



**PANHANDLING IN WINNIPEG  
LEGISLATION VS SUPPORT SERVICES**

**VOLUME 1**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**A STUDY FOR THE PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE**

**by**

**Tom Carter  
Canada Research Chair in Urban Change and Adaptation  
Anita Friesen  
Chesya Polevychok  
John Osborne**

**University of Winnipeg**

**May 2007**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Panhandling, the act of stopping people on the street or in public or private spaces to ask for food or money, has long been part of the urban environment. The activity generates various reactions from people: some see it as a sign of poverty and lack of services including affordable housing for marginalized groups. Others view it as having a negative effect on businesses. Some perceive panhandling to be the outcome of alcohol and substance abuse; the result of family breakdown; or as the actions of those unable or unwilling to sustain themselves by other activities.

The negative reaction to panhandling by a substantial proportion of the public has prompted legislation to either control and/or eliminate panhandling. In response, the City of Winnipeg passed legislation that prohibits some methods of panhandling, and places restrictions on some aspects of panhandling activity, particularly as it relates to specific types of services or locations in the city. This project is designed to answer the following questions regarding the need for, and the effectiveness of, this legislation:

1. given the nature, number and activity of panhandlers in the city, is this legislation an appropriate response to the circumstances?
2. based on the results of this research and the experience of other cities, is the legislation likely to be effective? and,
3. drawing on the findings of the research and experience in other cities, are there more effective means of addressing the issues of panhandling? Is legislation the answer or should the focus be on services and programs to address systemic problems that lead to panhandling in the first place?

The research methodology used to undertake and complete this project included:

1. a review of the current literature on panhandling as well as legislation and initiatives to control and/or reduce the need to panhandle;
2. individual interviews with 75 panhandlers in the city;
3. mapping of the location of panhandling activity relative to other services in study area;
4. observation of the nature and methods of panhandling; and,
5. consultation with service agencies, that have regular interaction with many of the people who panhandle, on most aspects of the research to obtain their insights on the issues associated with panhandling.

The literature review provides valuable insights into who panhandles and why they are on the streets of North American cities. The studies document the increasing diversity of a panhandling population that includes women, men, children, different racial and ethnic groups, the unemployed, the elderly, mothers and their children, youth who are runaways, the mentally ill, disabled, and substance users. This increase in diversity has been accompanied by the growth in the number of panhandlers.

People have seldom engaged in begging through choice, but have been driven to it by poverty, lack of opportunity, low levels of education, discrimination, poor health and mental and physical illness or disability.

The literature identifies many other factors that contribute directly or indirectly to panhandling including:

- economic restructuring and associated labour market changes, such as the decline of manufacturing leading to fewer jobs for low skilled workers and inadequate wages for the “working poor”;
- housing affordability problems and lack of affordable housing supply;
- inadequacy of coordinated services for individuals and families experiencing poverty;
- welfare retrenchment and benefit reductions which have contributed to escalating poverty;
- increased in-migration to urban areas of Aboriginal people who experience higher rates of poverty, unemployment and low educational attainment;
- domestic violence or physical or sexual abuse;
- drug or alcohol abuse;
- deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill; and,
- lifestyle choices.

The fundamental cause of panhandling is poverty. Most of the factors noted above are either the result of poverty or they contribute to poverty. Many panhandlers experience a complex set of challenges and circumstances that include a combination of many of the above factors.

A negative reaction to panhandling by a substantial proportion of the public has prompted many local governments to attempt to control panhandling through legislation as well as program approaches that assist panhandlers to “get off the street”. Anti-panhandling by-laws often impose regulations on the time, place, and manner of panhandling. Regarding the manner in which panhandling occurs by-laws generally target panhandling behaviour that is persistent, intimidating, obstructive, and/or threatening.

Though anti-panhandling legislation found in Canada is generally city-wide in application, the main intent is to address particular concerns about begging within the public spaces of the downtown. Enforcement of anti-panhandling by-laws varies widely among cities. In some enforcement is lax, while others enforce the legislation very strictly. At the same time many other cities make no formal attempt to regulate panhandlers.

Often legislative approaches have been challenged on the basis that they only move (as opposed to solve) the problem and limit or violate the rights of panhandlers trying to sustain themselves. The literature indicates that public education, adequate social programs and services for panhandlers, and informal social control are more effective and appropriate responses. In several cities, including Winnipeg, both approaches are employed: they use legal measures to tackle the issue directly, while also offering a variety of social programs to reduce the extent of panhandling.

Most researchers agree that the enforcement of laws prohibiting panhandling does not solve the problem. Enforcing by-laws generally only “moves” the problem or reduces it in the short term but because by-laws fail to address the underlying causes, panhandlers soon return to panhandling. As well, panhandlers who may have been charged, generally show up panhandling somewhere else. Anti-panhandling legislation approaches have been criticized for a variety of reasons:

- existing laws within the Criminal Code already prohibit aggressive behaviour so by-laws that criminalize all panhandling are not necessary, nor will they effectively reduce panhandling over the long term;
- by-laws often rely upon subjective criteria – fear, perception, incivility and so on;
- there is no empirical evidence to prove that these legislative measures are working effectively. It has not been demonstrated that anti-panhandling by-laws actually reduce serious crime. Often it is difficult to determine if the intent of by-laws is to reduce serious crime or to improve the public’s level of comfort and perception of safety; and,
- safety for those panhandling is as great a concern as for other citizens. Panhandlers often endure harassment and violence from the wider public, and legislative measures may actually increase the verbal and physical abuse panhandlers endure.

In some instances the issue of panhandling has been indirectly addressed through long-term programs with broad objectives such as job creation and reduction of unemployment; skills upgrading and job training; community economic and social development that arrests urban decay and neighbourhood decline; and, provision of adequate services addressing the needs of panhandlers. These are broad, complex, long-term solutions aimed at reducing the marginalization of sectors of society that has intensified over the past couple of decades.

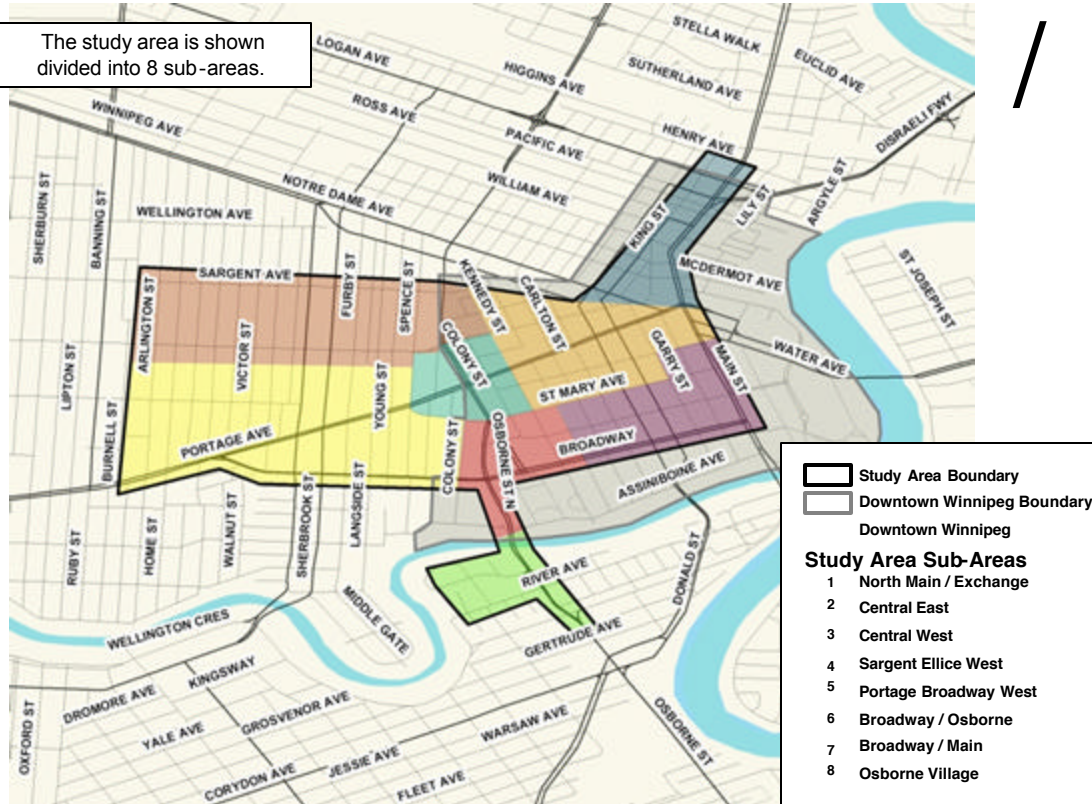
Many smaller, more focused initiatives that have played an effective role in reducing the number of people panhandling have been introduced in a variety of forms in many different cities throughout Canada and the United States. This illustrates that creating by-laws and criminalizing panhandling are not the only solutions.

The review concludes that making panhandling a crime by introducing anti-panhandling legislation will not eliminate begging. Making panhandling a criminal offence only penalizes and stigmatizes people based on their economic and social situation, but does not address the causes. The solutions have to include both short-term and long-term initiatives which address systemic problems associated with poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, family instability, domestic abuse, poor skill levels, low levels of education, discrimination and other forms of marginalization.

The observation and mapping component of the study examined the geographic distribution of panhandling, different panhandling methods, and panhandling by-law violations in Winnipeg and found that:

- panhandling activity in the study area (see Map 1) is concentrated in the Central East and Central West sub-areas along Portage Avenue, North Main/Exchange, and Osborne Village sub-areas;
- based on the ten-metre distance restriction chosen, the observation determined that the type of sensitive services most often violated were bus stops;
- according to the amended By-Law 7700/2000(2005) a little over half of all panhandling events in the study area would be considered violations.
- Violations of sensitive services were observed most often in Central East, representing more than one third of all violations of sensitive services in the study area.



**MAP 1. STUDY AREA AND SUB-AREAS**

Base Map Source: DMTI Spatial

The research clearly indicates that obstructive, persistent and threatening panhandling, as defined in the amended by-law, does occur in the city.

- Of the events observed, the greatest number of such acts occurred in the Central East sub-area where panhandlers are most concentrated. However, the rate of occurrence is highest in the North Main/Exchange sub-area.
- Most such events recorded involved obstructing the passage of pedestrians or vehicular traffic, followed by persistent continued solicitation.
- Approximately three quarters of panhandling acts are performed by individuals.
- Group activity (13% of panhandling events) tends to be concentrated in the Central East sub-area.

Panhandling is most prevalent during afternoon and evening hours. According to observation, there is a correlation between the frequency of panhandling events, the volume of pedestrian traffic and the business hours in certain sub-areas. At night panhandling is most likely to occur in the North Main/Exchange sub-area of the city.

The ratio of by-law violations to total observed events varied by sub-area. The highest ratios of violations versus non-violations were recorded in the Broadway/Main, North Main/Exchange, Central East, and Portage Broadway West study sub-areas. Broadway/Osborne had the lowest proportion of violations. Out of 130 total violations observed in the entire study area, one third were recorded in Central East. The share of

violations for other areas ranged from twelve to sixteen percent.

The study found that “captive audience” situations at sensitive services comprised almost half of all panhandling violations observed, followed by events involving obstructive, continued and/or threatening panhandling (17%) and panhandling approach by a group of three or more (10%). Combinations of violations represent slightly more than a quarter of all by-law violations (28%). Almost half of the combination approaches were obstructive, continued or threatening and involved captive audiences. Within combination methods obstructive, continued or threatening panhandling by a group of three or more was the least common type.

Although this study identifies nearly half of all observed panhandling events as By-Law violations, this is based on a broad interpretation of the By-Law. When a more narrow interpretation of the By-Law is used, the number of violations observed decreases thirty percent. A broad interpretation includes a 10 meter distance restriction, whereas a narrow interpretation does not specify a distance restriction, but refers instead to using, waiting at, waiting to use or departing from sensitive services. A narrow interpretation also includes only those groups of three or more panhandlers which physically approach during the course of soliciting.

The interview component of the research indicated that panhandlers in Winnipeg are a diverse population. One characteristic they all share, however, is that of living in extreme poverty. Few are working, many lack the skills necessary to access employment, and others have physical or mental illness or disabilities that are significant barriers to employment. Due to insufficient income, panhandlers turn to panhandling to support themselves.

The interviews indicated that panhandlers in Winnipeg are predominantly male. Twice as many panhandlers as the general population fall into the age bracket of 25 – 44 years. The very high proportion of Aboriginal people among the respondents is testament to their marginalized position in society. Among those interviewed, there is a very high proportion who have never been married, leaving them with a small social support system to rely on in difficult times.

High levels of unemployment (85% of interviewees), infrequent and short incidents of employment, and inability to function effectively in the workforce characterize the work history and employment status of panhandlers. The interviewees identified many common barriers to finding and keeping employment.

- Sixteen percent of the panhandlers interviewed had less than a grade nine education. Twenty-seven percent had completed high school. 6.6% had some post secondary education and 1.3% had a university degree. The fact that approximately sixty-seven percent of the sample had not completed high school is a clear indication that the majority have a skill and education level that makes access to the labour market difficult.
- Thirty-seven percent had a disability that was a barrier to labour force participation.
- Sixty percent of the interviewees were homeless – either “couch surfing,” staying in shelters, or sleeping on the streets. Housing and employment are inextricably interconnected: one cannot get a place to live without a job, and one cannot get a job without a place to live.

- There were also problems such as no fixed address, no phone, illiteracy (17%), a criminal record, addictions, no identification and the fact many had been in the city only a short period of time which created barriers to permanent employment that would provide a liveable income.

Although eleven respondents worked regularly, they had to supplement their wages by panhandling. Those for whom it was their only income source often relied on other ways of meeting their basic needs, such as collecting cans and dumpster diving. Many relied on services such as temporary shelters, soup kitchens, and clothing banks, but for others, these services were not appropriate to their needs or were considered “a last resort”.

Panhandling is not an option that many would choose over employment. The majority would certainly rather work for a living-wage through full-time employment over panhandling. When asked what they needed in order to stop panhandling, interviewees most often mentioned employment and employment related supports, such as training and education, a return to good health, or being free from addictions so they could work again.

Some respondents, however, admitted that it was their choice not to work as they were not prepared to work for minimum wage and to accept the regular schedule that a job requires. They preferred instead to panhandle, as it provided them with more flexibility. Although it provides freedom to choose where and when to work, it also comes with many disadvantages. These include being the target of frequent physical and verbal abuse, having to endure all weather conditions, not knowing when the next meal will be, not having the freedom that comes with having a regular income, being labelled as a lazy addict, living on the margins of society, and associated diminished self-esteem.

For the approximately two-thirds of respondents who received one form or another of government income assistance, they found it to be insufficient and, therefore, supplemented it by panhandling. Others reported that they panhandled because they could not qualify for income assistance. Contributing factors also included the break-up of significant relationships, and leaving home at a young age. Alcohol, drug or substance addictions were identified by some respondents as major factors that brought them to panhandling and kept them there, while others had developed addictions as a result of the panhandling lifestyle. Interviewees reported various degrees of success with their efforts to overcome their addictions.

The research certainly highlights the complexity of the circumstances that force people to panhandle. Unfortunate events, choices, or situations, which on their own might easily be dealt with, when combined, can become insurmountable and leave panhandling as the only income earning option. In order to have any lasting positive change happen in their lives, the multiple issues and barriers have to be dealt with simultaneously. For example, a job alone is insufficient: without any income until the first payday, and no place to sleep and food to eat, keeping a job is virtually impossible.

For many of the interviewees, the road to positive change in their lives may seem so unlikely that it isn't even something they consider. The daily and immediate struggle to meet basic needs such as finding shelter, clothing and food monopolizes their efforts and thinking, pushing out dreams of future possibilities. This is reflected in panhandlers' spending

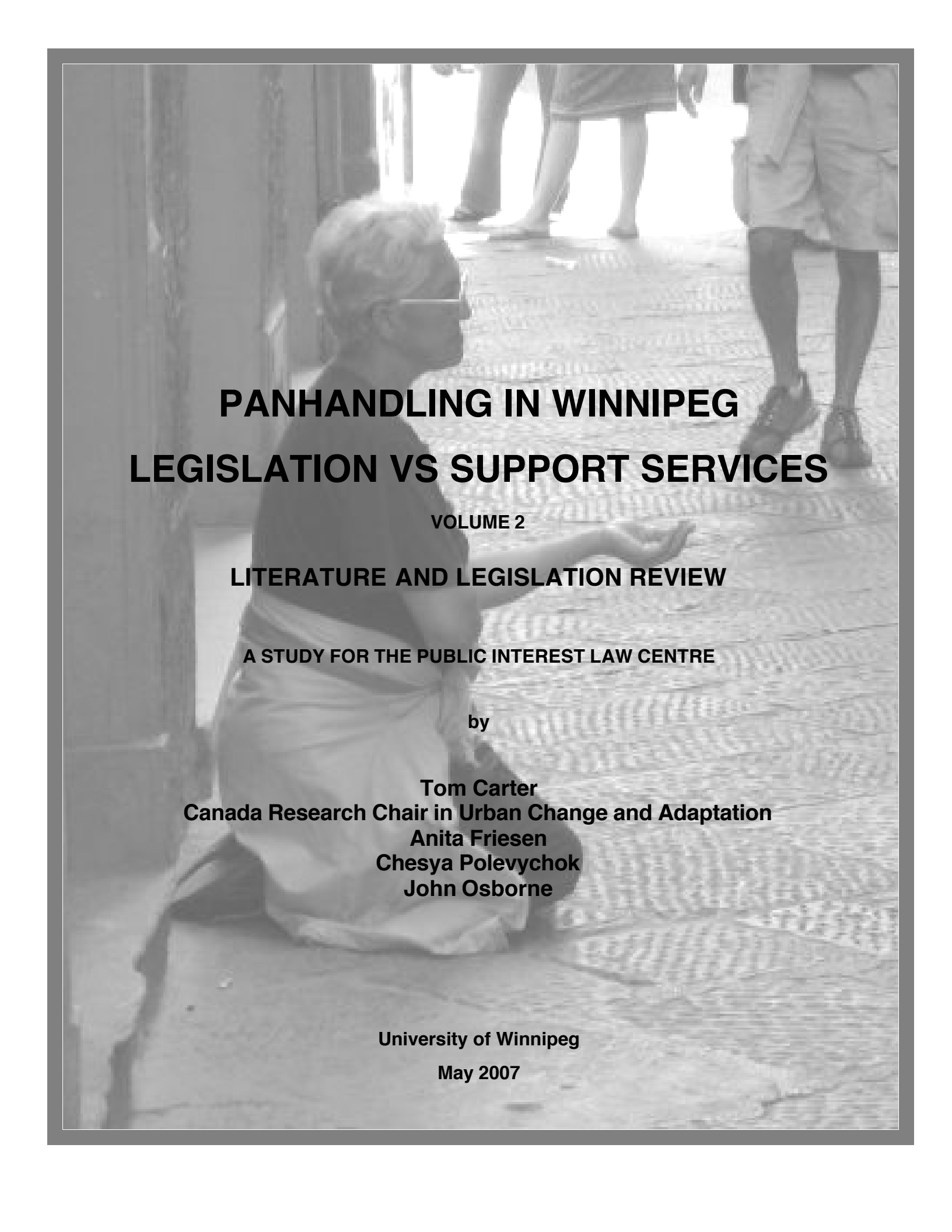
priorities: 93 percent spend their panhandling earnings on food, and for 88 percent, it ranks as their first or second priority. Shelter costs, clothing and bus tickets also ranked high. Panhandlers also spend their earnings on cigarettes, alcohol and illegal drugs and substances, but generally these did not rate as high priorities.

Sources of pride for many of the interviewees were the panhandling skills they had honed and creative strategies they have developed through experience. Many expressed pride in their adherence to a panhandlers “Code of Conduct” which outlines basic ethics of considerate behaviour toward each other and polite interactions with those they panhandle. About forty percent of panhandlers said they stay stationary when they panhandle and speak only to thank those who give. The majority, however, do use a verbal request. About half panhandle alone and those who choose to panhandle with others generally do so for the company and for personal safety. Overwhelmingly, the interviewees advocated politeness and respectfulness when panhandling, and said they do not agree with aggressive panhandling techniques because it is rude, counterproductive, and reflects badly on all panhandlers. There did not, however, seem to be a clear consensus on a definition of aggressive. What one panhandler would consider aggressive, another would not.

This lack of consensus on what constitutes aggression parallels the interviewees’ lack of understanding of current legal restrictions on panhandling. Only half of them knew that changes had been made recently which directly affect how and where they can undertake their income earning activity. Of those who knew a by-law to this effect had been passed, most were misinformed as to its content. In fact, many were under the impression that all panhandling is illegal. Less than a third of the interviewees reported having been ticketed for panhandling. Most of those who had, ignored the tickets because they said they would have had to panhandle to pay any fines. A few had been arrested. All those ticketed or arrested reported that one effect this had on their panhandling was to make them more cautious and watchful for those enforcing the By-Law.

Since the amendments were put into place in the summer of 2005, relations with the public have generally taken a turn for the worse for panhandlers. For many it has resulted in reduced panhandling income, which means they now have to panhandle longer to earn enough for their needs, or else they turn to crime. Some interviewees also indicated that relationships have deteriorated with business owners, the BIZ Ambassadors and the police, with reports of increased pressures to “move along” or to stop panhandling altogether.

Panhandlers are a group living on the “margins of society.” They panhandle for many different reasons but poverty is certainly the underlying cause. What they need to stop panhandling goes far beyond by-laws that restrict panhandling activity. A range of targeted services are required to address the multiple health, housing, education, employment and social problems that panhandlers face. Unless the systemic problems and gaps in services and supports that are barriers to poverty reduction are addressed, preventing people from panhandling may only drive them to other ways to access funds, not all of them legal.



**PANHANDLING IN WINNIPEG  
LEGISLATION VS SUPPORT SERVICES**

**VOLUME 2**

**LITERATURE AND LEGISLATION REVIEW**

**A STUDY FOR THE PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE**

**by**

**Tom Carter  
Canada Research Chair in Urban Change and Adaptation  
Anita Friesen  
Chesya Polevychok  
John Osborne**

**University of Winnipeg**

**May 2007**

## Table of Contents

|                                                                                             |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| List of tables                                                                              | ii  |
| Executive Summary                                                                           | iii |
| 1.0 Introduction                                                                            | 1   |
| 2.0 A Review of Recent and Relevant Literature                                              | 3   |
| 2.1 Defining Panhandling                                                                    | 3   |
| 2.2 Who Are the Panhandlers: What the Literature Tells Us                                   | 3   |
| 2.3 How Panhandlers Spend Their Money                                                       | 4   |
| 2.4 Causes of Panhandling                                                                   | 5   |
| 2.5 Methods of Panhandling                                                                  | 14  |
| 2.6 Panhandlers in Winnipeg: A Profile Drawn from Winnipeg Studies                          | 16  |
| 2.7 Perceptions of Different Groups Regarding Panhandling                                   | 20  |
| 2.8 Conclusion and Implications for the By-Law                                              | 24  |
| 3.0 A Review of Recent Policy and Legislation to Control, Restrict or Eliminate Panhandling | 25  |
| 3.1 Current and Recent By-Laws in the City of Winnipeg                                      | 25  |
| 3.2 Policy Responses to Panhandling                                                         | 26  |
| 3.3 Legislative Approaches to Panhandling                                                   | 26  |
| 3.4 American Legislation                                                                    | 27  |
| 3.5 Prohibiting Panhandling in Specific Areas                                               | 28  |
| 3.6 Public Space: What is the Definition?                                                   | 29  |
| 3.7 Canadian Legislation                                                                    | 30  |
| 3.8 Panhandling By-Laws in Winnipeg                                                         | 32  |
| 3.9 Effectiveness of Legislation                                                            | 34  |
| 3.10 Program Approaches to Panhandling                                                      | 35  |
| 3.11 Conclusion and Implications for the By-Law                                             | 37  |
| 4.0 Conclusions                                                                             | 39  |
| List of References                                                                          | 40  |
| Appendices                                                                                  |     |
| A. Project Methodology                                                                      | 45  |
| B. Employment Insurance Legislation Chronology                                              | 50  |

**List of Tables**

|                                                                    |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Table 2.1. Poverty By Household Type. Manitoba and Canada: 2003    | 6  |
| Table 2.2. Manitoba: Estimated Number Of Persons On Welfare        | 8  |
| Table 2.3. Manitoba Welfare Incomes in Constant 2005 Dollars       | 9  |
| Table 2.4. Manitoba Welfare Income As A Percentage Of Poverty Line | 10 |
| Table 2.5. Manitoba Welfare Statistics By Household Type           | 11 |
| Table 3.1. Public Forums                                           | 30 |
| Table 3.2. Summary of Municipal Panhandling By-Laws                | 32 |
| Table 3.3. Summary of By-Law Restrictions                          | 33 |

## Executive Summary

This literature review provides valuable insights into who panhandles and why they are on the streets of North American cities. The studies reviewed here document the increasing diversity of the panhandling population which includes women, men, children; different racial and ethnic groups; the unemployed, the elderly, mothers and their children; children who are runaways; the mentally ill, and people with alcohol and/or drug abuse problems. This increase in diversity has been accompanied by the growth in the number of panhandlers.

People seldom engage in begging through choice, but are driven to it by poverty, lack of opportunity, discrimination, poor health and mental disability. The fundamental cause of panhandling is poverty. Among other factors that contribute to panhandling, the literature identifies:

- economic restructuring and associated labour market changes, such as the decline of manufacturing leading to fewer jobs for low skilled workers and inadequate wages for the “working poor”;
- Housing affordability problems and lack of affordable housing supply;
- Inadequacy of ample and coordinated services for individuals and families experiencing poverty;
- Welfare retrenchment and benefit reductions contributing to escalating poverty;
- Increased in-migration to urban areas of Aboriginal people who experience higher rates of poverty, unemployment and low educational attainment;
- Domestic violence and history of physical and sexual abuse;
- Drug and alcohol abuse problems; and
- Deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill.

A negative reaction to panhandling by a substantial proportion of the public has prompted many local governments to attempt to control panhandling through legislation as well as program approaches that assist panhandlers to “get off the street”. Anti-panhandling by-laws often impose regulations on the time, place, and manner of panhandling. Regarding the manner in which panhandling occurs by-laws generally target panhandling behaviour that is persistent, intimidating, obstructive, and/or threatening.

Though anti-panhandling legislation found in Canada is generally city-wide in application, the main intent is to address particular concerns about begging within the public spaces of the downtown. Enforcement of anti-panhandling by-laws varies widely among cities. In some enforcement is lax, while others enforce the legislation very strictly. At the same time many other cities make no formal attempt to regulate panhandlers.

Often legislative approaches have been challenged on the basis that they only move - as opposed to solve - the problem, and limit or violate the rights of panhandlers trying to sustain themselves. Public education, adequate social programs and services for panhandlers, and informal social control are more effective and appropriate responses. Several cities employ both approaches: they use legal measures to tackle the issue directly, but also offer a variety of social programs to reduce the extent of panhandling.

Most researchers agree that the enforcement of laws regulating panhandling does not solve the problem. Enforcing by-laws moves the problem or reduces it in the short term but, because it fails to



address the underlying causes, people are soon back panhandling. As well, panhandlers who may have been charged generally show up panhandling somewhere else. Anti-panhandling legislation approaches have also been criticized for other reasons:

- Existing laws within the Criminal Code already prohibit aggressive behaviour so by-laws that criminalize all panhandling are not necessary, nor will they effectively reduce panhandling over the long term;
- The by-laws often rely upon subjective criteria - fear, perception, incivility and so on;
- There is no empirical support to prove these legislative measures are working effectively. It has not been demonstrated, that anti panhandling by-laws actually reduce serious crime; and
- Safety of those panhandling is a concern as much as of other citizens. Panhandlers often endure harassment and violence from the larger public.

The issue of panhandling has been indirectly addressed through several long-term programs through broad initiatives such as job creation and reduction of unemployment; skills upgrading and job training; community economic and social development that arrests urban decay and neighbourhood decline; and provision of adequate services addressing the needs of panhandlers. These are broad, complex, long-term solutions aimed at reducing the marginalization of sectors of society that has intensified over the past couple of decades.

Many smaller, more focused initiatives have also been introduced in a variety of forms in cities throughout Canada and the United States and have played an effective role in reducing the number of people panhandling. Both the long-term and the short-term initiatives illustrate that introducing by-laws and criminalizing<sup>1</sup> panhandling are not the only solutions.

To conclude, making panhandling illegal will not eliminate begging. Making panhandling a criminal offence only penalizes and stigmatizes people based on their economic and social situation but does not address the causes. The solutions have to include both short-term and long-term initiatives which address systemic problems associated with poverty including unemployment, marginalization, substance abuse, family instability, domestic abuse, poor skill levels, low levels of education, and discrimination.

---

<sup>1</sup> Making (an action, a practice, etc) illegal.

## 1.0 Introduction

Panhandling has long been part of the urban environment. Panhandling generates various reactions from people: some see it as a sign of poverty and lack of services including affordable housing for marginalized groups. Others view it as having a negative effect on businesses. Some perceive panhandling to be the outcome of alcohol and substance abuse; the result of family breakdown; or as the actions of those unable or unwilling to sustain themselves by other activities. Those who see panhandling as a symptom of systemic problems in society feel the “problem” has to be resolved by services such as adequate, affordable housing, substance and alcohol rehabilitation programs, skills training and poverty alleviation initiatives. Those concerned about the real or perceived negative effects on business, although they would not argue against the need for such programs, want to get “the problem” off the streets and away from their establishments. Their assumption is that panhandlers on the street are negatively perceived, and at times feared, by people passing by and perhaps even discourage customers from patronizing their businesses.

The negative reaction to panhandling by a substantial proportion of the public has prompted the creation of legislation to either control and/or eliminate panhandling. Invariably this legislation has been challenged on the basis that it only relocates the problem rather than solving it, and limits or infringes on the rights of an impoverished group trying to sustain themselves.

Stereotypes about panhandlers abound in Winnipeg. It is uncertain whether the stigma attached by many members of the public and many in the business community is justified, because there is little solid information about individuals who panhandle. This study develops a better understanding of panhandling activity, where it occurs, how panhandlers approach people, and panhandlers’ realities and needs. Coupled with a comprehensive review of the literature on panhandling and of current legislation, services and programs, the report provides an understanding of the gaps to be filled and systemic changes required to improve circumstances and reduce individuals’ reliance on panhandling activity.

The research also helps determine if the current by-laws that restrict panhandling activities infringe on the rights and abilities of a group of people to gain income and if these by-laws are an effective way of dealing with perceived and real problems associated with panhandling. The research sheds light on whether resources devoted to by-law enforcement and punitive measures should be diverted instead to improving supports that would enable individuals to not have to rely on panhandling income. Essentially, this research provides a foundation from which to better address the personal, systemic, legal, service-provision and social issues associated with panhandling activity.

This research project is designed to answer some basic questions regarding the need for and the effectiveness of the legislation. More specifically, the research addresses the following questions:

1. Given the nature, number and activity of panhandlers in the city is this legislation an appropriate response to the circumstance? Does the nature of panhandling in Winnipeg warrant the legislation?
2. Based on the results of this research and the experience of other cities, is the legislation likely to be effective? and,
3. Drawing on the findings of the research and experience in other cities, are there more effective means of responding to the needs of panhandlers? Is legislation the answer or should

the focus be on services and programs to address systemic problems that lead to panhandling in the first place?

There are several components of the research methodology that were used to undertake and complete this project (study methodology is presented in Appendix A). The study reviews the current literature on panhandling plus legislation and initiatives in other jurisdictions to control and/or reduce the need to panhandle; maps the location of panhandlers relative to “sensitive” services, observes the nature and methods of panhandling, and conducts interviews with 75 panhandlers. The study examines the effects of the current legislation on panhandling activities in the city and determines what support services and program initiatives might be effective in reducing the need to panhandle.

This volume presents the first component of the study. It reviews academic, legal, government, advocacy and professional literature. This informs the project by providing information on the characteristics of panhandlers, how they panhandle, why they panhandle and what services or initiatives might help this group of people reduce their dependence on panhandling. It also provides background on recent legislation that has been introduced in Canadian cities, the nature and effectiveness of this legislation and the reason(s) it was introduced. In addition, the review presents an overview of other non-legislative initiatives (Canada and abroad) to reduce the number of panhandlers through provision of services and support programs that reduce the need for panhandling. The literature sheds some light on programs and support services that have been introduced to address the systemic causes that drive people onto the streets to panhandle. The three components of the literature review are outlined below.

The focus of the literature review is Canadian material, but relevant works from the United States and other countries are included. The review of the literature attempts to highlight recent changes in panhandling, including the changing nature, number and characteristics of panhandlers, reactions by the public, business and government sectors, as well as changing attitudes toward the use of public space and the debate surrounding private versus public space in the urban environment.

The review of legislation focuses on Canadian cities where there have been recent changes in the legislation affecting panhandling. The review also highlights legislation in American cities. It presents a detailed account of recent changes in panhandling by-laws in Winnipeg and compares the nature of legislation in Winnipeg with legislation in other key cities. A matrix, accompanied by a detailed written explanation, has been developed to compare the regulations.

The review of initiatives that provide resources to reduce the need for panhandling takes an approach similar to the review of legislation. It focuses on key cities in Canada, the U.S. and other countries to determine what programs and support services have been introduced. Initiatives in selected cities and those available in Winnipeg illustrate that by-laws restricting panhandling or making it illegal are not the only solutions.

## **2.0 A Review of Recent and Relevant Literature**

### **2.1 Defining Panhandling**

Over the past several years, cities across Canada have witnessed an escalating number of panhandlers (Carter 1998, Schafer 1998). Residents and visitors to many urban centers encounter panhandlers every day. A walk down a major street in a major city is very likely to result in at least one solicitation by someone seeking spare change.

Panhandling is commonly defined as the act of stopping people on the street to ask for assistance, for example in the form of food or money (National Anti-Poverty Organization 1999, Bose and Hwang 2002, Collins and Blomley 2003). Methods range from carrying a sign or holding out a cup on a city sidewalk, to threatening, taunting and touching passersby in an attempt to intimidate them into giving money. Panhandlers use numerous ways to get attention, sometimes going so far as to obstruct a pedestrian's path as they shove their hand or a cup out in front of them. Generally, though, panhandling occurs in a passive manner.

The literature illustrates that society has always had a low tolerance level for the beggar and the panhandler (Carter 1998, O'Reilly-Fleming 1993). As Lee and Farrell (2003, p.300) convey, "...conventional wisdom regards panhandling as a deviant activity, engaged in by the stigmatized poor that carries significant costs and is disapproved of by a majority of citizens". Aggressive panhandling may create an intimidating and unsightly atmosphere, negatively impacting the quality of life of urban residents while adversely affecting businesses and tourism. The increasing visibility of people panhandling is generating much public discussion and debate about the causes of panhandling and possible ways to address it. Many view the panhandlers as undeserving of help and their panhandling activity as a result of pathological, self-induced and self-selected circumstances (Esmonde 2002, Wilson 1991). While it is true that a small number of people "choose the lifestyle", the vast majority are begging on the streets because of a lack of other alternatives.

### **2.2 Who Are the Panhandlers: What the Literature Tells Us**

Studies demonstrate that most panhandlers live in poverty, "panning" for a variety of reasons. Numerous sources point to support of alcohol and drug addictions as one of the major reasons for panhandling (Bodnarchuk et al. 2006, Bose and Hwang 2002, Duneier 1999, Lankenau 1999, Addictions Foundation of Manitoba 1996, 1993). Several investigations strongly associate panhandling and other subsistence activities with the duration and frequency of homelessness (Lee and Farrell 2003). Some individuals are unable to get by on their income assistance and, therefore, supplement their income assistance cheques by begging. Some panhandlers, such as transients, individuals from out-of-province and some youth under 18 years of age, are unable to get income assistance. Some youth who panhandle do it "for the thrill", more for the image and an opportunity to associate with the hard-core street kids, but then return to their homes in the evenings. These individuals (referred to on the streets as "Twinkies") are few in number and usually only panhandle for short periods of time.

These characteristics plus disorderly behaviour are consistent with the characterization of panhandlers by Kelling and Coles (1996) who differentiated them as "have-nots," "cannots," and "will-nots". The "have-nots" are people who are temporarily economically needy. The "cannots" are people who are unable to resolve their own problems due to mental illness or substance abuse. The "will-nots" are people for whom street hustling and panhandling has become a lifestyle by choice.

Often those who are homeless and panhandlers are considered one and the same. Over recent decades substantial literature on homelessness has been produced, but only a few of the contributions to that literature focus on panhandling (Lee and Farrell 2003; Bose and Hwang 2002). These studies offer valuable insights into the dimensions and dynamics of panhandling; however, little quantitative information is available - especially when compared to the amount of heated commentary devoted to this issue in the media - that would allow generalizing about the incidence of panhandling or panhandlers' characteristics, such as education, income, transiency, spending patterns or other aspects of their background and behaviour.

In the United States, Lee and Farrell (2003) studied panhandling among homeless people and summarized what has been learned from past investigations. They document that most panhandlers are men, often with substance abuse and/or mental health difficulties. The few female panhandlers observed do not have children in their care and, like their male counterparts, are assumed to be single. Panhandlers often have criminal records, but they are nearly as likely to have been crime victims as offenders (Scott 2002, Wessler and Melnick 2005). At the same time, literature sources emphasize the increasing diversity in characteristics of street people in many North American cities (Bentley 1995, Lee and Farrell 2003, Carter 1998). As the profile of the homeless has changed to include street kids and youth, young single adults, families with children, and the elderly, there has likewise been a growing number and increasing diversity of people who panhandle. Carter (1998, p.5) contends that:

[t]he evidence is overwhelming, both on the streets and in the literature: panhandlers cut a wide swath across the social fabric – women, men, children; different racial and ethnic groups; the unemployed, the old, mothers and their children; children who are runaways; the mentally ill, alcoholics, and drug users.

Two findings that are common to most research is the fact that panhandling is one of several strategies adopted by the homeless and other people in crisis in order to survive, and that panhandlers have very scarce reserves of human and social capital on which to draw. It has to be acknowledged, however, that not all panhandlers are homeless and not all homeless panhandle.

### **2.3 How Panhandlers Spend Their Money**

As was mentioned above, there is an ongoing public debate as to whether panhandlers beg out of necessity because they have fallen through the social safety net, or whether they beg in order to “feed their addictions”. A recent study of panhandling in the Canadian context was conducted by Bose and Hwang (2002) who surveyed panhandlers in Toronto. The survey showed that the majority of panhandlers are homeless and living in extreme poverty. Seventy percent of the participants stated that they would prefer a minimum-wage job, typically citing a desire for a “steady income” or “getting off the street.” However, many felt they could not handle conventional jobs because of mental illness, physical disability or lack of skills. A surprising thirty percent said they preferred panhandling to a full-time job or getting off the street, but half of those who beg for money found it to be degrading. Forty three percent of participants said they enjoyed panhandling because of the opportunity to “meet people.”

The panhandlers surveyed in Toronto reported a median monthly income of \$300 from panhandling and \$638 from all sources (Bose and Hwang 2002). This suggests that few panhandlers earn extremely large amounts of money. Their single largest reported expense was food, followed by tobacco, then alcohol and/or illicit drugs. Lee and Farrell (2003) also found that the speed with which

the money is spent, not just on alcohol or drugs but on essential goods and services illustrates that people panhandle because of desperation rather than laziness. Panhandlers often share their proceeds with others in need in anticipation of future reciprocity.

Bose and Hwang (2002) found that thirty-seven percent of the surveyed panhandlers had used cocaine in the previous 12 months; nine percent used heroin; and 93% percent said they were current cigarette smokers. The study reports that the amount of money panhandlers spend on alcohol and illicit drugs is significant, but much lower than some have suggested. At the same time an award-winning series of articles in *The Globe and Mail* in 1999 ("Seven days on the street", Dec. 18, 20, 21) concluded that panhandling essentially feeds addictions. Going undercover as a panhandler, *Globe* reporter John Stackhouse found that beggars spent "almost all their begging money on their addictions."

Income from panhandling can have a very positive effect on the lives of those who panhandle if earnings are being used to obtain food, housing or other necessities. For the one-fourth of panhandlers surveyed in Toronto who rent a room or apartment, for example, any loss of income could easily lead to homelessness (Bose and Hwang 2002). On the other hand, use of panhandling income to buy alcohol or illicit drugs could be harmful to their health. This raises the question of whether giving money to panhandlers benefits them or not.

## 2.4 Causes of Panhandling

Panhandling is a complex issue. The main reasons people find themselves panhandling on the street are connected to social issues of poverty, unemployment, food insecurity, lack of or high cost of housing, insufficiency of social programs, and low income. Drug and alcohol addiction, mental illness, increased levels of Aboriginal migration to cities and the poverty these new arrivals experience, marital or relationship breakdown, imprisonment, and history of physical or sexual abuse are also parts of the equation. Carter (1998) gives an account of key systemic reasons why panhandlers are found on the streets of Canadian cities. He presents a picture of both personal and systemic failure, and emphasizes that solutions based on laws and legislation that make panhandling a crime will not address the causes that are outlined below:

- **Economic restructuring and globalization of the economy** have been particularly important. Labour force changes over the past 15 years have resulted in a declining number of jobs in the sectors that people who have low skilled levels can access. With globalization of the economy some industries in the unskilled and semi-skilled manufacturing sectors have closed entirely, unable to compete with cheaper imports. Other industries have moved to other countries where labour costs are lower and environmental regulations are less restrictive. During the 1990s job growth was in the research and development, high technology, computers and electronics sectors. Growth in these new sectors plus decline in the unskilled and semi-skilled sectors led to increased unemployment for those who lack the skills to access these new jobs. Since 2000 there has been significant growth in construction, mining and real estate and to a lesser extent in the public service and health care sectors (Canadian Economic Observer 2005; Cross 2006). Again these jobs require skills people who panhandle don't have and are often in locations that are far removed from urban communities.  
Full-time permanent employment also declined during the 90s, dropping from 67% of the total labour force in 1989 to 63% in 2002 (Vosko et al. 2003). More and more people

were depending on part-time jobs that were contractual in nature and provided lower wages and fewer benefits, particularly those with low skill levels. This has also changed in recent years as full time positions have increased by four percent since 2003 but again, in the job sectors noted above, not in those available to people with very low skill levels (Cross 2006).

Manitoba's employment growth over the 1991-2001 decade was 5.5%. This growth is fairly small compared to 13% employment growth for Canada overall. The Winnipeg CMA had an employed labour force of 325,040 in 1991, 324,745 in 1996 and 345,730 in 2001, a 1991-2001 increase of six percent, still well below the national average. Recent trends in Winnipeg's labour force growth have been more positive with an increase to 374,700 in 2005. Canada's unemployment rate has declined progressively since the peak of over 10% in the early 1990s to 6.9% in 2005, representing a significant improvement. In 2005 the unemployment rate was 4.8% in the Winnipeg CMA, lower than most of the major cities. However, people with low skill levels still have difficulty finding permanent employment

- **Poverty rates in Manitoba, although they have moderated slightly in recent years are still very high.** In 2003 the poverty rate for all persons was 16.9 percent, for families 11.7 percent and unattached individuals it was 38.4 percent. The proportions for all persons and unattached individuals are higher than the national average (National Council of Welfare, 2006a). Poverty rates for other household types are noted in the table below. The depth of poverty is also troubling. In Canada, for example, the average income of single parent mothers is \$9600 below the poverty line, unattached men >65 \$8800, unattached women >65 \$8700 (National Council on Welfare, 2006). Many people work hard but are still unable to escape poverty (National Council of Welfare 2006). For instance, a single person would have to work 56 hours a week at minimum wage just to reach the poverty line, as measured by the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO), and a lone parent with two children would have to work at least 85 hours a week (The Just Income Coalition 2005).

| <b>Table 2.1. Poverty By Household Type Manitoba and Canada: 2003</b> |                 |               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
|                                                                       | <b>Manitoba</b> | <b>Canada</b> |
| All Persons                                                           | 16.9            | 15.9          |
| Unattached Individuals                                                | 38.4            | 38.0          |
| Families                                                              | 11.7            | 12.0          |
| Single Parent Mothers <65                                             | 38.8            | 48.9          |
| Two Parent Families <65                                               | 13.0            | 9.8           |
| Couples Without Children <65                                          | 8.2             | 9.2           |
| Unattached Women <65                                                  | 43.0            | 42.8          |
| Unattached Men <65                                                    | 30.5            | 34.4          |
| Unattached Senior Women                                               | 48.6            | 40.9          |
| Unattached Senior Men                                                 | 33.2            | 31.6          |
| All Persons 65+                                                       | 18.5            | 15.1          |
| Women 65+                                                             | 23.9            | 19.1          |
| Men 65+                                                               | 11.5            | 10.2          |

Source: National Council of Welfare, 2006a

- **The incidence of poverty is also very high in Winnipeg, particularly in the inner city.** Approximately four out of every ten households in the inner city fall below the poverty line (Carter et al. 2003). For individuals the ratio rises to more than one out of every two and for families the proportion is one of every three families. These ratios are much lower in the non-inner city and the city as a whole, particularly for all households and families where ratios approximate one in five and one in ten respectively.

According to the 2004 Manitoba Child Poverty Report Card, approximately one in five Manitoba children are living in poverty (Social Planning Council, 2006). The poverty rate among immigrant children in Manitoba is 40%, and it climbs even higher for recent immigrants who have arrived since 1996 (51.2%). Among Aboriginal children, the poverty rate continues to be two times greater than the overall child poverty rate. Child poverty is associated with poor health, low levels of education, behavioural and mental problems, which eventually result in poor employment prospects and a persistently low economic status (Silver 2000).

- **Large sectors of the population have been marginalized over the past decades** (Carter 1998). Despite the improving economic circumstances and job prospects for most of the population, there is the continued development of an increasingly marginalized group in society that is unable to access the benefits of economic growth (Arundel and Associates 2003, Toye and Infanti 2004). The processes of economic restructuring have also enhanced the acute disparity between inner cities and areas of urban prosperity. A shift in emphasis to part-time and temporary jobs, a decline in job opportunities for inner city low-skilled workers, and an increase in long-term unemployment disproportionately affects inner-city poor people, particularly minorities, who often face more limited choice of affordable housing options. Several investigations show panhandling and other subsistence activities to be positively associated with the duration and frequency of homelessness (Wilson 1991, Scott 2002, Lee and Farrell 2003). The continued high proportion of long-term jobless people and recipients of transfer payments further contribute to poverty and social inequity in the inner city.

Job loss means more people are forced to rely on unemployment insurance and social assistance. However, the changes in unemployment insurance legislation of 1994 and 1996 made it more difficult for unemployed to be qualified for the insurance and unemployment benefits for many recipients were reduced. Whereas 74 percent of Canada's unemployed qualified for unemployment benefits in 1990, reforms to EI lowered eligibility to 39 percent by 2001. Many people have to work longer to qualify for insurance, which is often difficult in areas where unemployment rates are high and long-term jobs are scarce. Restrictions on people who quit or are fired went from minimal to total (for a detailed chronology of major Employment (Unemployment) Insurance legislation changes see Appendix A). Those who end up on social assistance find their monthly assistance is declining, as social assistance rates have not kept up with cost of living increases. People have less money in their pockets, they do not qualify, or they fall through the cracks. And for those left behind by the labour market, government cutbacks to social assistance, unemployment insurance, and skills upgrading programs in the 1990's, make their return to the labour force extremely difficult.

With less purchasing power they face increasingly limited housing options. The increasing marginalization and associated poverty that is occurring in Winnipeg is also



confirmed by the rising use of such services as food banks. Food distributed by Winnipeg Harvest has increased from approximately one million pounds in 1988 to approximately 8 million pounds in 2004 (Winnipeg Harvest Inc). In 2004, Harvest distributed food each month to 13,458 households or 36,871 people compared to 1,800 households in 1985. Forty percent of all food bank users are single people; 47% are children; and two-fifths are living with a disability. More than three quarters of the users are on social assistance, 16.5% work full or part-time or are collecting employment insurance, 44.7% go without food at least once a month, and 30% had their phones disconnected to save money.

- **Welfare retrenchment and a changing social safety net system may also be a contributing factor** as they further marginalize those negatively affected by the changing nature of the economy. Social assistance caseloads in Winnipeg are clear evidence of this. The total caseload rose from approximately 12,000 in 1980 to about 35,000 in 1994 before starting to fall since then due to declining unemployment rates, but also due to the tightening of eligibility requirements (Prince 1998). From 1995 to 2000, Winnipeg's average monthly caseload was reduced by nearly 30% (Janzen et al. 2003). The nature of the caseload has also changed to include not only single individuals and single-parent families, but two parent families as well. While Winnipeg's inner city accounts for less than 20% of the city's total population, it contains more than half of Winnipeg's total social assistance caseload. Correspondingly, 28% of all inner city households receive social assistance, compared to 10.6% of all households in Winnipeg.

The number of persons on welfare, like the caseload, has been declining (Sceviour and Finnie 2004). In 1995 there were 85,200 people in Manitoba on welfare, approximately 80 percent of them in Winnipeg. By 2005 this number had declined to 60,900, a 29 percent drop (Table 2.2.).

|                      | <b>Number</b> | <b>% Change</b> |
|----------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1995                 | 85,200        |                 |
| 1996                 | 85,800        | 0.007           |
| 1997                 | 79,100        | -0.07           |
| 1998                 | 72,700        | -0.08           |
| 1999                 | 68,700        | -0.05           |
| 2000                 | 63,300        | -0.07           |
| 2001                 | 60,500        | -0.04           |
| 2002                 | 60,100        | -0.006          |
| 2003                 | 59,900        | -0.003          |
| 2004                 | 58,400        | 0.01            |
| 2005                 | 60,900        | -0.29           |
| % Change 1995 - 2005 | -24,400       |                 |

Source: National Council of Welfare 2006b

**The characteristics of people on welfare illustrate the depth of poverty and the degree of marginalization that they face:**

- in constant (2005) dollars benefits have been constantly declining since 1992 (Table 2.3.). For a single employable person the decline has been from 9,036 to 5,818 or a 36 percent decline in purchasing power.
- other household types have experienced similar declines.

| <b>Table 2.3. Manitoba Welfare Incomes in Constant 2005 Dollars</b> |                          |                               |                                |                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
|                                                                     | <b>Single Employable</b> | <b>Person With Disability</b> | <b>Single Parent One Child</b> | <b>Couple Two Children</b> |
| 1986                                                                | 8,295                    | -                             | 14,547                         | 22,881                     |
| 1989                                                                | 8,709                    | 9,462                         | 14,269                         | 24,450                     |
| 1990                                                                | 8,923                    | 9,441                         | 14,362                         | 25,195                     |
| 1991                                                                | 8,981                    | 9,451                         | 14,432                         | 25,605                     |
| 1992                                                                | <b>9,036</b>             | <b>11,416</b>                 | <b>15,630</b>                  | <b>25,912</b>              |
| 1993                                                                | 8,894                    | 10,325                        | 14,238                         | 23,891                     |
| 1994                                                                | 8,297                    | 10,267                        | 14,148                         | 24,252                     |
| 1995                                                                | 8,133                    | 10,051                        | 13,843                         | 23,728                     |
| 1996                                                                | 7,536                    | 9,889                         | 13,621                         | 21,542                     |
| 1997                                                                | 6,567                    | 9,733                         | 13,405                         | 20,112                     |
| 1998                                                                | 6,507                    | 9,643                         | 13,282                         | 19,722                     |
| 1999                                                                | 6,395                    | 9,558                         | 13,050                         | 19,383                     |
| 2000                                                                | 6,229                    | 9,365                         | <b>13,028</b>                  | <b>19,230</b>              |
| 2001                                                                | 6,078                    | 9,134                         | 13,485                         | 19,385                     |
| 2002                                                                | 5,950                    | 8,936                         | 13,692                         | 19,365                     |
| 2003                                                                | <b>5,794</b>             | 8,696                         | 13,475                         | 19,680                     |
| 2004                                                                | 5,918                    | 8,762                         | 13,387                         | 20,394                     |
| 2005                                                                | 5,818                    | <b>8,601</b>                  | 13,282                         | 20,357                     |
| % Change<br>Peak to 2005                                            | -36                      | -25                           | -15                            | -25                        |
| <b>123</b> Peak year and peak amount                                |                          |                               |                                |                            |
| <b>123</b> Lowest year and lowest amount                            |                          |                               |                                |                            |

Source: National Council of Welfare 2006b

- welfare incomes as a percentage of the poverty line have been declining almost constantly since the early 90s (Table 2.4.). The various household types have to live on incomes that vary from 28 percent of the poverty line for single employables to 53 percent for a couple with two children.

| <b>Table 2.4. Manitoba Welfare Income As A Percentage Of Poverty Line</b> |                              |                                   |                                    |                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
|                                                                           | <b>Single<br/>Employable</b> | <b>Person With<br/>Disability</b> | <b>Single Parent<br/>One Child</b> | <b>Couple<br/>Two Children</b> |
| 1986                                                                      | 43                           | -                                 | 56                                 | 60                             |
| 1989                                                                      | 40                           | 43                                | 50                                 | 60                             |
| 1990                                                                      | 46                           | 49                                | 54                                 | 65                             |
| 1991                                                                      | 46                           | 49                                | 55                                 | 67                             |
| 1992                                                                      | 43                           | 55                                | 60                                 | 67                             |
| 1993                                                                      | 43                           | 50                                | 55                                 | 62                             |
| 1994                                                                      | 40                           | 49                                | 55                                 | 63                             |
| 1995                                                                      | 39                           | 48                                | 54                                 | 61                             |
| 1996                                                                      | 36                           | 48                                | 53                                 | 56                             |
| 1997                                                                      | 32                           | 47                                | 52                                 | 52                             |
| 1998                                                                      | 31                           | 46                                | 51                                 | 51                             |
| 1999                                                                      | 31                           | 46                                | 50                                 | 50                             |
| 2000                                                                      | 30                           | 45                                | 50                                 | 50                             |
| 2001                                                                      | 29                           | 44                                | 52                                 | 50                             |
| 2002                                                                      | 29                           | 43                                | 53                                 | 50                             |
| 2003                                                                      | 28                           | 42                                | 52                                 | 51                             |
| 2004                                                                      | 28                           | 42                                | 52                                 | 53                             |
| 2005                                                                      | 28                           | 41                                | 51                                 | 53                             |
| % Change peak to<br>2005                                                  | -39                          | -25                               | -15                                | -21                            |

Source: National Council of Welfare, 2006b

- the gap between welfare incomes and the poverty line varies from approximately \$12,000 dollars for the disabled and single parents to almost \$15,000 for a single employable and to above \$18,000 for a couple with two children (Table 2.5).
- welfare incomes range from 21 to 34 percent of the average income of all households in each household group.

Increases in social assistance rates have not kept pace with the cost of living - in many jurisdictions rates have been reduced and eligibility requirements have become more restrictive. For example, in Manitoba there has been (Carter 1998, National Council of Welfare 2005):

- a 10% rate reduction overall in social assistance payments in 93/94;
- rates for employable singles and couples without children were cut a further 10% on May 1, 1996;
- a reduction of 2% made to the overall budget for single parent families on May 1, 1996;
- in 1994 the allowances for eye care, dental, and prescription drugs were reduced;
- shelter component has been frozen for more than a decade;
- in May 1994 the special needs category for social assistance recipients was eliminated: there used to be an automatic minimum of \$150 per year to help in the purchase of items such as furniture and winter clothes;

- in March 1996 social assistance clients who receive full welfare benefits were made ineligible for the provincial property and the cost of living tax credits (National Anti-Poverty Organization 1997); and,
- in July 1998, the Government of Canada increased the Canada Child Tax Benefit for low-income families by adding the new National Child Benefit Supplement. Spending on child benefits has increased significantly since 1998, but the increases have been offset by freezes and cuts in provincial and territorial benefits.

|                                                      | <b>Single<br/>Employable</b> | <b>Person with<br/>Disability</b> | <b>Single Parent<br/>One Child</b> | <b>Couple Two<br/>Children</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Welfare Income (\$) <sup>1)</sup>                    | 5,818                        | 8,601                             | 13,282                             | 20,357                         |
| Est. Avg. Income (\$)                                | 28,207                       | 28,207                            | 38,938                             | 80,534                         |
| Welfare as % of Avg.                                 | 21                           | 30                                | 34                                 | 25                             |
| Est. Median Income (\$)                              | 22,382                       | 22,382                            | 31,230                             | 79,116                         |
| Welfare as % of Median                               | 26                           | 38                                | 43                                 | 26                             |
| Peak Year                                            | 1992                         | 1992                              | 1992                               | 1992                           |
| Peak Amount (\$)                                     | 9,036                        | 11,416                            | 15,630                             | 25,912                         |
| 2005 Amount (\$)                                     | 5,818                        | 8,601                             | 13,282                             | 20,357                         |
| Change Peak to 2005                                  |                              |                                   |                                    |                                |
| Dollar Amount                                        | -3,218                       | -2,815                            | -2,348                             | -5,555                         |
| % change to 2005                                     | -35.6                        | -24.7                             | -15.0                              | -21.4                          |
| Poverty Line (\$)                                    | 20,778                       | 20,778                            | 25,867                             | 38,610                         |
| Poverty Gap (\$)                                     | -14,960                      | -12,177                           | -12,585                            | -18,253                        |
| Welfare Income as % of Poverty Line                  | 28                           | 41                                | 51                                 | 53                             |
| Notes: <sup>1)</sup> includes the federal GST credit |                              |                                   |                                    |                                |

Source: National Council of Welfare, 2006b

These few facts plus the other information in the tables illustrate the degree of poverty and marginalization that people who depend on welfare face. This helps explain why some people have to panhandle to cover living costs.

This marginalization and associated poverty drive more people on to the street and into circumstances where panhandling may be their only option. However, there are many other factors that play a role in the increase in panhandling that are not as closely connected to economic restructuring:

- **deinstitutionalization of patients from mental institutions**. The move to return many mentally challenged individuals from the institutional to a community setting over the past couple of decades has been a laudable policy. However, this policy shift has not always been accompanied by the provision of the necessary services and affordable housing in the community. Without these services, people have fallen through the mental health system cracks and ended up on the streets (Halifax Regional Municipality 2004, Eberle et al. 2001, Bentley 1995).
- **low skills and education levels also are a factor**. Compared to many metropolitan areas, a very high percentage of Winnipeg's population (20.5%) is without a high school diploma: Quebec is 10.0%, Ottawa 12%, Toronto 14% for example. In Winnipeg's inner

city almost a quarter of the population over the age of twenty does not have a high school diploma and more than 12% have an education of grade nine or less, almost double the proportions in other parts of the CMA (Carter, Polevychok and Sargent 2003).

- **discrimination in the workplace and the housing market** also plays a role, particularly for Aboriginals who find access to employment difficult (Ark Research Associates 1996, Beavis 1995, Beavis et al. 1997).

A recent Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) study explored the nature and extent of housing discrimination towards Aboriginal people living in Winnipeg and Thompson (Corrado Research and Evaluation Associates Inc. 2003). The study found that in Winnipeg approximately a third of those surveyed were discriminated against in the housing market because of either their skin color, primary source of income, ethnicity, culture, or religion. In both Winnipeg and Thompson, respondents felt that their current landlords were exhibiting a range of discriminatory practices. In the past five years the following outcomes of discrimination were experienced by the Winnipeg respondents based on being Aboriginal:

- More than a quarter believed they had been denied tenancy unfairly;
- Almost a quarter felt that they had received unequal or a lack of maintenance services;
- Approximately 40% believed that they had been given fewer choices among available vacancies, locations or neighbourhoods;
- 39% believed they had been forced to pay higher rent and 12% reported having to pay a higher proportion of their rent as a damage deposit; and
- Almost one third believed that they had been forced to move more frequently.

Respondents felt that the level of current housing discrimination was quite high (Winnipeg 42%; Thompson 51%). Nearly half of all respondents felt they had been provided with a low quality of assistance in housing matters. Approximately 43% of the respondents believed that racial discrimination had restricted their housing options.

- **disadvantages faced by Aboriginal people.** The plight of the Aboriginal population is particularly relevant to the issue of panhandling. For Aboriginal people, rates of high school graduation and attendance at post-secondary schools are well below those of the rest of Canada. In 2001, among non-Aboriginal Canadians 69 percent had graduated from high school (Statistics Canada 2001). Among the analogous Aboriginal-identity population, 52 percent graduated from high school, representing a gap of 17 percentage points. Only 8 percent of the 25-34 age group of Aboriginal people had completed a university degree compared to 28 percent of all Canadians. Unemployment rates among Aboriginals are approximately three times higher than the Winnipeg average<sup>2</sup>. The First Nations/Métis/Inuit Mobility Study, which conducted 1350 interviews with persons who had recently moved to Winnipeg, reported that over 50% of respondents were unemployed (Institute of Urban Studies 2004).

According to the 2001 Census, Aboriginal households reported an average of \$49,123 in before-tax income, 19.9 percent less than non-Aboriginal households (\$61,311). The First

---

<sup>2</sup> 2003 Environmental Scan & Winnipeg Census Data. United Ways of Winnipeg.  
<http://www.unitedwaywinnipeg.mb.ca/pdf/environmental-scan-2k3.pdf>

Nations/Métis/Inuit Mobility Study indicates that 75 percent of the single parent families in the study group had an annual family income under \$15,000 (Institute of Urban Studies 2004).

Aboriginal lone parent families are overrepresented in inner city Winnipeg. The proportion of single parents in the inner city is 18%, compared to 7.6% for the city as a whole, and 5.3% for the non-inner city. In some neighbourhoods in the inner city, the unemployment rates for Aboriginal single parent households are considerably higher than for non-Aboriginal single parents. For instance, in Lord Selkirk Park the unemployment rate for Aboriginal single parents is six times the level for non-Aboriginal. In Centennial, St. Matthews and Roslyn it is more than 5 times higher. For the city of Winnipeg as a whole, the unemployment rate for non-Aboriginal single parents is almost 3 times lower than for Aboriginal lone parents.

The Aboriginal population, particularly renters, represents one of the most poorly housed segments of Canadian society due to high in-migration, residential mobility and poverty rates. In 2001 one-quarter of Aboriginal households living in metropolitan areas were in *core housing need*<sup>3</sup>, compared to 17% of all urban households (Statistics Canada 2001). Aboriginal households are also much more likely than non-Aboriginal households to live in housing that falls below adequacy and suitability standards. In 2001, 6% of Aboriginal households lived in inadequate homes (dwellings that required major repairs and were in core housing need), compared to just 2% of non-Aboriginal households (CMHC 2005). The limited supply of affordable housing means that many Aboriginal people with low incomes live in temporary housing with family or friends, which often results in frequent moves from one housing situation to another. Such a transient lifestyle often places Aboriginal people at a higher risk of homelessness. The high residential mobility rate of the Aboriginal population presents additional challenges to obtaining and maintaining continuous education, employment and health services.

The housing situation for Aboriginal households in Winnipeg is amongst the most difficult for Aboriginals in any Canadian urban centre (Carter 1998):

- Just 22.6 percent of Aboriginal households are homeowners in Winnipeg. Only Saskatoon Aboriginals have a lower rate of homeownership (22.1%).
- Approximately 29% of Aboriginal households in Winnipeg live in housing built prior to 1946 - about double the proportion in most other Canadian urban centres.
- 60% of Aboriginal households in Winnipeg have one or more housing problems. Their housing is crowded, needs major repairs or they spend 30% or more of their income on shelter (they have affordability problems).
- 18% of the respondents surveyed in Winnipeg reported overcrowding (Corrado Research and Evaluation Associates Inc. 2003).
- In the inner city, approximately 70% of all Aboriginal households and 80% of Aboriginal single parent households have housing affordability problems (City of Winnipeg, 1997).

---

<sup>3</sup> According to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, households are in core housing need if they cannot find somewhere to live that is in reasonably good condition and is big enough for their household without spending more than 30% of their income. Households who choose to spend more than 30% of their income on housing are not considered to be in core housing need, nor are residents of social housing where rents are geared to income. Since they don't have a home to pay too much for, the homeless are likewise not included in the count of core need households.

Only in Saskatoon and Regina do Aboriginal households experience a similar level of housing difficulties. Given the poverty and housing related circumstances presented, it is not surprising that many of the panhandlers on the streets are Aboriginal.

- **substance abuse (alcohol and drugs) play a role.** Substance abuse and addiction can cause serious health problems - brain and nerve damage and fetal alcohol syndrome make it more difficult for sufferers to obtain an adequate education or access steady employment. This leaves many people panhandling on the street to support their addictions or because their health - as a result of their addictions - prevents them from securing meaningful employment (Hwang 2001, Bray and Olson 1989).
- **domestic and sexual abuse and family instability also lead to situations where people end up on the street.** Women and children flee abuse; teenagers flee broken homes and abusive situations. The literature refers to the very high percentage of Aboriginal women who suffer abuse in the home: Aboriginal women in Canada are three times more likely to have experienced spousal violence than non-Aboriginal women (Statistics Canada 1999). This forces the women to either tolerate the violence and remain with their abusers or flee to friends, relatives, shelters or, failing the availability of any these options, the streets (Statistics Canada 2004, Ontario Native Women's Association 1989, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1993, LaRocque 1993).
- **panhandling for the thrill of it.** It must also be acknowledged that some people end up on the street panhandling for a "thrill" or a "lark" (Carter 1998, Collins and Blomley 2003). They "choose the lifestyle" and are simply content to wander the streets panhandling for an existence and free of responsibility. However, these people are a) few in number; b) usually short term panhandlers before returning home to a more "mainstream" lifestyle; and, c) rarely, if ever, aggressive panhandlers.

The discussion above illustrates that there are many different reasons contributing directly or indirectly to reliance on panhandling - abusive home and family situations, substance abuse, mental illness, lack of affordable housing options, and discrimination, just to name a few. Welfare cutbacks and benefit reductions have contributed to escalating poverty, socioeconomic marginalization and homelessness in the past, as has the deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill. Current social assistance rates are not being increased to keep up with increasing costs of living. Some people panhandle for one of these reasons, others because of multiple issues. These factors may drive many people to panhandle and although most may be passive, gentle panhandlers, others may become more threatening in their desperation or frustration.

## 2.5 Methods of Panhandling

Many of the circumstances outlined in the previous section are part of the larger problem of urban decay and inner city decline. The nature of urban decline today is much broader than deteriorating housing and physical infrastructure. Urban decay encompasses a number of trends that are related to the growth in the number of street people and the associated panhandling, including growth in a range of social problems driven by poverty; a decline in income equality and a growing gap between the rich and the poor; the flight of more wealthy residents who can afford to re-locate to suburban areas or commuter communities; a growing polarization and segregation of the population by income and a range of other social and economic factors - hence a concentration of marginalized people who are more likely to panhandle. Reduced levels of funding from senior levels of government to address the

many problems associated with neighbourhood decline (funding for new affordable social housing has been reduced from past levels, for example) also weakens the position of the marginalized population.

Panhandlers, however, concentrate in the inner city and downtown areas for other reasons. The supports that these people access, sometimes on an irregular basis, are there - the shelters, the food banks, the steam vents, and of course, the highest volume of potential donors. Panhandling, considered by many to be anti-social behaviour, is also less tolerated in a more suburban residential community (Carter 1998). Downtowns do not always have the same cohesive neighbourhood atmosphere common in more suburbanized, residential areas. The downtown area (particularly commercial area) belongs to everyone, yet no one. It offers anonymity as well. In addition, the means of planning and zoning, urban design and landscape techniques in suburbs have tended to exclude the diversity of the street, promising their residents an exclusive, secure, homogenous living space. Downtowns seem to be the only urban space in North American cities where diversity of the physical and social environment still exists.

The literature illustrates that usually panhandlers ask for money in a passive, non-threatening manner, making a request or holding out a cup with coins. Soliciting can include using the spoken, written, or printed word, gestures, signs, or other means. Most studies conclude that intentionally aggressive panhandling is rare, largely because panhandlers realize that using aggression is not an effective strategy, and is more likely to get them arrested or draw police attention to them (Scott 2002, Schafer 1998, Carter 1998). However, over recent years increasingly belligerent panhandling has become a growing concern to residents and business communities in cities across North America.

Aggressive panhandling can involve making loud, sometimes repeated demands; persistently following the pedestrian down the street after a request has been denied; using violent or threatening gestures toward a person solicited; or intentionally blocking free passage of a pedestrian or vehicle.

Whether panhandling intimidates a passerby is a matter of perception and depends also on the context in which the panhandling occurs. According to Michael Scott (2002), an act of panhandling in one context might not be intimidating, but the same behaviour in a different context might. Some contextual factors that influence how intimidating panhandling is include:

- the time of day (nighttime panhandling is usually more intimidating than daytime panhandling);
- the ease with which people can avoid panhandlers (panhandling is more likely to intimidate motorists stuck in traffic than it is those who can drive away);
- the degree to which people feel especially vulnerable (for example, being panhandled near an ATM makes some people feel more vulnerable to being robbed);
- the presence of other passersby (most people feel safer when there are other people around);
- the physical appearance of the panhandler (panhandlers who appear to be mentally ill, intoxicated or otherwise disoriented are most likely to frighten a passerby because their conduct seems particularly unpredictable);
- the reputation of the panhandler (panhandlers known to be aggressive or erratic are more intimidating than those not known to be so);



- the characteristics and vulnerability of the person being solicited (the elderly tend to be more intimidated by panhandlers because they are less sure of their ability to defend themselves from attack);
- the number of panhandlers (multiple panhandlers approaching as a group are more intimidating than a lone panhandler); and
- the volume of panhandling (the more panhandlers present in an area, the more intimidating and bothersome panhandling will seem).

Specifics of laws or ordinances that seek to restrict “aggressive” panhandling or solicitation are unique to each community. Most commonly, aggressive panhandling laws restrict locations where panhandling is permitted and the way in which individuals may ask for money or goods (NAPO 1999, Collins and Blomley 2003, Scott 2002, Coffey et al. 2004).

## **2.6 Panhandlers in Winnipeg: A Profile Drawn from Winnipeg Studies**

Although there has been no systematic, ongoing or regular survey undertaken of the number and characteristics of panhandlers in Winnipeg, there is a great deal of anecdotal evidence, reports in the press, statements from the police, the business community, and complaints from the public. Although limited in scope and methodology the best information comes from surveys conducted by the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba working in conjunction with the Downtown Biz. These surveys have been part of the "Change For The Better Program" (described in more detail later in this paper).

The surveys and anecdotal evidence provide wide-ranging estimates of the number of panhandlers in the city:

- the Addictions Foundation/Downtown Biz survey of 1992 reports that two workers for the Addictions Foundation interviewed "73 of the reported 200" panhandlers allegedly working in the city;
- the 1993 survey by the Addictions Foundation/Downtown Biz included interviews with 171 panhandlers;
- in 1995 (January 10) the *Winnipeg Free Press*, quoting the police, stated there was a core of 50 panhandlers downtown and about 20 in the Osborne Village area whose ranks swelled in the summer with transients moving through;
- a 1996 survey by the Addictions Foundation/Downtown Biz included interviews with 88 panhandlers; and,
- a 1998 publication in *The Manitoban* reports “over 200 panhandlers and street people beg for money on the streets of Winnipeg. According to many citizens, especially those in the business community, the beggars are a cause of displeasure and disdain and they would like them removed” (Graham 1998).
- Winnipeg Transit Riders' Union's 2005 publication mentions the estimate of the number of Winnipeg's persistently problematic panhandlers at 50.

Although one may argue about the actual number of panhandlers in Winnipeg, there is no doubt that they are present in substantial numbers. The surveys indicate that panhandlers include men and women, youth, children and the elderly. Winnipeg panhandlers, as well as spanning both age and sex, also represent different ethnic groups.

These surveys also provide other important characteristics. The 1993 Addictions Foundation/ Downtown Biz survey revealed (Addictions Foundation of Manitoba 1993):

- 46% were male, 54% were female;
- 70% were between the ages of 25 and 44, 16% over the age of 45, and 14% were 24 years of age or younger;
- 49% were recent arrivals from outside Winnipeg, mainly from Reserves;
- 67% had a home of "some sort," but many lived on the street;
- 57% panhandled on Portage Avenue, many of them near Eaton Place, but Osborne Village was also a common area for panhandlers;
- 62% collected less than \$10.00 a day, only 9% collected more than \$25.00;
- 70% used some of the money for food, 34% used some of the money on housing, and 23% on clothing;
- 68% also used some of the funds to buy alcohol and 4% spent some of the money on "sniff" products;
- 54% were sober when interviewed, 36% had been drinking, and 8% were drunk;
- 34% had been panhandling for more than two years, but 40% were erratic panhandlers; and
- 15% admitted that they had mental health problems.

The 1996 survey also reported a range of characteristics including the following (Addictions Foundation of Manitoba 1996):

- 76% of the panhandlers were male, 24% female;
- 64% were between the ages of 25 and 44, 12% were over 45 years of age, and 12% were 16 years of age or younger;
- 66% collected less than \$10.00 per day;
- 46% were intoxicated when panhandling;
- 25% spent some of the money on housing, 51% spent some of it on food, 17% spent some on clothing, and 50% and 3% spent some on alcohol and "sniff" respectively;
- 90% said they lived in Winnipeg, but 44% said they had no fixed address while 6% stated they lived on the street;

- 12% had been panhandling for two or more years;
- 13% reported mental health problems; and,
- 55% indicated welfare was their major source of income while 43% had no source of income and 89% had never been employed in other than unskilled positions.

The findings of the 1998 Addictions Foundation/Downtown Biz survey indicate that (Kostyk and Ratt 1998):

- 63% were male, 37% were female;
- 44% were between the ages of 25 and 44, 17% over the age of 45, and 39% were 24 years of age or younger;
- 63% had children;
- only 4% graduated high school; 7% had less than grade 7 education; and 89% had grade 7-12 education;
- 93% did not have a job at the time of the survey, but 98% indicated that they would like to work;
- most of the panhandlers indicated that their income is comprised of both panhandling and social assistance (68%);
- 13% relied on panhandling as a single income source;
- 89% used some of the money for food and 54% used some of the money on housing;
- 67% also used some of the funds to buy booze and 76% to buy tobacco; and
- 10% admitted that they had health problems.

The 1993 Addictions Foundation/Downtown Biz survey divided Winnipeg panhandlers into six sub-groups on the basis of types of panhandlers and their behaviour. The sub-groups were:

- Aboriginal
- Sub-Culture Youth
- Middle-Aged
- Prostitutes
- Mental Health Problems
- People in Crisis.

The characteristics of each sub-group are briefly outlined below. The material is quoted directly from the report (Addictions Foundation Manitoba 1993):

## **Aboriginal**

Some Aboriginal people affected by alcohol or drug problems had a tendency to roam the streets in groups of 2, 3 or more, panhandling to support daily cravings. They were more often than not, intoxicated when they were panhandling. During such escapades, the individuals were intimidating to the public and [their actions] could be viewed as bordering on harassment or assault by purposely blocking patrons' paths and grabbing patrons' shoulders. Individuals who were sober, were very shy and polite when requesting spare change from strangers.

## **Sub-Cultural Youth**

These youths can be identified as dressing "fashionably out of fashion"; wearing army boots, torn clothes, pastel coloured hairstyles and jewellery representative of anti-semitism, neo-nazism, and devil worship. However, what is clear is that these were not necessarily representative of their beliefs.

The youth usually worked in groups of two for safety reasons, as well as in shifts in different locations.

The reasons for their presence varied from insufficient funds received from Welfare to claims of sexual/physical abuse by parents and hence no home to reside in. Another common complaint cites the lack of employment opportunities as well as the closure of S.K.Y. (Street Kids and Youth).

Noteworthy, is the ironic affect they had on the public. From one point of view they were seen as looking different hence untrustworthy and possibly violent in nature, yet their approach to the public was somewhat passive.

## **Middle-aged**

The middle-aged represented a small portion of all the panhandlers, yet their presence was consistent. They can be described as victims of labour force changes, i.e.: they had at one time no problem locating well paying manual labour jobs which have presently given way to high-technology manufacturing jobs.

Many middle-aged panhandlers did not have a high school education and were affected by work related injuries of the past. As a result, they did not have the confidence nor the motivation to work towards satisfactory employment.

## **Prostitutes**

Throughout the project, this group of young women were found to be panhandling as a front against open prostitution. Many of these women expressed concerns about locating counselling and getting away from the pimps and drugs, however when informed about which agencies provided the services requested, they failed to show up for appointment.

## **Psychiatric Disorders**

During the summer, contacts were made with panhandlers who were in need of psychiatric assessments and monitoring. Panhandlers afflicted by psychiatric disorders walked along the streets talking aloud and often displaying episodes of anger and frustration. In certain instances, when patrons refused to give, they would become verbally abusive and physically threatening. Most panhandlers in this group did not display any standards of hygiene as they lived off the street.

## **Citizens in Crisis**

At various times in the summer, contacts were made with people who needed assistance on the spur of the moment. Most of these individuals were not panhandlers as such, but were clearly in a crisis situation. These crises ranged from physically abusive relationships to requests on how to go about finding housing.

## **Panhandlers Have Histories**

Families begging on the streets in Winnipeg, however, are a rare (perhaps never) occurrence, although some young women are single mothers and many of the men are fathers. The fact that 43% of the panhandlers interviewed in the 1996 survey had children is clear evidence of this. Most are passive, quiet beggars but some are aggressive to the point of intimidating people. These people have names, they have histories and once one gets to know them, these histories are full of problems. Their problems are easy to discuss but far harder to solve. They are not the faceless, nameless poor many people feel they are.

Often they add a very human, even humorous touch to their panhandling. A middle aged man, panhandling in Toronto, on the corner of Yonge and St. Clair carried a sign that read "Will hit Claude Lemieux from behind for food" drawing on an incident between Claude Lemieux of the Colorado Avalanche and a member of the Toronto Maple Leafs during a recent thrashing of the Maple Leafs by the Avalanche.

The characteristics collected in the surveys of Winnipeg panhandlers vary slightly from year to year but there is a commonality. The vast majority are "marginalized" members of society. Poverty, lack of skills and education, mental and physical health problems, physical or sexual abuse are common problems. These are not the sort of problems that will be solved by criminalizing panhandling.

## **2.7 Perceptions of Different Groups Regarding Panhandling**

There is a diversity of opinions regarding the extent of the panhandling problem and the most appropriate way to address it. Irrespective of whether panhandlers pose a direct threat to the safety of passersby, the general perception remains that panhandling does not contribute to the success of any area. Because of many social ills, one of which is begging, many view downtown as unsafe or otherwise undesirable as a place to live. Government officials and business owners worry that tourists, conventioners, and shoppers will stay away from parts of town where requests for donations are numerous. Many view aggressive behaviour as a direct threat to community life and the economic vitality of an area, as it generally makes people feel unsafe. If people feel threatened in a particular place they are likely to avoid the area in the future, resulting in a decline in business and community

life, as well as making the area ripe for more serious crime<sup>4</sup>. Perceptions and concerns of urban residents and businesses associated with panhandling are outlined below.

### **Perception of city residents**

A publication *Do You Give To Panhandlers? Winnipegger's Reaction to Panhandling* reports on a citywide survey that was conducted in February-March 2002 among 600 Winnipeg residents (The Probe Team 2002). When asked how citizens would most likely react to an appeal for money from a panhandler in downtown Winnipeg, only 20% of city adults indicated that they would offer a financial donation. Sixteen percent, however, indicated that they would consider giving money depending upon specific circumstances.

Key factors influencing the prospective donors include the appearance of the individual asking for money, an assessment of panhandler's sincerity and need, and whether or not the panhandler appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Some hesitant donors also conceded that their charity was dependent upon their own mood at the moment of the encounter and whether or not they had a suitable denomination of money on hand at the time. The incidence of giving to panhandlers did not depend on survey population subgroups or respondents' area of residence.

The Winnipeg Area Study surveyed one thousand Winnipeg residents in 1999, when the most restrictive panhandling by-law (by-law 6555/95) was in place (Linden 2000). Some of the findings are presented below:

Three quarters of respondents had been approached by a panhandler in Winnipeg; 68% of them had been approached in the last year; and most of these had been approached more than once.

Of those who had been solicited:

- 72% were approached in the afternoon, 12% in the morning, and 16% after sunset;
- 38% were solicited in or near business or store, 33% on the street, 13% at a bus stop, or other location (parking lot 3%, church 3%, mall 2%, bus shelter 2%, public park, ATM, and skywalk - 1% each); and
- 21% were approached in a persistent fashion.

About 20% of those surveyed claimed they have avoided parts of the city because of panhandlers. Respondents identified downtown as the location most often avoided because of panhandling, followed by Osborne Village (ibid.).

In terms of their support for restrictions on panhandling, the vast majority of Winnipeggers surveyed agreed with the prohibition of panhandling at bank machines (93%), bus shelters (85%), bus stops (83%), and businesses and stores (76%). 42% of respondents suggested additional locations where it should be prohibited. Being approached in a manner that violated the by-law seemed to be more

---

<sup>4</sup> The Center for the Community Interest. "Backgrounder" #1: Aggressive Panhandling.  
<http://www.communityinterest.org/backgrounders/panhandling.htm>

likely to favour restrictions. People over 65 years of age, women, and people with less than high school education were more likely to support restrictions. However, there were no differences by reported income. One can conclude that the most vulnerable segment of Winnipeg's population most likely to feel threatened by panhandling and want it restricted are seniors, women, and those with low education (ibid.).

Linden (2000) concludes that results of the Winnipeg Area Study are comparable to those of a study by the Downtown BIZ that interviewed 1,000 Winnipeggers in 6 downtown locations in September 1999. The BIZ study found:

- Nearly all of those interviewed stated they had been approached by a panhandler in the past year;
- the contacts were made more frequently in the afternoon (91%) than in the morning (59%) or after sunset (49%);
- the most common places for being approached by a panhandler were sidewalks, bus stops, businesses or stores, and ATMs; and
- almost 70% supported the restriction of panhandling.

### **Perception of business owners**

Many business owners say beggars have a harmful impact on the local economy and are a nuisance to people who live, work or visit downtown. They see panhandlers as a visible sign of a failing downtown and believe that the presence of panhandlers on the streets costs them customers (Collins and Blomley 2003, Schafer 1998). Not surprisingly businesses, especially in the inner city, are among the strongest supporters of anti-panhandling legislation.

In a survey of the Downtown Biz members in Winnipeg, respondents indicated that the presence of derelict buildings and panhandlers were the two most important issues negatively affecting downtown businesses (The Innovators Ltd. 2002). On a scale of 1 (no impact) to 7 (large impact) businesses rated derelict buildings at 6.2 and Panhandlers at 6.1. Other concerns included lack of visible policing, street kids and youth, media focusing on downtown crime, and prostitution. Some of the survey findings are presented below (ibid.):

- Most of the Downtown BIZ members (84%) think that panhandling is a problem in downtown Winnipeg;
- those in retail sales (92%) are the most likely to agree that panhandling is a problem;
- almost all respondents (96%) were approached by a panhandler at least once in the last year. To quote one member "Many, many times – like everyday!"
- nearly one in five members claim that on occasion they give money to panhandlers.

Conversely most (81%) don't give money to panhandlers;

- nearly three quarters think panhandling should be banned, while only 16% said that panhandling should be allowed; 22% agree that panhandling should be allowed as long as it is in a non-aggressive manner; and
- most members (83%) think there should be better ways to get programs to panhandlers who need them. Also, two-thirds think the public need to be educated about how to deal with panhandlers.

Very similar results are reported in a survey of the Downtown business community in Vancouver (City of Vancouver 1998) and a survey commissioned by the Calgary Downtown Association (Cameron Strategy Inc. 2003). The Vancouver survey indicated that 73% of Business Improvement Association members felt that the panhandling is a problem in the downtown area and it had worsened over the past few years. All Business Revitalization Zones in Calgary are also experiencing an increase in panhandling. In the Downtown area, for example, 86% of respondents felt that panhandling has increased significantly over the past year. The Calgary survey also revealed that about three quarters of respondents had encountered people on the street asking for money in the past year, and of these, 40% gave money. Those giving money to people on the street tend to be male, younger to middle aged and university educated. "Givers" were most likely to offer money 1 time in an average month. Most gave between \$1 and \$3 (\$2.15 on average).

There is growing resentment among Calgarians and visitors alike towards panhandlers and what is perceived to be their increasingly intimidating behaviour:

Business owners say it impacts them negatively and people are feeling 'trapped' while waiting in line, dining on patios or standing at intersections. Even churchgoers are being targeted by slick panhandlers. In one neighbourhood, panhandlers target people as they leave services by reminding them that the Bible teaches to give to others less fortunate, therefore, the churchgoers should fill up the panhandlers outstretched hands and ball caps<sup>5</sup>.

To conclude, panhandling generates various reactions from people: some see it as a sign of poverty and lack of services including affordable housing for marginalized groups. Others view it as having a negative effect on businesses. Some perceive panhandling to be the outcome of alcohol and substance abuse; the result of family breakdown; or as the actions of those unable or unwilling to sustain themselves by other activities. Those who see panhandling as a symptom of systemic problems in society feel the "problem" has to be resolved by services such as adequate, affordable housing, substance and alcohol rehabilitation programs, skills training and poverty alleviation initiatives. Those concerned about the real or perceived negative effects on business, although they would not argue against the need for such programs, want to get "the problem" off the streets and away from their establishments. Their assumption is that panhandlers on the street are negatively perceived and perhaps even frighten customers.

---

<sup>5</sup>Over \$10 Million Might be in the Hands of Calgary Panhandlers – Is the Money in the Right Hands? Media Release. [www.downtowncalgary.com](http://www.downtowncalgary.com) November 06, 2003.



These concerns of the business community and the public have prompted many communities to pass by-laws to regulate and control panhandling. Further discussion will focus on the effectiveness of policing and legislation as a solution and review other approaches that may be more effective in addressing panhandling and the problems it is reputed to create.

## **2.8 Conclusion and Implications for the By-Law**

This literature review provides valuable insights into who panhandles and why they are on the streets of North American cities. The studies reviewed document the increasing diversity of the panhandling population that now includes women, men, children; different racial and ethnic groups; the unemployed, the elderly, mothers and their children; children who are runaways; the mentally ill, alcoholics, and drug users. This increase in diversity has been accompanied by the growth in the number of panhandlers.

People seldom engage in begging through choice, but are driven to it by poverty, lack of opportunity, discrimination, poor health and mental disability. The fundamental cause of panhandling is poverty. Among other factors that contribute to panhandling the literature identifies:

- Economic restructuring and associated labour market changes, such as the decline of manufacturing leading to fewer jobs for low-skilled workers and inadequate wages for the “working poor”;
- Housing affordability problems and lack of affordable housing supply;
- Inadequacy of ample and coordinated services for individuals and families experiencing poverty;
- Welfare retrenchment and benefit reductions have contributed to escalating poverty;
- Increased in-migration to urban areas of Aboriginal people who experience higher rates of poverty, unemployment and low educational attainment;
- Domestic violence and history of physical and sexual abuse;
- Drug and alcohol problems; and
- Deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill.

The systemic problems that generate the circumstances causing people to panhandle are complex – far too complex to solve by legislation alone.

### **3.0 A Review of Recent Policy and Legislation to Control, Restrict or Eliminate Panhandling**

#### **3.1 Current and Recent By-Laws in the City of Winnipeg**

The concerns of the business community and the public prompted Winnipeg City Council to pass a by-law to regulate and control panhandling as of January 26th, 1995 (By-Law No. 6555/95). It included place, manner, and time-of-day restrictions on panhandling. The 1995 By-Law was challenged by an anti-poverty group, which argued that the by-law infringed on charter rights.

The City replaced the 1995 By-Law with the current Obstructive Solicitation By-Law No. 7700/2000, Consolidation Update 2005. The 2000 By-Law removed the distance and the time-of-day restrictions and prohibited solicitation in an obstructive manner. The 2005 amendment added to the list of sensitive services where solicitation of a “captive audience” should not occur. The By-Law targets panhandlers who follow someone who has refused to give money, block a passerby's way or threatens or insult people. It provides enforcement officials with a tool to remove panhandlers from areas around bus stops, bank machines, pay phones, outdoor patios and areas within the indoor walkway systems downtown.

A June 29, 2006 CBC report indicated that since the By-Law was put into effect, more than 60 tickets have been issued in the city's downtown and Exchange District for contravention of the By-Law, while 30 warnings were issued in the Osborne Village area alone. In related incidents, offence notices were issued for 80 liquor-related offences, and over 100 charges made under the Intoxicated Persons Detention Act<sup>6</sup>.

The question remains, however, whether the By-Law is accomplishing what it was intended to do. For instance, little evidence is currently available on whether the number of threatening or obstructive panhandling incidents has decreased. There is no context for the 60 tickets that have been issued under the By-Law. Were 20 panhandlers ticketed three times each, or 10 panhandlers ticketed six times each, or 60 panhandlers ticketed once each? Also, there is no mention of what has happened to those who have been ticketed. How many have actually gone to court? What fines, if any, have the judges charged, and how many have actually paid?

The following review of recent policy and legislation to control, restrict or eliminate panhandling helps answer the question: is it more worthwhile to develop a framework to deal with the social components related to health, housing, employment and substance abuse issues faced by panhandlers? Or, is legislation restricting or eliminating panhandling a more effective approach?

---

<sup>6</sup>“Mayor deems anti-begging by-law a success” CBC News. June 29, 2006.  
<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/manitoba/story/2006/06/29/panhandling-by-law.html?ref=rss>

### 3.2 Policy Responses to Panhandling

The negative reaction to panhandling by a substantial proportion of the public has prompted cities to either control and/or eliminate panhandling through legislation and introduce program approaches that assist panhandlers to “get off the street”. Most researchers and practitioners agree that the enforcement of laws prohibiting panhandling does not solve the problem (Carter 1998, Scott 2002a, Collins and Blomley 2003, Schafer 1998, NAPO 1999). Often legislation approaches have been challenged on the basis that they only move - as opposed to solve - the problem and limit or violate the rights of panhandlers trying to sustain themselves. Public education, adequate social programs and services for panhandlers, and informal social control are more effective and appropriate responses. Several cities, including Winnipeg, Ottawa and Vancouver, employ both approaches. They use legal measures to tackle the issue directly but also offer a variety of social programs to reduce the extent of panhandling.

### 3.3 Legislative Approaches to Panhandling

Legislation to control panhandling goes back several centuries. In England, vagrancy laws were enacted as early as 1349 (Carter 1998). Early English anti-begging laws were usually components of larger statutes intended to control labour mobility and wages. Punishment for begging varied over the centuries and included resettlement, imprisonment, removal, forced labour, branding, whipping, and death (Mitchell 1995). Subsequent laws enacted in England in the 1800s became the basis for early legislation in Canada, the United States and Australia. Since that point in history, there have been cyclical attempts to control the homeless, the beggars, and the panhandlers through both harsh and more humane applications of the law.

Some argue that while the ordinances cannot prohibit panhandling completely as panhandlers are considered to have some constitutional protection, they can identify specific actions (e.g., gesturing, using abusive language, violating passersby’s personal space, and begging while intoxicated) and locations (near ATM machines, vehicle solicitation, in parking lots or subways) that make the activity illegal, with fines and imprisonment among the more common penalties (Scott 2002a, Collins and Blomley 2003, Conner 2000, Lee and Farrell 2003, Smith 2005).

Panhandling by-laws have often been challenged on grounds that include:

- The City does not have the delegated authority to enact the provision;
- The provision is “criminal ” in nature, and therefore only the federal government could enact it; and
- It restricts rights to equal treatment and to free speech (in the US) or violates equality provisions and free expression rights under the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (in Canada).

Commonly cities restrict soliciting in an aggressive manner in any public place. Some cities have turned their attention to restricting panhandling specifically in the downtown areas of their cities. For instance, Seattle, Washington, completely banned panhandling in its business district (The National Coalition for the Homeless 2004). Although Canadian municipalities’ anti-panhandling by-laws are generally citywide in application, they usually address particular concerns about begging within the public spaces of the downtown (Collins and Blomley 2003). Enforcement of anti-panhandling laws

varies widely among cities and can be substantial. At the same time many cities make no formal attempt to regulate panhandlers.

### 3.4 American Legislation

American cities have been the most aggressive, going so far as to criminalize behaviours such as begging, lying on sidewalks, or sleeping in public places. Some have conducted police sweeps that physically remove homeless persons, who are most likely to panhandle, from the city core altogether. These initiatives can be traced to ideas concerning policing and social order that emerged in the United States, but have become quite influential within Canada. ‘Zero-tolerance policing’ originates from ‘broken windows’ theory and presumes that one can prevent serious crime by proactively preventing anti-social behaviour and minor offences (Kelling and Coles 1996). While this involves dealing with graffiti and littering, it also appears that it is the ‘anti-social’ behaviour of the urban poor and homeless that is targeted.

Over one-third of the 504 largest cities in the United States had panhandling control ordinances as of mid-1996 (Conner 2000). A growing number of jurisdictions have enacted aggressive-panhandling laws within the past 10 years. A report *A Dream Denied: The Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities* (NCH and NLCHP 2006) documents the results of a survey of laws that criminalize homelessness in 224 cities around the US, as well as a survey of lawsuits from various jurisdictions in which those measures have been challenged. The study showed that the criminalization measures in City ordinances have increased. Of the cities surveyed 43% prohibit begging in specific public places; 45% prohibit aggressive panhandling and 21% have citywide prohibitions on begging. Compared to NCH and NLCHP’s 2002 joint report that surveyed 67 cities (NCH and NLCHP 2002), this study found that there was a 12% increase in laws prohibiting begging in certain public places and an 18% increase in laws that prohibit aggressive panhandling. Cities with panhandling control measured adopted recently include Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Cincinnati, Seattle, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, Long Beach, Philadelphia, Sacramento, Raleigh, New Haven, and Santa Cruz (NCH and NLCHP 2006).

- In 2005 Atlanta passed a comprehensive ban on panhandling in the “tourist triangle” and anywhere in the city after sunset; and within 15 feet of an ATM, bus stop, taxi stand, pay phone, public toilet, or train station in all parts of the city. Upon conviction for a third offence of the ordinance, a violator can be fined up to \$1000 or imprisoned for up to 30 days.
- Cleveland also passed an anti-panhandling law in 2005 that, among other things, prohibits panhandling within 20 feet of an ATM, bus stop, or sidewalk café. The law on “aggressive solicitation” also prohibits panhandling within 10 feet of an entrance to a restaurant or parking lot.
- Pittsburgh amended its panhandling ordinance in 2005, which expands on the existing panhandling law by restricting solicitation for charity to daylight hours. The bill also bans panhandling within 25 feet of an outdoor eating establishment, 25 feet of an admission line, 25 feet of the entrance to a place of religious assembly, within 25 feet of money dispensing areas, and 10 feet of a food vendor or bus stop. The bill also outlaws “aggressive panhandling” and solicitation of money that hinders traffic.

Other measures include the forced removal of homeless persons from selected locations (via police sweeps), their restriction to “safe zones,” and the dispersal of service agencies to prevent panhandlers from congregating in the central business district or similar prime spaces at too high a density (Lee and Farrell 2003).

Another trend among cities trying to regulate panhandling includes requiring panhandlers to obtain a license to panhandle or solicitation permits. Dayton, for example, prohibits persons from panhandling without a “registration” issued by the Chief of Police (NCH and NLCHP 2006). Some cities, including Wilmington, Del., and New Orleans, have at some time required panhandlers to obtain solicitation permits, just as permits are required from street vendors and others who solicit money in public (Scott 2002a). However, little is known about the effectiveness of such permit schemes.

Some jurisdictions have made wide use of community service sentences tailored to the particular offender and offence. For example, officers in St. Louis asked courts to sentence chronic panhandlers to community service, cleaning the streets in the area where they panhandled (Scott 2002a).

### **3.5 Prohibiting Panhandling in Specified Areas**

Interaction with panhandlers generally occurs in a public place or what is considered public space. While public space is not exclusively “publicly owned,” the streets, parks, and plazas of the contemporary city are its most obvious manifestation. Recently there has been an increase in efforts to exclude “undesirables” from certain urban environments or public spaces. Advocates of anti-panhandling legislation contend that streets and subways are for commuting from home to office (not for sleeping or begging) and that parks are for recreation only. Panhandling is seen as a threat to order and stability (Collins and Blomley 2003). Others argue that the “right to the city,” should remain a core social value, and that the constriction of public space is an attack on civil liberties of those disadvantaged (Mitchell 2003). According to NAPO place restrictions discriminate against people who are poor as it is only the poor who are being limited from parts of a city that are supposed to be open to full public access (National Anti-Poverty Organization 1999). NAPO argues that in a free and democratic society, public spaces should be accessible to all citizens.

In the US, many United States Supreme Court and state court decisions have recognized solicitation rights for organizations. However, individual beggars’ rights to seek contributions remain unclear (Mabry 1994). Generally it is a challenge to identify which specific public location can be restricted and which cannot, as the courts have been unable to agree not only on whether begging is speech or conduct, but also whether it is protected (ibid.).

In a class-based society, locational conflict can be understood to be conflict over the legitimacy of various uses of space, and thus of various strategies for asserting rights, by those who have been disenfranchised by the workings of property or other “objective” social processes by which specific activities are assigned a location.

Mitchell 2003, p.81.

A study entitled *Panhandling* by Michael Scott (2002a) describes the most common forms of begging, reviews contributing factors and provides possible responses to address the problem. According to the report, in the United States many courts have been continually reviewing laws that restrict panhandling.

### 3.6 Public Space: What is the Definition?

“Public space” is commonly defined as a space where a governmental entity has title, to which the public has access, including but not limited to any street, highway, parking lot, plaza, transportation facility, school, place of amusement, park, or playground (The Center for the Community Interest website). In the United States the debate evolving around constitutional rights of speech and conduct in public space has distinguished three types of public space: traditional public forum, designated public forum and non-public forum. These are spaces where panhandlers are most likely to engage in begging, and the constitutionality of place restrictions for panhandling depends upon the forum beggars select. McAndrews (2000) and Mabry (1994) summarize forum descriptions used to determine the constitutionality of panhandling place restrictions in the United States as follows:

#### a. Traditional Public Forum

- Traditional public forums are places, which have been traditionally devoted to assembly and debate and include public streets, city roadways and parks, public sidewalks, bandshells in public parks, state capitol grounds and public bus terminals. In traditional public fora, people can normally control whether they listen to what is happening around them. However, restrictions may be permissible when the public forum holds a captive audience (in which case the confines of the area prevent escape from the unwanted speech).

#### b. Designated (Limited) Public Forum

- A designated public forum is public property, such as municipal auditoriums and university meeting rooms open to students, which the government opens to part or all of the public for use as a place for expressive activity.

#### c. Non-Public Forum

- Property that is neither traditional nor designated for expressive activity. Non-public forum includes walkways to post office buildings, sidewalks and streets on military reservations, public buses, subway and street cars, jails and prisons, publicly owned airport terminals, government office buildings, race tracks and sports stadiums, schools, hospitals, public libraries, apartment hallways, and City council chambers.

#### d. Quasi-Public Forum

- The term quasi-public forum is reserved for private business places.

Stevens (2003) provides examples of different public forums and measures that can be undertaken by governments/ private owners to regulate panhandling (Table 3.1):

| <b>Table 3.1. Public Forums</b> |                                                     |                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Forum</b>                    | <b>Example</b>                                      | <b>Standards for Regulating Access</b>                                                               |
| Non-Public                      | Office buildings, military bases, prisons, airports | Government must be (1) neutral as to viewpoint, (2) reasonable in light of purpose facility serves   |
| Traditional Public              | Streets, sidewalks, parks                           | Government must have compelling reason to restrict                                                   |
| Public By Designation           | Municipal auditoriums, meeting halls                | Government must have substantial interest to restrict                                                |
| Quasi-Public                    | Shopping centers, malls, stores                     | Private owners have authority to regulate as they see fit; signed permission usually by owner to use |

Source: Adapted from Stevens 2003.

Shopping malls are generally considered private rather than public places, giving mall owners and managers greater legal authority to deny access to the premises, but in many jurisdictions, they are considered quasi-public. American courts recognize the quasi-public nature of shopping malls and have extended certain constitutional guarantees, especially those relating to free speech and assembly, to those visiting malls (Scott 2002b). The extent to which a mall is considered public or private depends in part on whether there are any public rights-of-way on the mall grounds. Malls with public transportation links, government offices or police substations on the premises are more likely to be deemed quasi-public, thus limiting mall owners' right to exclude certain people.

Skywalks remain popular in some cold-weather cities such as Winnipeg; however, it is not clear to what category of public space skywalks belong. In Cincinnati's 1998 case, the ordinance that made it a crime for a person to sit or lie on the Cincinnati skywalk was found to be unconstitutional (NCH and NLCHP 2006). The Skywalk in Winnipeg is a combination of private and public space (see attached map). Under agreements with building owners and tenants the majority of the Skywalk is considered to be private space under private management (The City of Winnipeg, North Portage Development Corporation). Maintenance and security is provided by the business owners.

Residential neighbourhoods are public spaces where panhandlers have a right to communicate. According to Mabry (1994), persons who are approached on their private property have alternatives to communicating with panhandlers. They may avoid any unwanted contact by posting signs indicating that no solicitation is allowed, asking beggars to leave or closing the door to end the contact with the beggar. Additionally, local municipalities may enforce trespass by-laws.

### **3.7 Canadian Legislation**

Canadian municipalities have not been as prohibitive as American cities: none have prohibited sitting or lying on the sidewalks or sleeping in public places, but some have passed by-laws regulating panhandling, loitering, and gathering in public places. Examples of such legislations cities have passed over the last decade, though not necessarily current, can be drawn from across Canada:

- some municipalities like Vancouver and Kamloops do not permit sitting or lying on a street for the purpose of panhandling;
- Windsor requires a permit to solicit contributions, but only charitable organizations may receive a permit;

- others such as Brandon, Ottawa, Windsor, and Sudbury have by-laws that ban all panhandling.
- Vancouver, Brandon, Hamilton, Sudbury, and Fredericton have by-laws restricting park access.
- Vancouver, Kingston, Oshawa, and Charlottetown have by-laws preventing gathering and loitering.

Under these by-laws persons apprehended for engaging in such activity are liable to be jailed and/or fined - generally in excess of \$50. Often these by-laws are punishing persons who have no money by fining them.

Arguably, laws can address aggressive panhandling through other parts of the Criminal Code of Canada therefore restrictive legislation to control aggressive panhandling is simply not necessary. However, local governments, in response to increasing pressure from many sectors of the community (particularly the business community), to deal with what appears to be a growing problem have introduced additional municipal by-laws that attempt to deal with people on the street. The particular focus of restrictions under these by-laws include control of panhandling in specific places, such as ATMs, shopping malls and subways, liquor stores etc.); time of day restrictions (for example, during the night-time); and manner in which panhandling can occur (Carter 1998, Schafer 1998, NAPO 1999, Collins and Blomley 2003).

In recent years, some jurisdictions have proceeded with legislative measures to restrict obstructive solicitation, notably Ontario and British Columbia. Ontario introduced The Safe Streets Act in 1999 and British Columbia recently enacted The Safe Streets Act in 2004. These pieces of legislation both prohibit solicitation of a "captive audience", such as individuals at automatic teller machines and banks, at pay telephones, taxi stands and bus stops, in public transit vehicles, getting in or out of vehicles, and in parking lots. The law in this area continues to develop:

...in *Federated Anti-Poverty Groups of B.C. v. Vancouver (City)*, in 2001, The British Columbia Supreme Court decided that the City of Vancouver had the authority to enact its By-law No. 8309, which contains provisions prohibiting the solicitation of a captive audience. In *R. v. Banks*, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice upheld the Ontario Safe Streets legislation as constitutional.

The City of Winnipeg 2005.

A summary of panhandling by-laws in selected Canadian cities is presented in Table 3.2.

Although many municipalities have these by-laws in place, many of the municipalities do not enforce them. There appears to be a number of reasons for lack of enforcement (Carter 1998):

- the absence of any significant problems with panhandling;
- the concern that by-laws are not the solution, particularly over the long term;
- the lack of sufficient numbers of law enforcement staff to carry out the by-laws;
- the concern that the by-laws would be successfully challenged in court if they were enforced; and,
- the availability of sections of the Criminal Code to deal with aggressive, threatening, intimidating, or persistent panhandling.



As opposed to charging people under the by-laws, police often enforce loitering and panhandling statutes against the homeless and the beggars by moving them from disputed public areas (Carter 1998). Calls from business owners or the general public to complain about homeless people or people panhandling for money simply lead to the police clearing them from the area - shifting the problem to a less visible and public location - a tactic often used with prostitutes. This does not eliminate the problem, it simply temporarily moves it out of the view of those who are offended or whose businesses are affected.

**Table 3.2. Summary of Municipal Panhandling By-Laws**

| City            | Complete ban | Time of day restriction | Specific area restriction | Aggressive panhandling banned | Obstructive panhandling banned | Specific fine Min./Max. |
|-----------------|--------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Fredericton     |              |                         |                           | X                             |                                | 0/\$70                  |
| Moncton         |              |                         |                           | X                             |                                | 0/\$50                  |
| Quebec City     |              |                         |                           |                               | X                              | 0/\$500                 |
| Ottawa          | X            |                         |                           | X                             |                                | 0/\$5,000               |
| Kingston        |              |                         |                           | X                             |                                |                         |
| Hamilton        |              |                         |                           | X                             | X                              |                         |
| Sudbury         | X            |                         |                           |                               |                                |                         |
| Windsor         | X            |                         |                           |                               |                                | 0/\$1,000               |
| Winnipeg        |              |                         | X                         | X                             | X                              |                         |
| Saskatoon       |              | X                       | X                         | X                             | X                              | 0/\$2,000               |
| Edmonton        |              |                         |                           |                               | X                              |                         |
| Calgary         |              | X                       | X                         | X                             | X                              | 0/\$10,000              |
| New Westminster |              | X                       | X                         | X                             | X                              | 0/\$2,000               |
| Vancouver       |              |                         | X                         | X                             | X                              | 0/\$2,000               |

Source: Collins and Blomley. 2003. p.60

### 3.8 Panhandling By-Laws in Winnipeg

Winnipeg's 1995 Panhandling By-Law was quite extensive as it incorporated place, manner, and time restriction on panhandling, and a severe penalty - a fine of not more than \$1,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, or both. It prohibited panhandling after sunset and within 10 metres of sensitive services. The By-Law also prohibited a person from continuing to ask another person for money, or continuing to follow that person, after a negative response had been made.

The 1995 By-Law was challenged by the National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO) that contended it violated the rights to freedom of expression and equal protection under the law as well as other rights protected by The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In September 2000, court action initiated by the NAPO convinced Winnipeg's City Council to repeal the City's by-law against panhandling (Canadian Housing and Renewal Association 2002).

The City replaced the 1995 By-law with the current Obstructive Solicitation By-Law No. 7700/2000, Consolidation Update 2005. Further to the City's decision to adopt the current By-Law, the National

Anti-Poverty Organization entered into a written agreement with the City that it would not bring a legal challenge to that by-law, provided that the by-law's essential features are not amended by the City in the future (The City of Winnipeg 2005).

The 2000 By-law removed the distance feature and the time of day stipulation and prohibited soliciting in an obstructive manner. However, obstructive solicitation had continued to be a concern coming from Winnipeg's citizens, business representatives, and organizations. The 2005 amendment added to the list of sensitive services where solicitation of a "captive audience" should not occur. The prohibition also applies to areas within the weather-protected walkway system of downtown Winnipeg. A summary of particular restrictions introduced by Winnipeg's panhandling By-laws is presented in Table 3.3. below:

| <b>Table 3.3. Summary of By-Law Restrictions</b> |                 |             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>By-law</b>                                    | <b>Distance</b> | <b>Time</b> | <b>Sensitive Services</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Other</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 1995                                             | X               | X           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the main entrance to a bank, credit union or trust company;</li> <li>- an automatic teller machine;</li> <li>- a public entrance to a hospital;</li> <li>- a bus stop;</li> <li>- a bus shelter;</li> <li>- in a Public Transit bus;</li> <li>- in an elevator or in a pedestrian walkway;</li> <li>- from an occupant of a motor vehicle, which is parked, or stopped at a traffic control signal.</li> </ul>                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regulates panhandling.</li> <li>- Prohibits a person from continuing to ask another person for money, or continuing to follow that person, after a negative response had been made.</li> <li>- Sets penalties</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 2000                                             |                 |             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Regulates obstructive solicitation by prohibiting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to obstruct or impede the convenient passage of pedestrians in a street;</li> <li>- continue to solicit or follow a pedestrian after that pedestrian has made a negative initial response;</li> <li>- verbally threaten a pedestrian; and</li> <li>- physically approach a pedestrian as part of a group of three or more persons.</li> </ul> |
| 2005                                             |                 |             | Prohibits solicitation in the situations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- at an automated teller machine, a bank or credit union;</li> <li>- at a public pay telephone;</li> <li>- at public transit stop or taxi stand or in transit buses ;</li> <li>- in elevators;</li> <li>- in the downtown pedestrian walkway;</li> <li>- getting in, out of, on or off a vehicle, or who is in a parking lot;</li> <li>- while seated in an outdoor area of a restaurant or bar in which food or beverages are being served.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regulates obstructive solicitation. Amends causes of obstruction by prohibiting:</li> <li>- to obstruct or impede the convenient passage of any pedestrian or vehicular traffic in a street;</li> <li>- to solicit a captive audience.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                |

### 3.9 Effectiveness of Legislation

Have by-laws banning or restricting panhandling been successful in Canadian and American cities? Despite all the attempts at legislation from various jurisdictions ranging from the criminal code to municipal by-laws, public begging or panhandling is still with us. There is no empirical support for these legislative measures working effectively. It has not been demonstrated, for instance, that American zero tolerance policing model actually reduces serious crime (Burnham 1996, Blomley 2004, Schafer 1998).

Commentators agree that correlations between policing policy and crime rates appear to be very questionable. For instance, interesting results were reported by a study *The Economics of Anti-Begging Regulations* by Patricia K. Smith (2005):

- Cities with higher welfare benefit levels are less likely to regulate begging. This suggests that public assistance benefits provide an effective alternative to begging and/or that communities that offer more generous welfare benefits are more tolerant of beggars.
- Communities with higher proportions of educated population appear more likely to believe that the most effective way to deal with the poor is to direct them to service agencies.
- The larger share of disabled citizens in a city, the higher the likelihood that the city will regulate panhandling. This supports the hypothesis that the greater incidence of disability, or the lesser availability of rehabilitation for the disabled, the greater the supply of panhandlers and the demand for anti-begging regulations.
- Cities with higher crime and denser populations are more likely to adopt anti-begging regulations due to the increased visibility and greater perceived danger associated with panhandlers.
- Higher average wages in the community reduce the likelihood of regulation by reducing the supply of beggars. Conversely, higher unemployment increases the likelihood of regulation by increasing the number of panhandlers.

The bottom line is that legislation has not been an effective short term, or long term, solution. The problem is that these by-laws fail to address the underlying causes (Schafer 1998, Carter 1998, NAPO 1999). The experience is much the same in city after city. Enforcing by-laws moves the problem or reduces it in the short term but because they fail to address the underlying causes, new people are soon back on the street. In general, the effects are short lived. As well, panhandlers who may have been charged generally show up panhandling somewhere else. By-laws generally just drive panhandlers to someone else's doorstep.

The discussion in this and the preceding sections seems to lead to an obvious conclusion. The factors that drive people onto the streets to panhandle are not ones that can be easily solved by making panhandling a crime. Making panhandling a criminal offence only punishes the perpetrators - it does not address the causes. It is a solution that deals with symptoms as opposed to basic causes. Making

these offences illegal only penalizes and stigmatizes people based on their economic and social situation.

### 3.10 Program Approaches to Panhandling

What are the lasting and long-term solutions? If Municipal By-laws are not the answer, then what are the solutions? Based on the discussion throughout this report, it is clear that to solve the panhandling problem requires far more complex and long-term solutions than by-law enforcement. According to Carter (1998), generally the solution must focus on broad issues such as:

- job creation and reduction of unemployment;
- skills upgrading and job training;
- community economic and social development that arrests urban decay and neighbourhood decline;
- provision of adequate health, education and counselling services addressing the needs of panhandlers; and
- higher welfare rates.

These are broad, complex, long-term solutions aimed at reducing the marginalization of sectors of society that has intensified over the past couple of decades. These are not always initiatives that can be introduced effectively at the local level. Job creation and economic restructuring has to be as much a national as a local initiative. However, many more local initiatives such as the Core Area Initiatives I and II, the Winnipeg Development Agreement, the current Winnipeg Partnership Agreement and programs under Neighbourhoods Alive! play a role in this context.

However, there are many examples of smaller, more focused initiatives throughout Canada and the United States that have made a difference in reducing the number of street people panhandling, or at least built a better understanding of the complexity of the situation:

- research into local poverty and homelessness and associated panhandling - in essence developing a better understanding of the problems and issues.
- community meetings and awareness programs to involve all constituents (community service organizations, concerned citizens, business owners and street people) in the development of strategies to address the problems.
- "Make A Change Campaign", intended to educate the public to say no to panhandlers, but yes to giving to service providers, was introduced in several North American cities.
- Winnipeg's Siloam Mission and Downtown Biz have team up to provide homeless people with employment and skill development to help them integrate into society. Mission Off The Streets (MOST) provides homeless people with employment in the downtown by paying them minimum wage to complete various tasks such as gardening, cleaning up garbage, and removing or installing signs. The process is gradual; the hours increase with time in order to ease the transition into the work force. In addition to employment, MOST works on developing the person as a whole by teaching many skills that are essential in everyday life: financial management, behaviour, hygiene, and communication in the work place.
- Winnipeg's recent strategy on panhandling involves the City's partnership with The Downtown BIZ, the Exchange District BIZ, the West End BIZ, the Osborne BIZ and six downtown social agencies in various panhandling programs. A major component of the

strategy is public education to help citizens help panhandlers in a constructive manner. Programs such as "Change For The Better" encourage people to alternatively donate money to agencies that provide services for street people.

- Vancouver has had Spare Change Meters for several years now collecting several thousand dollars each year. Public education campaigns use posters, pamphlets, movie trailers, and charity collection points. For instance, a poster campaign was an important element of the New York City Transit Authority's effort to control subway panhandling (Scott 2002a).
- some programs encourage people to buy and give panhandlers vouchers, instead of money. Several North American communities have instituted programs where people can buy and give panhandlers vouchers redeemable for food, shelter, transportation, or other necessities, but not for alcohol or tobacco. Typically, a private non-profit organization prints and sells the vouchers and serves as the broker between buyers and merchants.
- specialized police training and community-based policing to help police deal more effectively, but in a sensitive fashion, with panhandlers. The Street Ambassador Program in Ottawa was established to assist merchants in the Byward Market and Rideau Street areas with aggressive panhandling and loitering. In Winnipeg, Downtown Watch ambassadors provide directions, administer first aid, guide street people to resources, direct tourists, and report incidents to the police service. Some programs, particularly the one in Baltimore provide "safety guides" for people who stand near chronic panhandlers to prevent the public from being annoyed.
- in 2006 the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ unveiled the Community Outreach Patrol Program to help address challenges of public intoxication, which can lead to aggressive panhandling, negative perceptions of downtown, and harm to the intoxicated people themselves. Outreach Patrol members would be properly trained in community outreach and the Intoxicated Persons Detention Act (IPDA) and would be granted limited use of Special Constable Status to enforce IPDA. It is expected that Community Outreach Patrol will provide quick response to public intoxication incidents; assistance to emergency services; and will assist individuals who are intoxicated and/or homeless or at-risk of homelessness.
- inter-departmental cooperation. The Winnipeg Police Service's Project Break-Away collects pertinent information about chronic street people to help get them off the street and into recovery programs. The project was developed to track those who frequently come to the attention of police, firefighters, paramedics, healthcare providers and social workers because of their lifestyle, aggressive panhandling and disorderly behaviour on city streets. Working together, the various organizations and agencies have attempted to be pro-active and to connect street people with the appropriate resources, at the same time helping to enhance safety in the downtown.
- a variety of outreach programs that specialize in providing services for youth, women, the elderly and other groups on the street. Outreach programs come in a range of initiatives including food distribution, medical care, clothes, overnight accommodation, and even learn to read programs.
- the Bay Area Homeless Program - a consortium of sixteen colleges and universities that provide courses on homelessness, special programs for homeless students and youth, student led projects for the homeless and panhandlers and student initiated fund raisers for street people.
- initiatives where a non-profit company creates a paper focusing on poverty issues, which is then sold and the proceeds donated to agencies that provide services for street people, exist in many different formats in a variety of cities. In Toronto the homeless and

panhandlers sell a paper known as *The Outrider*. People who sell the paper have to operate in an entrepreneurial fashion - purchasing the papers for a certain amount and selling them to make a profit. In Seattle a similar paper called *Real Change* is sold in the same fashion. In San Francisco the paper is called the *Street Sheet*.

- community work experience programs where participants work on community initiatives in order to qualify for welfare, but at the same time are gaining work experience and references which will aid them in future job searches (an American initiative).
- Vancouver's Gathering Place - a program that works with street youth, some of whom panhandle. Similar to Winnipeg's SKY Program (which has been discontinued), the Vancouver initiative provides a safe haven for youth, advice on services, emergency shelter, health care, referrals to job placements, training, etc.
- Vancouver's Youth Job Bank provides employment for street youth, many of whom depend in part on panhandling for a living.
- landscape maintenance training programs under which the homeless receive both field and classroom training in the area of landscape maintenance. Participants work in city parks and other public areas (an American program).
- homeless prevention programs that stabilize people in their existing homes through the use of rent subsidies.
- provision of shelters and hostel units.
- transition housing for victims of spousal or sexual abuse.
- community mental health housing projects that provide a range of health and social support services.

The above are generic programs. They have been introduced in a variety of forms in many different cities. For the purposes of this report it is not necessary to go into detail on these initiatives but they do illustrate that By-laws and criminalizing panhandling are not the only attempted solutions.

### **3.11 Conclusion and Implications for the By-Law**

The negative reaction to panhandling by a substantial proportion of the public has prompted Canadian municipalities to attempt to control panhandling through legislation as well as through program approaches that assist panhandlers to “get off the street”. Anti-panhandling by-laws usually impose regulations on the time, place, and manner of panhandling. Regarding the manner in which panhandling occurs by-laws generally focus on behaviour that is persistent, intimidating, obstructive, and threatening.

Though Canadian anti-panhandling legislation is generally citywide in application, the intention is to address particular concerns about begging within the public spaces of the downtown. Enforcement of anti-panhandling laws varies widely among cities and can be substantial. At the same time many cities make no formal attempt to regulate panhandlers.

Often legislative approaches have been challenged on the basis that they only move - as opposed to solve - the problem and limit or violate the rights of panhandlers trying to sustain themselves. Public education, adequate social programs and services for panhandlers, and informal social control are more effective and appropriate responses. Several cities employ both approaches: they use legal measures to tackle the issue directly but also offer a variety of social programs to reduce people’s need to rely on panhandling.

Most researchers agree that the enforcement of laws prohibiting or restricting panhandling does not solve the problem. Enforcing by-laws moves the problem or reduces it in the short term but because by-laws fail to address the underlying causes, people are soon back panhandling. As well, panhandlers who may have been charged generally resurface, panhandling somewhere else. Anti-panhandling legislation approaches have been criticized for a variety of reasons:

- Existing laws within the Criminal Code already prohibit aggressive behaviour so by-laws that prohibit all panhandling are not necessary, nor will they effectively reduce panhandling over the long term;
- The by-laws often rely upon subjective criteria - fear, perception, incivility and so on;
- There is no empirical support to prove these legislative measures are working effectively. It has not been demonstrated, that anti panhandling by-laws actually reduce serious crime; and
- Safety of those panhandling is a concern as much as of other citizens. Panhandlers often endure harassment and violence from the larger public.

The issue of panhandling has been indirectly addressed through several long-term programs involving broad initiatives such as job creation and reduction of unemployment; skills upgrading and job training; community economic and social development that arrests urban decay and neighbourhood decline; and provision of adequate services and supports addressing the needs of panhandlers. These are broad, complex, long-term solutions aimed at reducing the marginalization of this sector of society; marginalization that has intensified over the past couple of decades.

Many smaller, more focused initiatives that have also been introduced in a variety of forms in cities throughout Canada and the United States have made a positive difference in reducing the number of people panhandling. This illustrates that introducing by-laws restricting panhandling activity is not the only solution.

## 4.0 Conclusions

This literature and legislation review provides a foundation from which to better understand panhandlers' needs, the service gaps to be filled, as well as systemic changes required that would enable individuals to not have to rely on panhandling. It shows that passing by-laws that prohibit all panhandling may reduce the frequency and shift the location of panhandling in the short term but they will not, in any way, eliminate or even reduce the problems that drive people onto the street to panhandle in the first place. Making panhandling a criminal offence only penalizes and stigmatizes people based on their economic and social situation but does not address the causes. Solutions have to address the more fundamental problems that marginalize people in society. They have to include both short-term and long-term initiatives which address systemic problems associated with poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, family instability and domestic abuse, poor skill levels, low levels of education, and discrimination. By-law creation and enforcement will not address these more basic problems.



### List of References

Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. 1996. *Change for the Better Program. Statistical Report.* Winnipeg.

Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. 1993. *Change for the Better Program. Statistical Report.* Winnipeg.

Arundel, Caryl and Associates. 2003. *Falling Behind: Our Growing Income Gap.* Report prepared for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities – Quality of Life Reporting System.

Ark Research Associates. 1996. *The Housing Conditions of Aboriginal People in Canada.* Ottawa: Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

Beavis, M. A. 1995. *Housing and Ethnicity: Literature Review and Select Annotated Bibliography.* Winnipeg: Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg.

Beavis, M.A., N. Klos, T. Carter and C. Douchant. 1997. *Literature Review: Aboriginal Peoples and Homelessness.* Winnipeg: Institute of Urban Studies, The University of Winnipeg.

Bentley, Daniel. 1995. *Measuring Homelessness: Review of Recent Research.* Winnipeg: Institute of Urban Studies.

Blomley, Nicholas. 2004. *Begging for change: justice and the urban poor.* Plenary talk given at the 2004 Shelter Net conference, Richmond, BC <http://shelternetbc.ca/Begging%20for%20change.pdf>

Bray, D.L. and P.D. Olson. "Appraisal of the Epidemiology of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome among Canadian Native Peoples." *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 80,1 (1989): 42-45.

Bodnarchuk, Jennifer, David Patton and Troy Rieck. 2006. *Adolescence without Shelter: A Comprehensive Description of Issues Faced by Street Youth in Winnipeg.* Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Bose, Rohit and Stephen W. Hwang. 2002. *Income And Spending Patterns Among Panhandlers.* *Canadian Medical Association Journal.* September 3; 167 (5): 477–479.

Cameron Strategy Inc. 2003. *Calgary Downtown Association Issue Tracking. PANHANDLING. 2003 City Omnibus Survey.* <http://www.downtowncalgary.com/pdf/miscellaneous/2003%20PanHandler-Omnibus%20Survey1.pdf>

Canadian Housing and Renewal Association. 2002. *On Her Own: Young Women and Homelessness in Canada* [electronic resource] WWW site of Status of Women Canada.

Carter, T., C. Polevychok and K. Sargent. 2003. *Winnipeg's Inner City in 2001.* Canada Research Chair in Urban Change and Adaptation. Research Highlight #1.

Carter, Tom. 1998. *Panhandling: Do municipal by-laws effectively address the problem?* Working document prepared for the Legal Aid Services Society of Manitoba.

The Center for the Community Interest. *Aggressive Panhandling*. American Alliance for Rights & Responsibilities, Washington, D.C. and New York, NY  
<http://www.communityinterest.org/backgrounders/panhandling.htm>

City of Vancouver. 1998. Panhandling. Administrative Report to Standing Committee on Planning and Environment. CC File No. 3504.

The City of Winnipeg, The Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services. June 21, 2005. Administrative report.

City of Winnipeg Social Development Review Committee. 1997. *Planning For Equity In Winnipeg*. Winnipeg.

CMHC. 2005. *Canadian Housing Observer 2005*. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

Coffey, Michael A., Gregory Toomey and Andrea Valenti. 2004. Survey and Overview of Selected Quality of Life Ordinances in 38 Metropolitan Areas. Downtown Austin Community Court, the City of Austin. <http://ida-downtown.org/km/DesktopModules/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentID=122>

Collins, Damian and Nicholas Blomley. 2003. Private Needs and Public Space: Politics, Poverty, and Anti-Panhandling By-Laws in Canadian Cities. In *New Perspectives on the Public-Private Divide*. Edited by the Law Commission of Canada. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Conner, Roger L. 2000. *Disorder Laws And The Courts: Review Of Recent Legal Developments*. The Center for the Community Interest. CCI Publications  
<http://www.communityinterest.org/Publications/rcreport.htm>

Corrado Research and Evaluation Associates Inc. 2003. *Housing Discrimination and Aboriginal People in Winnipeg and Thompson, Manitoba*. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Ottawa.

Cross, P. 2006. "Emerging Patterns in the Labour Market" *Canadian Economic Observer*, February, Statistics Canada, Ottawa.

Duneier, M. 1999. *Sidewalk*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Eberle, Margaret et al. 2001. *A Profile and Policy Review of Homelessness in the Provinces of Ontario, Quebec and Alberta*. Homelessness - Causes and Effects. Volume 4. Background Report. Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security, BC.

Esmonde, Jackie. 2002. Criminalizing Poverty: The Criminal Law Power and the *Safe Streets Act*. *Journal of Law and Social Policy*. Vol. 17 (Spring, 2002).

Graham, Rodney. 1998. Street knights shine, the rich whine. Squeegee kids, panhandlers suffer most from prejudice of local business leaders. *The Manitoban*. On-line edition. March 25, 1998.  
<http://umanitoba.ca/manitoban/1997-1998/0325/feat.html#f1>

Halifax Regional Municipality. 2004. *Homelessness in HRM, Portrait of Streets and Shelters*. Halifax Regional Municipality. Planning and Development Services.

Hwang, Stephen W. 2001. Homelessness and Health. *CMAJ* 164 (2): 229-33.

The Innovators Ltd. 2002. Downtown BIZ Member Study 2002. Winnipeg.

Institute of Urban Studies. 2004. *First Nations/Métis/Inuit Mobility Study. Final Report*. In collaboration with Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Manitoba Métis Federation. Winnipeg: Institute of Urban Studies, The University of Winnipeg.

Janzen, Tom, Tom Carter, and Brian McGregor. 2003. A New Face On Poverty: Social Assistance In Winnipeg's Inner City. Canada Research Chair in Urban Change and Adaptation. Research Highlight #3.

The Just Income Coalition. 2005. Paid to Be Poor. Report of the 2005 Manitoba Low Wage Community Inquiry. The Social Planning Council of Winnipeg.

Kelling, G.L. and C.M. Coles. 1996. *Fixing Broken Windows*. Library of Congress: Simon & Schuster.

Kostyk, Rhena and Albert Ratt. 1998. Change for the Better. Addictions Foundation and Downtown Biz. Winnipeg.

Lankenau, S.E. 1999. Panhandling repertoires and routines for overcoming the nonperson treatment. *Deviant Behavior* 20:183-206.

Lee, Barrett A. and Chad R. Farrell. 2003. Buddy, Can You Spare A Dime? Homelessness, Panhandling, and the Public. *Urban Affairs Review* 38: 299-324.

Linden, Rick. 2000. Winnipeg Panhandling Survey. The Winnipeg Area Study. The University of Manitoba, Winnipeg.

Mabry, Cynthia R. 1994. "Brother Can You Spare Some Change? - And Your Privacy Too?: Avoiding a Fatal Collision Between Public Interests and Beggars' First Amendment Rights." *University of San Francisco School of Law Review* 28: 309-341  
[http://www.popcenter.org/Problems/Supplemental\\_Material/panhandling/Mabry\\_1994.pdf](http://www.popcenter.org/Problems/Supplemental_Material/panhandling/Mabry_1994.pdf)

McAndrews, George. 2000. *First Amendment Issues Affecting Municipal Regulation Of Panhandlers And Street Musicians*. City of Alexandria, Virginia  
<http://www.coopercenter.org/lga/sitefiles/conferences/2000/spring/mcandrews.pdf>

Mitchell, Don. 2003. *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space*. New York: Guilford.

Mitchell, W. 1995. "Secondary Effects' Analysis: A Balanced Approach to the Problem of Prohibitions on Aggressive Panhandling." *University of Baltimore Law Review* 24(Spring): 291-330.

National Anti-Poverty Organization. 1999. *Short-Changed on Human Rights: A NAPO Position Paper on Anti-Panhandling By-Laws*. Ottawa: NAPO. [http://www.povnet.org/human\\_rights/NAPO%209.htm](http://www.povnet.org/human_rights/NAPO%209.htm)

The National Coalition for the Homeless and The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. 2006. *A Dream Denied: The Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities*. Published by the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, with outreach and organizing work by NCH's National Homeless Civil Rights Organizing Project (NHCROP) <http://www.nlchp.org/content/pubs/ADreamDenied1-11-06.pdf>

The National Coalition for the Homeless and The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. 2002. *Illegal to Be Homeless: The Criminalization of Homelessness in the United States*. Published by the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, with outreach and organizing work by the National Homeless Civil Rights Organizing Project (NHCROP) <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/publications/crimreport/Crim2002.pdf>

The National Coalition for the Homeless. 2004. *Illegal to Be Homeless: The Criminalization of Homelessness in the United States*. Published by the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) with outreach and organizing work done by NCH's National Homeless Civil Rights Organizing Project (NHCROP) <http://www.tdrc.net/Report-04-11-illegal.pdf>

National Council of Welfare. 2006a. *Poverty Profiles, 2002 and 2003*, Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, Ottawa.

National Council of Welfare. 2006b. *Welfare Incomes 2005*, Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, Ottawa.

O'Reilly-Fleming, Thomas. 1993. *Down and Out in Canada: Homeless Canadians*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Prince, Michael J. 1998. Holes in the Safety Net, Leaks in the Roof: Changes in Canadian Welfare Policy and their Implications for Social Housing Programs. *Housing Policy Debate*, 9(4), 825-848. [www.fanniemaefoundation.org/programs/hpd.shtml](http://www.fanniemaefoundation.org/programs/hpd.shtml)

The Probe Team. 2002. Do You Give To Panhandlers? *Winnipegger's Reaction to Panhandling*. 2002. May 2002, Volume V, Issue II.

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. 1993. *Aboriginal Peoples in Urban Centres: Report of the National Round Table on Aboriginal Urban Issues*.

Sceviour, R. and R. Finnie. 2004. "Social Assistance Use: Trends in Incidence, Entry and Exit Rates" *Canadian Economic Observer*, August, Statistics Canada, Ottawa.

Schafer, Arthur. 1998. *Down and Out in Winnipeg and Toronto: The Ethics of Legislating Against Panhandling*. Caledon Institute of Social Policy. Ottawa.

Scott, Michael S. 2002. *Panhandling*. Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice. The Department, Washington, DC.

Scott, Michael S. 2002b. *Disorderly Youth in Public Places*. Problem-Oriented Guides for Police Series Guide No. 6. U.S. Department of Justice. Office of Community Oriented Policing Services <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/mime/open.pdf?Item=275>

Silver, Jim. 2000. "Solutions that Work: Fighting Poverty in Winnipeg's Inner City" in Silver, Jim, Ed. *Solutions That Work: Fighting Poverty in Winnipeg*. Winnipeg: CCPA and Fernwood Publishing.

Smith, Patricia K. 2005. "The economics of anti-begging regulations". *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, April 2005.

Statistics Canada. 2005. "Recent Changes in the Labour Market" *Canadian Economic Observer* Volume 18, No.3, Statistics Canada, Ottawa.

Statistics Canada. 2004. Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile 2004. Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. Catalogue No. 85-224-XIE. Ottawa.

Statistics Canada. 1999. A Profile of Criminal victimization Results from the 1999 General Social Survey. Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Catalogue no. 85-553-XIE. Ottawa.

Stevens, Mark. 2003. *Freedom Of Speech*. Lecture Notes For Constitutional Law. North Carolina Wesleyan College, Morrisville, NC <http://faculty.ncwc.edu/mstevens/410/410lect08.htm>

Toye, Michael and Jennifer Infanti. 2004. Social Inclusion and Community Economic Development. Literature Review. The Pan-Canadian Community Development Learning Network Project Framework [http://www.ccednet-redec.ca/en/docs/pccdln/PCCDLN\\_20040803\\_LitReview-L.pdf](http://www.ccednet-redec.ca/en/docs/pccdln/PCCDLN_20040803_LitReview-L.pdf)

Vosko, Leah F., Nancy Zukewich, and Cynthia Cranford. 2003. *Precarious Employment In The Canadian Labour Market: A Statistical Portrait*. Forum on Precarious Employment. Just Labour. Vol. 3 [http://www.yorku.ca/julabour/volume3/cranfordetal\\_justlabour.PDF](http://www.yorku.ca/julabour/volume3/cranfordetal_justlabour.PDF)

Wessler, Stephen and Alysia Melnick. 2005. Homeless and Hated. *Bias Motivated Violence, Degradation and Discrimination Against Maine's Homeless*. Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence. Portland, Maine.

Wilson, G.1991.Exposure to panhandling and beliefs about poverty causation. *Sociology and Social Research* 76: 14-19.

Winnipeg Transit Riders' Union. 2005. OP-ED: Downtown streets need people <http://www.truwinnipeg.org/panhandlers.html>

## Appendix A

### Project Methodology

The general methodology of the study in many respects is breaking new ground using a combination of several quantitative and qualitative approaches. The interviews with panhandlers yield specific quantitative information about the characteristics of panhandlers, the frequency of panhandling, the amount of money collected, and their use of supportive services. The mapping of locations of panhandlers also provides quantitative material on the location and nature of the activity. Additionally, the literature review presents facts and figures from other surveys and Statistics Canada data. The interviews also incorporate many qualitative, open-ended questions that elicit opinion panhandlers' opinions. The development of a typology of panhandling methods is another qualitative tool and a subjective exercise based on the researchers' observations. There has been little work undertaken elsewhere in developing a typology of panhandling approaches.

There are five basic components to the research methodology that were used to undertake and complete this project. Each component is described in more detail below.

#### 1.0 The Review of Literature

The first component is a review of academic, legal, government, advocacy and professional literature. This informs the project by providing information on the characteristics of panhandlers, how they panhandle, why they panhandle and what services or initiatives might help this group of people reduce their dependence on panhandling. It also provides background on recent legislation that has been introduced in Canadian cities, the nature and effectiveness of this legislation and the reason(s) it was introduced. In addition, the review presents an overview of other non-legislative initiatives (Canada, the United States and abroad) to reduce the number of panhandlers through provision of services and support programs that reduce the need for panhandling. The literature sheds some light on programs and support services that have been introduced to address the systemic causes that drive people onto the streets to panhandle. The three components of the literature review are described in more detail below.

The focus of the literature review is Canadian material, but relevant works from the United States and other countries are included. The review of the literature attempts to highlight recent change in panhandling, including the changing nature, number and characteristics of panhandlers, reactions by the public, business and government sectors as well as changing attitudes toward the use of public space and the debate surrounding private versus public space in the urban environment.

The review of legislation focuses on Canadian cities where there have been recent changes in the legislation affecting panhandling. The review also highlights any appropriate legislation in American cities. It presents a detailed account of recent changes in panhandling by-laws in Winnipeg and compares the nature of legislation in Winnipeg with legislation in other key cities. A matrix, accompanied by a detailed written explanation, has been developed to compare the regulations.

The review of initiatives providing resources to reduce the need for panhandling takes an approach similar to the review of legislation. It focuses on key cities in Canada, the U.S. and other countries to determine what programs and support services have been introduced. Initiatives in selected cities and those available in Winnipeg illustrate that criminalizing panhandling is not the only solution.

## 2.0 Mapping of Panhandling Locations

A second component of the research is the mapping of panhandling locations. It identifies where people panhandle in the city, and whether they panhandle in close proximity to “sensitive services”. There were three approaches to this component of the methodology: 1) recording the locations of panhandlers based on observation of panhandling activity throughout the study area; 2) mapping of these locations using Geographic Information Systems and mapping software; and, 3) using information gathered through observation to indicate if panhandlers are active near “sensitive services.” Several maps were produced indicating the distribution of panhandlers throughout the study area, priority or high traffic locations for panhandling, and proximity to “sensitive services.”

The necessary steps in preparing the maps included:

- a) Preparation of base maps for the downtown area and Osborne Village. For the purposes of this research, the downtown study area extends as far west as Arlington and north to include Ellice and Sargent Streets, as panhandling has been observed in these areas. Downtown also includes Main Street north to Higgins and south to include Broadway. The commercial portion of Osborne Village to Wardlaw Avenue was also included in the study area. It was limited to Osborne Street itself and the adjoining Safeway Shopping Complex, as this is where most panhandling activity in Osborne Village was observed occurring.
- b) The locations of sensitive services were plotted on the base maps as was the walkway system;
- c) The nature of the sensitive services was determined in consultation with the client based on by-law No. 7700/2000 and a review of the literature, and included ATMs, bus stops, banks, liquor stores, money marts, etc.;
- d) Fieldwork observation identified panhandling locations; and,
- e) Locations were plotted to illustrate proximity of panhandlers to sensitive services. Proximity was based on a 10-metre distance restriction.

## 3.0 Interviews with Panhandlers

A third and major component of the methodology was the interviewing of panhandlers. Representatives of three social service agency partners - Resource Assistance for Youth, The Main Street Project, and Siloam Mission - assisted the researchers in developing a structured questionnaire to be administered through confidential personal interviews. Their input ensured the research tool was comprehensive, appropriately worded, and sensitive in addressing topics of concern. It was agreed upon with the client that the “squeegee kids” and buskers would not be included because they do not clearly fall within the definition of “panhandlers” (as they offer a service in exchange for donations) and the current legislation has not targeted these activities.

The questionnaire contains both defined and open-ended questions, focusing on a number of themes: demographic and socio-economic characteristics of panhandlers, their housing circumstances, where and why they panhandle, how much money they make and what they spend it on, the services they use and need, and how the legislation has affected their methods and locations of panhandling. The panhandlers were asked if they were aware of the current By-Law and whether they had changed their method of panhandling since it came into effect. Interview questions also asked about panhandlers’ experiences with authorities and how street patrols and police have changed their approach since the passage of legislation: Are they asking panhandlers to “move along” from certain locations? Do they warn panhandlers not to work in certain areas?, etc.

Because the actual number of panhandlers in Winnipeg is unknown, it was difficult to determine a representative sample size of this population. Consultation with the client and social service agency partners resulted in a decision of seventy five as the total number of panhandlers to be interviewed. Some of the interviews were conducted during the winter months of February and March when there were fewer panhandlers on the street, but interviews were extended into April, May and June to ensure that those who might not panhandle in colder weather were also included as research subjects.

Two approaches were taken in finding panhandlers to interview. The agency partners are established organizations that have developed trusting relationships with clientele, among which are individuals who panhandle. Agency employees discreetly approached potential interviewees to ask them to participate. It was believed this strategy would be most effective because potential interviewees would be more trusting and, therefore, be more likely to participate and more open with their responses if the research was endorsed and supported by an organization they trusted. Thirty six interviews were undertaken at the social service agencies: 15 at Siloam Mission, 9 at Mainstreet Project, and 12 at Resource Assistance for Youth (RaY). These interviews took place in a quiet, private room at the respective agencies.

Because not all panhandlers use services, it was necessary to find and ask panhandlers on the street for interviews as well. This second approach to finding interviewees was undertaken at various times of the day (ranging from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.), in areas frequented by panhandlers and resulted in thirty-nine interviews. Of those asked for an interview in this way, only 6 declined. Seven interviews were conducted on the street at the request of the interviewees. When the researcher approached, a brief explanation was given about the research, and the panhandler was asked if s/he would like to participate. The interview was most often conducted in a quiet location such as a coffee shop.

One interviewer was present for each interview. Two interviewers conducted interviews, and the primary interviewer met each interview subject to ensure that no panhandler was interviewed more than once. Before beginning the actual interview, the process and purpose of the research was explained, with emphasis given to the confidentiality and voluntary participation. Then the interviewee was given an opportunity to ask questions about the research, and was asked to sign a consent form (Appendix B). On average, the duration of the interview was one hour. Each interviewee was given an honorarium of ten dollars for their participation, whether they completed the interview or not. There were no interviews started that were not completed.

Findings were analyzed using appropriate database software. The write up of the interviews highlights the key socio-economic and demographic characteristics of panhandlers, provides insights into the reasons they are on the street, what services they use or need, how much money they collect and how they spend the money. The report also highlights the geographic distribution of those surveyed and the effect of current legislation.

#### **4.0 Characterizing Panhandling Methods**

A fourth component of the methodology was the observation of panhandling techniques to characterize panhandling methods. To collect and analyze data in the observation component of this research study, a typology of panhandling methods was developed based on the categories of panhandling offences identified in By-Law 7700/2000 and the 2005 amendment to this By-Law. The typology also incorporates other categories in order to collect information upon which to develop a broader understanding of panhandling. This includes



factors such as technique used (eg. sign, cap in hand), how the request is indicated (eg. verbal, gesture), and level of activity (sitting, standing, walking). It was recorded as to whether or not upon refusal any further communication followed, and if so, whether it was polite (“thank-you”, “have a nice day”, etc.) or impolite (nasty reply, perhaps including obscenities, gesturing or raised voice). The intention was to capture a more comprehensive range of panhandling methods than is achieved by the By-Law and to better reflect the truly broad spectrum of panhandling methods that exist. Community agency partners, a review of the literature and legislation in other cities, and panhandlers themselves provided insights into the development of the typology.

Fieldwork was required to document the nature of the methods through simple “observation.” The researcher simply observed from a discreet distance and recorded how panhandlers indicate their need to people.

The Observation Matrix (Table 3.1), based on the typology above, was used to record the panhandling methods observed during sweeps of the survey area. Whether the panhandler was male or female, alone, with a pet, or with others was recorded. If with others, the number of people together was also noted. The panhandling location, address and description, the date and time of the panhandling event, and weather conditions were also noted.

Key panhandling methods were distinguished for the purpose of mapping and to allow for more accurate analysis:

- **OTM** (On-The-Move) refers to a panhandler who, for the most part, is walking and panhandling people along the way. Other than short stops made to rest or to gather money, movement is constant.
- **Stationary** is when the panhandler is either seated or standing in one place.
- **Approach** is when the panhandler is standing and moves towards a passerby when making a request. The solicitation space is very small; only a couple of steps are taken.
- **Still** is a category which includes both Stationary and Approach, but not OTM.
- **OCT** – refers to **o**bstruct, **c**ontinue and **t**hreaten as descriptors of the following specific parts of the amended By-Law 7700/2000 (2005):
  - a) In the course of solicitation, to **obstruct** or impede the convenient passage of any pedestrian or vehicular traffic in a street;
  - b) To **continue** to solicit from or follow a pedestrian after that person has made a negative response to solicitation; or
  - c) To verbally **threaten** or insult a pedestrian in the course of, or following a solicitation.

For a panhandling event to be considered OCT, it must be recorded on the observation matrix as at least one of the following categories: Obstructive Approach, OTM Obstructive, Verbal Repeat, Verbal Loud/Threatening, Follows, Gestures, Touches, or Nasty Reply.

Passive methods of panhandling involve no violation of the above three rules (they could be considered non-OCT).

The Panhandling Observation Matrix was used to gather all data on panhandling event observation, which was then used to map panhandling methods. These maps illustrate the distribution and frequency of occurrence of different methods of panhandling according to the By-Law.

### **5.0 Consultation with Service Agencies**

A fifth key component of the methodology is consultation and work with service agencies. Through contact and meetings representatives of the three agencies expressed a strong interest in the research, the issue of panhandling, the legislation currently in place, and alternative solutions or initiatives to reduce people's reliance on panhandling. Staff at these agencies have regular interaction with many of the people who panhandle and have thus developed a strong understanding of their situations. Consultation with these service agencies on aspects of the research and obtaining their insights on the issues has substantially enhanced the report.

## Appendix B

### Employment Insurance Legislation Chronology

| A chronology of major Employment (Unemployment) Insurance legislation since 1971 |                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Legislation                                                                      | Effective date     | Key parameters                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| UI Act                                                                           | June 27, 1971      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generously liberalized the pre-1971 system:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided nearly universal coverage (commencing February 2, 1972)</li> <li>• Eased eligibility</li> <li>• Added a series of special benefits – sickness, maternity and retirement</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Bill C-69                                                                        | January 1, 1976    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disqualification increased from 3 to 6 weeks for those who quit without just cause, were fired because of misconduct, refused to accept suitable employment, failed to attend a placement interview, or refused to follow instructions from personnel handling their claims</li> <li>• Maximum age for coverage reduced from 70 to 65</li> <li>• Replacement rate reduced from 75% to 66.67% for claimants with dependants</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Bill C-27                                                                        | September 11, 1977 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variable Entrance Requirements (VERs) established (effective December 4, 1977), based on 16 UI regions</li> <li>• Three-phased benefit structure replaced former five-phased benefit structure</li> <li>• Maximum benefit period reduced to 50 weeks</li> <li>• 48 new UI regions replaced former 16 UI regions (effective November 11, 1978)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Bill C-14                                                                        | January 1, 1979    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrance requirement for new entrants and re-entrants to the labour market set at 20 weeks (effective July 1, 1979)</li> <li>• Entrance requirement for repeat claimants set at VER, plus up to 6 additional weeks in regions with an unemployment rate under 11%</li> <li>• Replacement rate reduced to 60%</li> <li>• Benefit claw-back introduced to recover benefits paid to high income recipients</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Bill C-156                                                                       | January 1, 1984    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seasonal fishermen's benefits modified</li> <li>• Maternity benefits modified</li> <li>• Adoption benefits introduced</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| VER                                                                              | February 11, 1990  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failed to pass the Senate; entrance requirements reverted to a uniform 14 weeks nation-wide</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Bill C-21                                                                        | November 18, 1990  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeat claimants no longer required 6 additional weeks</li> <li>• Retirement benefits eliminated; workers 65 and over covered again</li> <li>• Penalty increased from 6, to 7 to 12 weeks for quitting without just cause, for being dismissed for misconduct, or for refusing to accept suitable employment; and replacement rate dropped to 50% for these claimants</li> <li>• VERs raised from 10 to 14 weeks, to 10 to 20 weeks</li> <li>• Single benefit schedule replaced former three-phased structure</li> <li>• Number of UI regions revised to 62</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                               |
| Bill C-113                                                                       | April 4, 1993      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those who quit without just cause, were fired for misconduct, or refused to accept suitable employment became ineligible for benefits</li> <li>• Replacement rate lowered to 57% from 60%</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Bill C-17                                                                        | July 7, 1994       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VERs raised to 12 to 20 weeks</li> <li>• Entitlement duration changed to work component and regional component</li> <li>• Replacement rate raised to 60% for claimants with low earnings and dependants; lowered to 55% for others</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Bill C-12                                                                        | July 1, 1996       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• System renamed to Employment Insurance (EI)</li> <li>• Hours/earnings coverage requirement abolished; every hour of work insurable, starting in January, 1997</li> <li>• Entrance requirement and benefit entitlement based on hours of work</li> <li>• Average earnings over the last 20 weeks used to calculate amount of benefits</li> <li>• Replacement rate for repeat claimants lowered by one percentage point for each 20 weeks of use in the past 5 years, up to a maximum 5 percentage points</li> <li>• Repeat claimants face a benefit claw-back of up to 100%, depending on earnings and weeks of benefits in the last 5 years</li> <li>• Weekly maximum insurable earnings revised to \$750</li> </ul> |

Source: Zhengxi Lin. Employment Insurance in Canada: Policy changes. Perspectives. Statistics Canada - Catalogue no. 75-001-XPE. Summer 1998, p.47.



**PANHANDLING IN WINNIPEG:  
LEGISLATION VS. SUPPORT SERVICES**

**VOLUME 3**

**MAPPING OF PANHANDLING ACTIVITY IN WINNIPEG**

**A STUDY FOR THE PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE**

**by**

**Tom Carter  
Canada Research Chair in Urban Change and Adaptation  
Anita Friesen  
Chesya Polevychok  
John Osborne**

**University of Winnipeg**

**May 2007**

## Table of Contents

|                                                                                                                       |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| <b>Glossary of Terms</b>                                                                                              | ii |
| <b>Executive Summary</b>                                                                                              | iv |
| <b>1.0 Introduction</b>                                                                                               | 1  |
| <b>2.0 Mapping of Panhandling Activity</b>                                                                            | 2  |
| 2.1 Identification and Definition of Areas of Activity                                                                | 2  |
| 2.2 Location of Sensitive Services Within Study Area                                                                  | 4  |
| 2.3 Proximity of Panhandlers to Sensitive Services                                                                    | 6  |
| 2.4 Conclusions                                                                                                       | 9  |
| <b>3.0 Documentation of Panhandling Methods</b>                                                                       | 10 |
| 3.1 Developing a Panhandling Typology                                                                                 | 10 |
| 3.2 Still vs. OTM and Passive vs. OCT                                                                                 | 12 |
| 3.3 Male/Female and Individual Versus Group                                                                           | 16 |
| 3.4 Conclusions                                                                                                       | 19 |
| <b>4.0 Frequency of Panhandling by Time of Day</b>                                                                    | 20 |
| 4.1 Developing a Time Frame for Analysis                                                                              | 20 |
| 4.2 Frequency of Panhandling by Time of Day                                                                           | 21 |
| 4.3 Conclusions                                                                                                       | 23 |
| <b>5.0 Summary of By-Law Violations</b>                                                                               | 24 |
| 5.1 Violations by Area and Sub-area                                                                                   | 24 |
| 5.2 Mapping of By-Law Violations                                                                                      | 26 |
| 5.3 Conclusions                                                                                                       | 28 |
| <b>6.0 Discussion of Observational Findings and Interpretation of the By-Law</b>                                      | 30 |
| 6.1 Introduction to Discussion                                                                                        | 30 |
| 6.2 Revisiting Panhandling Methods                                                                                    | 30 |
| 6.3 Broad vs. Narrow Interpretation of the By-Law                                                                     | 35 |
| 6.4 Methodological Limitations                                                                                        |    |
| <b>7.0 Conclusions</b>                                                                                                | 36 |
| <b>Appendices</b>                                                                                                     |    |
| A. Project Methodology                                                                                                | 38 |
| B. By-Law No. 7700/2000                                                                                               | 43 |
| C. Location of Sensitive Services and Panhandling Events in<br>Violation of a Captive Audience at a Sensitive Service | 46 |
| D. Mapping of Panhandling Methods                                                                                     | 55 |
| E. Mapping of Panhandling by Time of Day                                                                              | 60 |
| F. Total By-Law Violations Mapping                                                                                    | 62 |

## Glossary of Terms

**10-Metre Distance Restriction** – the distance from a sensitive service used by the researchers of this report as the threshold to define a violation of the captive audience at a sensitive service.

**Approach** – a panhandler physically moves towards a passer-by in the course of solicitation.

**By-Law** – In this report is used to refer to the City of Winnipeg’s “The Obstructive Solicitation By-Law No. 7700/2000”, with amendment added June 29, 2005.

**Captive Audience** – a person at a certain location for a purpose that requires them to stay at the site for a period of time, and in some cases, perform a particular function at the site: withdraw money from an ATM, catch a bus, etc: hence, they are “captive” for a period of time in that location.

**Group** – panhandlers in a group of 3 or more who are panhandling together.

**OCT Panhandling** – in this report will refer to obstruct, continue and threaten as descriptors of the following specific parts of the amended By-Law 7700/2000 (2005):

- a). In the course of solicitation, to **obstruct** or impede the convenient passage of any pedestrian or vehicular traffic in a street.
- b). To **continue** to solicit from or follow a pedestrian after that person has made a negative response to solicitation.
- c). To verbally **threaten** or insult a pedestrian in the course of, or following a solicitation.

**OTM** – On The Move; refers to a panhandler who is, for the most part, walking and panhandling people along the way.

**Panhandle** – to indicate to a passer-by, whether by spoken or printed word, or gesture, a request for donations of money or other things of value for one’s self or for any other person.

**Panhandler** – someone who panhandles (as above) by requesting money, food, etc. from a passer-by.

**Panhandling By-Law Violation** – any panhandling event that falls under one or more of the following 5 sections of the amended By-Law 7700/2000 (2005):

“Causes an Obstruction” Means:

- (a) In the course of solicitation, to obstruct or impede the convenient passage of any pedestrian or vehicular traffic in a street;
- (b) To continue to solicit from or follow a pedestrian after that person has made a negative response to the solicitation;
- (c) To verbally threaten or insult a pedestrian in the course of or following a solicitation;
- (d) To physically approach and solicit from a pedestrian as a member of a group of three or more persons; or
- (e) To solicit a captive audience.

**Panhandling Event** – In this study a panhandling event refers to the solicitation activity of a panhandler, observed for a short period of time to determine method used.

**Panhandling Method** – the way in which a panhandler solicits.

**Passive Panhandling** – no violation of the three rules used to define **OCT panhandling**.

**Sensitive Services** – a term used commonly in panhandling literature to define locations where panhandling solicitations are not supposed to occur. For the purposes of this study, generally a sensitive service is a location where a “captive audience” can be found as outlined by the 2005 By-law Amendment in Section 2.

**Stationary** – standing or sitting in one place, without any movement towards those solicited.

**Still** – the panhandler is either seated or standing in one place, or takes only a couple of steps in the course of an approach.

**Study Area** – the Winnipeg downtown study area (Map 2.1.) extended west to Arlington St, then north to include Sargent Avenue. The northern boundary was extended as far as Higgins Avenue at Main Street, which is the eastern boundary. The southern boundary runs along Broadway Avenue. The downtown underground and above-ground walkway system was part of the study area, as was the retail/commercial part of Osborne Village, with the study area limited to Osborne Street south to Wardlaw Avenue, plus the adjoining Safeway Shopping complex on River Ave. (See Map 2.1 on P. 3 Section 2.1)

**Sweep** – a 3 to 4 hour time period during which the researcher would walk through the study area to observe and record panhandling activity.

## Executive Summary

This volume presents the results of field observation of panhandling activity throughout the study area. The observation component of the study focuses on the mapping of panhandling locations and panhandling methods. Several maps were produced indicating the distribution of panhandlers throughout the study area, priority or high traffic locations for panhandling activity, and proximity to “sensitive services.” The types of panhandling methods used, and the distribution and frequency of occurrences of different methods was also recorded and mapped. Based on this observational data it was possible to record and map frequency and type of panhandling violations. Details on the methodology are in Appendix A.

To collect and analyze data, a typology of various panhandling methods was developed using the language and types of panhandling offences found in By-Law 7700/2000 and the 2005 amendment to this by-law. This typology allowed identification of By-Law violations according to sections a-e of “causes an obstruction”, which means:

- (a) In the course of solicitation, to obstruct or impede the convenient passage of any pedestrian or vehicular traffic in a street;
- (b) To continue to solicit from or follow a pedestrian after that person has made a negative response to the solicitation;
- (c) To verbally threaten or insult a pedestrian in the course of or following a solicitation;
- (d) To physically approach and solicit from a pedestrian as a member of a group of three or more persons.
- (e) To solicit a captive audience

For brevity, in this report (a) (b) and (c) will be referred to as “**OCT**” (obstruct, continue, threaten); (d) will be called “**Group**”; and (e) will be “**Captive Audience**”, referring to solicitation of a captive individual/s at sensitive services.

Although the current amended By-Law does not use the term “sensitive service”, it does list particular services where people would be considered “captive.” The list used in this study roughly corresponds to what the general literature refers to as “sensitive services”; therefore, the term is used in the same manner in this study for continuity. Sensitive services includes ATMs (automated teller machines), bus stops, entrances to financial institutions including pay day loan and cheque cashing operations, liquor stores, public phones located on the street or attached to the exterior of a building, taxi stands, walkway systems, patios, parking lots and parked cars. Approximately 380 sensitive services were identified in the study area, excluding parking lots and on street parking spaces (which were too numerous to count and map).

A 10-metre distance restriction was created around all sensitive services in the study area. The 10-metre distance restriction was chosen to reflect the restriction used in the repealed 1995 By-Law because the amended 2005 By-Law has no quantifiable distance restriction. As well, a similar distance factor has been incorporated in many panhandling by-laws in other cities. For measurable research purposes in this study, this distance restriction is used as a threshold to define an infraction or violation of the captive audience aspect of the By-law. Panhandling events taking place within any 10-metre sensitive service distance restriction were considered to be involving a “captive audience” and in violation of the amended 2005 By-Law.



Panhandling activity in Winnipeg within the study area was found to be concentrated along Portage Avenue from Kennedy Street to Main Street (Central East); Kennedy Street to Spence Street (Central West); in the North Main/Exchange area; and in Osborne Village. The findings indicated that panhandling is most prevalent during afternoon and evening hours, and at night is most likely to occur in the North Main/Exchange area of the city.

There is a correlation between panhandling events, the volume of pedestrian traffic and the business hours in certain areas. There are more entertainment venues (night clubs, theatre etc.) open in the North Main/Exchange area in the evening. This attracts patrons, which in turn attracts panhandlers. Panhandling activity in Osborne Village is also somewhat higher than in other areas in the evening, probably for the same reason. Evening panhandling activity drops in areas like Central East and Central West, likely because this area consists mainly of offices and businesses which are closed in the evenings.

During the observational fieldwork, 250 panhandling events were observed and recorded throughout the study area. About three-quarters of these were performed by individuals. Group activity (3 or more people) accounted for thirteen percent of all panhandling events. The remaining events were performed by individuals working alone or in pairs. Group activity tended to be concentrated in the Central East area.

Of the 250 panhandling events recorded, 130 were considered to be violations of the amended By-Law. The highest proportion of violations per sub-area were recorded in Broadway/Main, North Main/Exchange, Central East, and Portage Broadway West. Broadway/Osborne had the lowest proportion of violations. Out of 130 total violations observed in the study area, one third were recorded in Central East; the share of violations for other areas ranged from 12 to 16 percent.

The study found that captive audience events comprised almost half (45%) of all panhandling violations, followed by 22 events involving OCT panhandling (17%) and 13 events of panhandling by a group of three or more (10%). There were 36 observed panhandling events which involved a combination of violations, representing just above a quarter (28%) of all By-Law violations. Almost half the combination violations were OCT involving captive audience situations.

Based on the ten-metre distance restriction chosen, the sensitive services most often observed being violated during this study were bus stops. The greatest number of OCT events occurred in the Central East area where panhandlers are most concentrated. However, the rate of occurrence of OCT events is highest in the North Main/Exchange area. Most of the OCT events recorded involved obstructing the passage of pedestrians or vehicular traffic. Continued solicitation was the next most frequently occurring panhandling event observed. There were no observed panhandling events in which those solicited were physically harmed; however, some may have felt threatened.

Although this study identifies nearly half of all observed panhandling events as By-Law violations, this is based on a broad interpretation of the By-Law. When a more narrow interpretation of the By-Law is used, the number of violations observed decreases considerably. A broad interpretation includes a 10 meter distance restriction, whereas a narrow interpretation does not specify a distance restriction, but refers instead to using, waiting at, waiting to use or departing from sensitive services. A narrow interpretation also includes only those groups of three or more panhandlers which physically approach during the course of soliciting.

## **1.0 Introduction**

Stereotypes about panhandlers abound in Winnipeg. Strong negative reaction to panhandling has been the impetus for the creation of legislation to either control and/or eliminate panhandling. The effectiveness of legislation is often questioned on the basis that it only relocates the problem - rather than solving it - and limits or infringes on the rights of a group trying to sustain themselves.

It is unknown whether the stigma attached to panhandlers by many members of the public and many in the business community is justified: there is little solid information about panhandling activity in Winnipeg. This study sheds light on panhandlers' realities and needs which provides an understanding of the gaps in services and supports that need to be bridged, and systemic changes required to improve circumstances and reduce individuals' reliance on panhandling. Essentially, this research provides a foundation from which to better address the personal, systemic, legal, service/support and social issues that make it necessary for individuals to resort to panhandling activity.

There are several components to the research methodology used in this project (for study methodology see Appendix A). This study 1) reviews the current literature on panhandling, and the legislation and initiatives in other jurisdictions used to control and/or reduce panhandling; 2) maps the location of panhandlers relative to "sensitive services"; 3) observes the nature and methods of panhandling; and 4) interviews 75 panhandlers. The study examines the effects of the current legislation on panhandling activities in Winnipeg, and describes inadequacies identified by panhandlers in support services and program initiatives in effectively reducing their need to panhandle.

This volume presents the results of field observation of panhandling activity throughout the study area in Winnipeg. Maps in this section indicate the distribution of panhandlers as observed throughout the study area, priority or high traffic locations for panhandling activity, and proximity to "sensitive services", as well as the distribution and frequency of occurrence of observed panhandling activity according to various factors.

## 2.0 Mapping of Panhandling Activity

### 2.1 Identification and Definition of Areas of Activity

In order to bring a geographic focus to the research, an area of Winnipeg generally known for its high concentration of panhandling activity was chosen. The Winnipeg study area (Map 2.1) extended west of downtown to Arlington St, then north to include Sargent Avenue. The northern boundary was extended as far as Higgins Avenue at Main Street, which is the eastern boundary. The southern boundary runs along Broadway Avenue. The downtown underground and above-ground walkway system was part of the study area, as was the retail/commercial part of Osborne Village, with the study area limited to Osborne Street south to Wardlaw Avenue, plus the adjoining Safeway Shopping complex on River Ave. This is where most of the panhandling activity in Osborne Village occurs.

The study was limited to this area, as this is where the vast majority of panhandling activity occurs in Winnipeg. Panhandling takes place elsewhere in Winnipeg such as Polo Park, St. Vital Centre, and St. Boniface, but these areas were not included in the study in order to concentrate limited resources to where panhandling seems to occur with greatest frequency.

For more detailed analysis the study area was broken into the following eight sub-areas:

1. North Main/Exchange
2. Central East
3. Central West
4. Sargent Ellice West
5. Portage Broadway West
6. Broadway/Osborne
7. Broadway/Main
8. Osborne Village

At the beginning of the project, the study area was divided into two sections that were walkable within a 3–4 hour period.

- The east section included areas: North Main/Exchange, Central East, Central West, and Broadway/Main.
- The west section included areas: Sargent Ellice West, Portage Broadway West, and Osborne Village.

The researcher walked through the study section in an “observational sweep” and recorded details of each panhandling event observed. A total of 27 observational sweeps were conducted during the course of this research. Two sweeps were done during the winter (Jan, Feb) followed by 25 sweeps between April 5<sup>th</sup> and June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

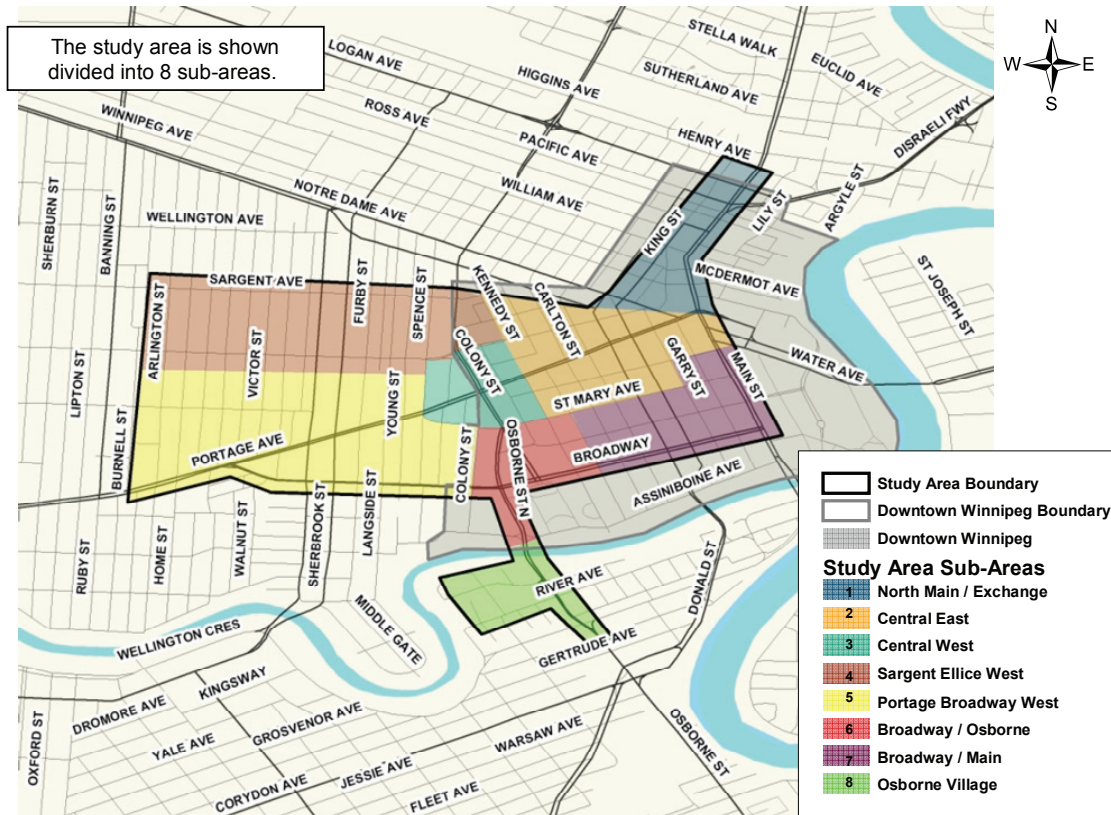
Due to its location relative to the two sections, observation in Broadway/Osborne was included in sweeps of both sections. It was necessary to double-back down Portage Avenue in order to cover sub areas in each sweep of the east section. This, coupled with the high concentration of panhandling activity along Portage, and the wideness of the street which made it impossible to observe both sides

at once, meant that the eastern part of Portage Avenue was included at least 3 times in each east section sweep.

These sweeps identified the sub-areas of concentrated panhandling activity to be Central East and Central West along Portage Avenue, North Main/Exchange, and Osborne Village. The observation sweeps were then focussed on these higher activity areas in order to record a higher number of panhandling events within a shorter period of time, and make more efficient use of limited research resources. This change meant that all four high priority areas could be walked in a single 3-4 hour sweep. Other areas were then only periodically sampled, during higher activity times of day and days of week.

Results related to areas and sub-areas are only general estimations, as the methodology for this study was not created with the primary intent of gaining statistically relevant information related to location. The focus of this study is on panhandling methods, so it was important to observe as many panhandling events as possible within the limited time and resources of the research. For that reason, it was important to focus on high frequency panhandling sub-areas. As a result, some sub-areas were observed more often than others, while other sub-areas were dropped altogether because few, if any, panhandling events were observed there. This means that some sub-areas may be over-represented when comparing panhandling events in sub-areas as a percentage of the overall study.

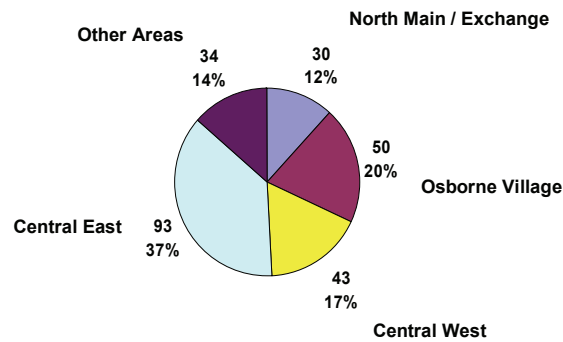
**MAP 2.1. STUDY AREA AND SUB-AREAS**



Base Map Source: DMTI Spatial

A total of 250 panhandling events were observed and recorded during the course of the research. Figure 2.1 presents the distribution of these events by sub-area. Most events observed occurred in the Central East, Central West, North Main/Exchange, and Osborne Village. The interview component of this research project (Volume 2), conducted separately from the field observation component, helped inform the selection of the study area, and provides additional insights into the geographic distribution of panhandling activity in the city.

**Figure 2.1: PANHANDLING EVENTS IN WINNIPEG BY SUB-AREA**



Note that in some cases only Central East and Osborne Village sub-areas are represented in the different categories of maps throughout this study. These sub-areas were chosen as examples because that is where the largest proportion of panhandling events was observed, and because between them they include the full spectrum of panhandling methods and panhandler population types.

## **2.2 Location of Sensitive Services Within Study Area**

“Sensitive Services” is a term often used in the panhandling literature to refer to specific types of locations, the nature of which potentially makes users of that service feel threatened or vulnerable when panhandling activity takes place in the location’s vicinity. In some cases it is because the service user would likely be in possession of something valuable, such as money withdrawn from a bank or alcohol purchased at a liquor store. A location may also be deemed a sensitive service if, in order to use the service, the user cannot readily leave the area to escape any unwanted solicitation. An example of this would be a bus stop where the user must be at the bus stop in order to board a bus. The individual needs to be at that particular location to use the service, hence they are “captive” for a period of time in that location.

Although the current amended By-Law does not use the term “sensitive service”, it does list particular services where people would be considered to be “captive”, and soliciting a captive audience, is considered to be a violation under the amended By-Law.

The list of sensitive services used for mapping purposes in this study includes the following specific locations mentioned in the amended By-Law:

1. bank, credit union, or automated teller machine (ATM). (In this study, only ATMs that are clearly advertised or can be clearly seen from outside a building are included).
2. public pay telephone (In this study, public pay phones located on the street or attached to the exterior of a building were included. Public pay phones inside buildings were not included).
3. public transit stop or taxi stand (Only officially marked taxi-waiting areas were included in this study).
4. downtown pedestrian walkway system – includes the Skywalk and underground.
5. an outdoor area of a restaurant or bar in which food or beverages are being served. For this study, this includes any outdoor patio attached to a bar, café, or restaurant with no differentiation drawn between fenced, glassed, or “open” patios.

Three other specific types of locations, although not mentioned in the By-Law, are also included in this study because they are considered to be sensitive services in the panhandling literature, and because people may feel threatened if they are panhandled nearby. These include:

6. liquor stores
7. other financial institutions (that are not banks or credit unions) including pay-day loan and cheque cashing outlets
8. the VIA-rail train station.

There are a few specific locations at which panhandling is considered a violation of the By-Law that were too difficult to map, and were therefore left out of the study. Public transit vehicles were not map-able because transit vehicles are not stationary. Elevators, parking spots and parking lots were not included because they are far too numerous in the study area to effectively map.

Approximately 380 sensitive services were identified in the study area. The distribution of the sensitive services is presented in Map 2.2.



**Map 2.2. SENSITIVE SERVICES IDENTIFIED IN THE STUDY AREA**



Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative

### 2.3 Proximity of Panhandlers to Sensitive Services

Several maps were produced indicating: the distribution of panhandlers throughout the study area; priority or high traffic locations for panhandling; and, proximity to sensitive services.

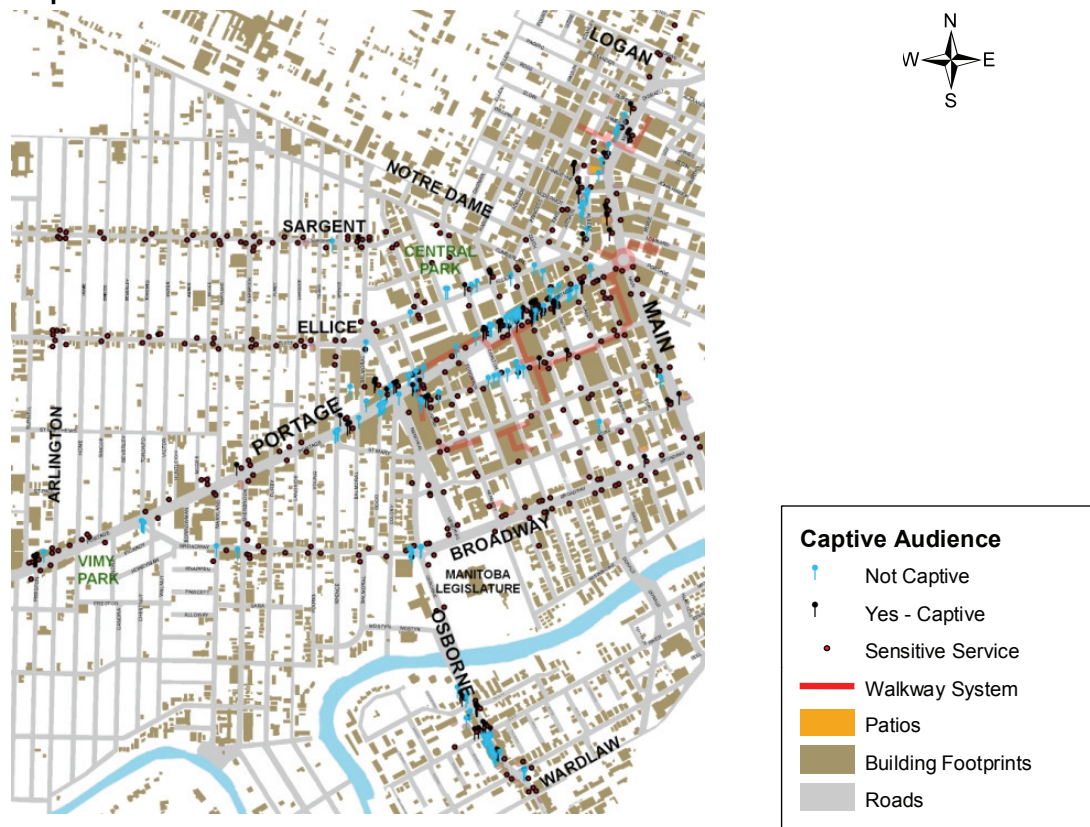
Some methodological challenges were encountered in identifying and mapping violations involving some situations with captive audiences at sensitive services. The amended 2005 By-Law's specific wording does not contain any reference to "nearness to" or "distance from" ATMs, banks, credit unions, or public payphones. In these situations it refers to "waiting to use" these services, a term which leaves much room for interpretation by: the field research observer, those responsible for enforcement, and the Courts. Determining whether a person is "waiting to use" requires knowledge of that person's intended actions. It can be argued that a person could be near a sensitive service but not be there to use the sensitive service. In such a situation, it would not be considered a By-Law violation if that person was panhandled. How is a panhandler, though, to know who is "waiting to use" a sensitive service, and thus, who can be panhandled and who cannot?

Although this does not make it a violation under the current By-Law, it could be argued that if the panhandler is near a sensitive service, simply his/her proximity to the service might discourage people from using it. Taking this into consideration, this study considers any panhandling event near a sensitive service to be a violation, with "near" defined as being within ten metres. This was chosen

because it is the distance restriction specified in the repealed 1995 By-Law. As well, a similar distance has been incorporated in many panhandling by-laws in other cities. For mapping purposes in this study, therefore, any panhandling event taking place within ten metres of a sensitive service is considered to be involving a “captive audience” and is in violation of the amended 2005 By-Law - part (e) of “causes an obstruction”.

All panhandling events identified through fieldwork observation were plotted on maps of the study area. Map 2.3 illustrates those events which were observed within a ten-metre distance of sensitive services, and are, therefore, considered to be violations of the By-Law. Observation of the panhandler for a brief period was often required in order to determine the panhandling method used. The problem with mapping panhandling events when the panhandler is “On the Move” (constantly walking) is that in a relatively short time frame the panhandler could pass through non-sensitive service areas and sensitive service areas. Therefore, if an OTM panhandler violated a sensitive service within the observation timeframe, even for a brief moment, he/she was said to have been in violation. This means that the number of sensitive service violations is likely overstated here.

**Map 2.3. VIOLATIONS OF SENSITIVE SERVICES**



Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative

Detailed maps of observed sensitive service violations by all eight study sub-areas are presented in Appendix B. Note that no panhandling events were observed in the walkway system, which may be because only two sweeps of the study area included the walkway system. Therefore, it appears on maps as a sensitive service, but no separate maps were made of the walkway system for analysis.

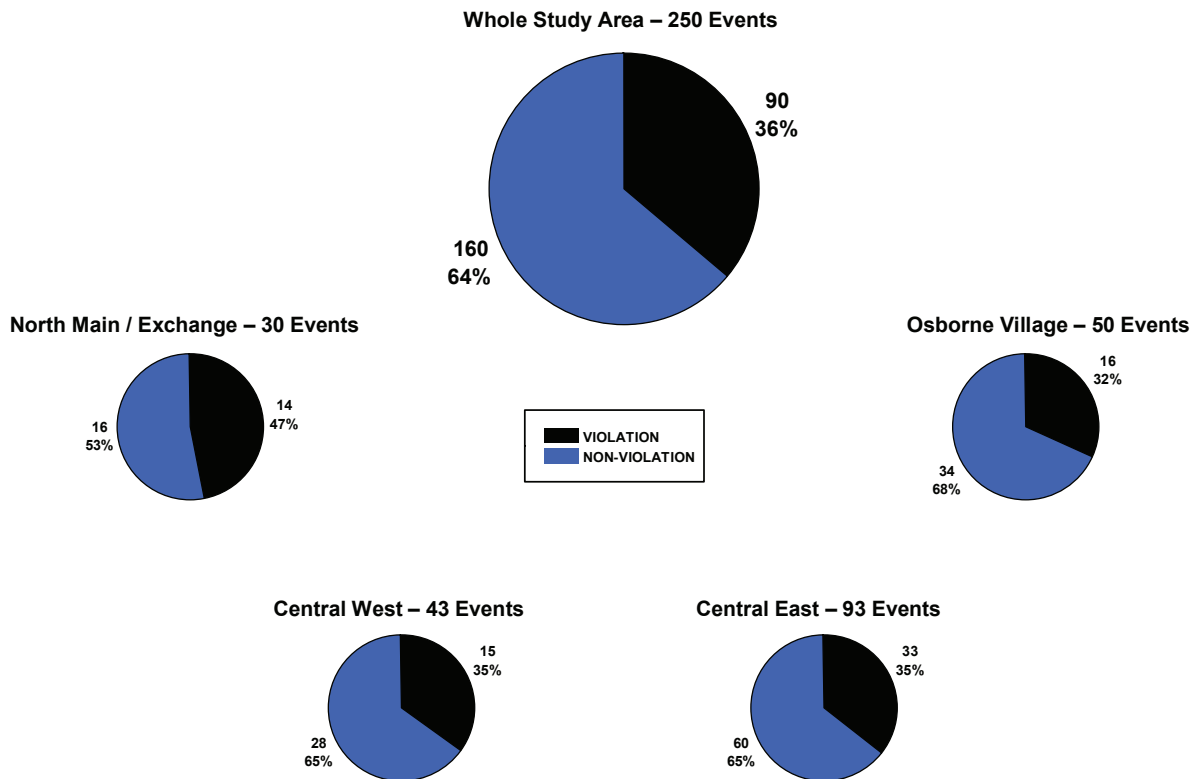


Table 2.2 presents the distribution of sensitive service violations by sub-area. Figure 2.2 and 2.3 illustrate the frequency of type of sensitive service violated within the study area and the sub-areas where the greatest number of panhandling events were observed.

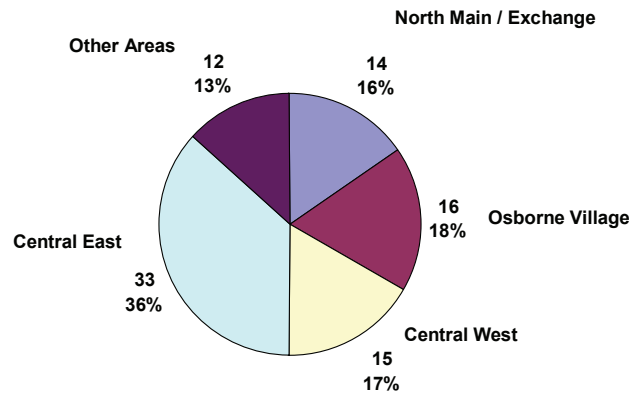
**Table 2.2 Violation of Sensitive Services by Area**

| Area                  | Total # of Panhandling Events | Sensitive Service Violation | Non-Violation of Sensitive Service | % Violation |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------|
| All                   | 250                           | 90                          | 160                                | 36.0%       |
| North Main / Exchange | 30                            | 14                          | 16                                 | 46.7%       |
| Osborne Village       | 50                            | 16                          | 34                                 | 32.0%       |
| Portage Broadway West | 15                            | 7                           | 8                                  | 46.7%       |
| Ellice Sargent        | 4                             | 1                           | 3                                  | 25.0%       |
| Broadway / Main       | 7                             | 4                           | 3                                  | 57.1%       |
| Central West          | 43                            | 15                          | 28                                 | 34.9%       |
| Central East          | 93                            | 33                          | 60                                 | 35.5%       |
| Broadway / Osborne    | 8                             | 0                           | 8                                  | 0.0%        |

**Figure 2.2. SENSITIVE SERVICE VIOLATIONS BY SUB-AREA**



**Figure 2.3. SUB-AREA SENSITIVE SERVICE VIOLATIONS AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL VIOLATIONS**



Out of 90 Total Sensitive Service Violations in Whole Study Area

Of the 250 panhandling events observed in this study, 90 events (36%) took place within 10 metres of a sensitive service and, therefore, were considered to be in violation of the By-Law. The type of sensitive service found to be most often violated was the bus stops. The greatest number of sensitive service violations was observed in the Central East sub-area (33). High ratios of violations (above 30%) were recorded in the Osborne Village, Central West and Central East sub-areas, where most of the panhandling activity was observed. Fifty-seven percent of panhandling events recorded in the Broadway/Main sub-area and 47 percent in each of the North Main/Exchange and Portage Broadway West sub-areas were sensitive service violations. However, there were relatively few panhandling events observed in these areas.

## 2.4 Conclusions

Panhandling activity in the study area in Winnipeg is concentrated in the Central East and Central West sub-areas along Portage, in North Main/Exchange, and in Osborne Village. Observation showed that, based on the ten-metre distance restriction, bus stops were the most often violated sensitive services. Violations of sensitive services were most likely to occur in Central East, representing more than one third of all observed violations of sensitive services in the study area. The ten-metre distance restriction, although not an arbitrarily chosen threshold, represents a significant distance. It could be argued that ten metres is too far, and a much shorter distance should be used to define “near” in a “captive audience” situation. However, if the ten metres is justified then about one-third of all panhandling events documented involved a “captive audience” situation. The frequency of sensitive services violations varied significantly by sub-area. It is difficult to explain why such variations were observed. It could be that monitoring of panhandling activity by authorities is not as concentrated in certain sub-areas, particularly outside the high activity locations and, therefore, panhandlers are less likely to be charged there as in other locations. Or it could be that the nature and/or location of the sensitive services themselves makes some easier than others to inadvertently infringe upon.

### 3.0 Documentation of Panhandling Methods

#### 3.1 Developing a Panhandling Typology

To collect and analyze data in the observation component of this research study, a typology of panhandling methods was developed based on the categories of panhandling offences identified in By-Law 7700/2000 and the 2005 amendment to this By-Law. The typology also incorporates other categories in order to collect information upon which to develop a broader understanding of panhandling. This includes factors such as technique used (eg. sign, cap in hand), how the request is indicated (eg. verbal, gesture), and level of activity (sitting, standing, walking). It was recorded as to whether or not upon refusal any further communication followed, and if so, whether it was polite (“thank-you”, “have a nice day”, etc.) or impolite (nasty reply, perhaps including obscenities, gesturing or raised voice). The intention was to capture a more comprehensive range of panhandling methods than is achieved by the By-Law and to better reflect the truly broad spectrum of panhandling methods that exist. Community agency partners, a review of the literature and legislation in other cities, and panhandlers themselves provided insights into the development of the typology.

1. **Stationary Passive:** Individual panhandler is sitting or standing with a sign, cup or outstretched hand, indicating need. No communication is involved unless the passerby initiates it. There is no movement of the panhandler towards the passersby unless there is an indication of a donation being offered. The panhandler is not blocking passage or causing people to alter their activity in any way.
2. **Stationary Passive with verbal request:** Individual panhandler is sitting or standing with a sign, cup or outstretched hand indicating need. This is accompanied by a verbal request in a normal speaking voice, brief and polite, and is made only once per person. There is no movement of the panhandler towards passersby unless there is an indication of a donation being offered. The panhandler is not blocking passage or causing people to alter their activity in any way.
3. **Stationary, with verbal threaten, continue:** Panhandler, standing or sitting, yells or shouts demands at passersby and/or panhandler repeats request after initial request is denied.
4. **On the move (OTM):** Individual panhandler asks people for money as s/he walks past them on the sidewalk, without obstructing their path. Accompanied by an indication of need which may include a verbal request that is in a normal speaking voice, brief and polite, and is made only once per person.
5. **Verbal with approach:** Panhandler is standing but moves toward (approaches) the passersby with a verbal request in a normal speaking voice that is brief, polite, and is made only once. The approach does not cause the person to move to avoid panhandler.
6. **Verbal with obstructive approach:** Panhandler is standing or walking and moves toward (approaches) the passerby, obstructing or impeding convenient passage to the degree that the person is forced to move around them. This is accompanied by a verbal request in a normal speaking voice that is brief, polite, and is made only once.
7. **Verbal threaten, continue:** Panhandler makes verbal request in normal speaking voice and only once, but follows pedestrian down the street; makes physical contact with the person; or uses violent, obscene or threatening gestures in the course of solicitation.
8. **Verbal threaten, continue, obstructive:** Panhandler standing or walking moves to obstruct or impede person’s convenient passage accompanied by loud and/or threatening verbal request during course of solicitation, or repeated requests after initial request is

- denied. The panhandler may also follow the pedestrian, make physical contact, or use violent, obscene or threatening gestures in the course of solicitation.
9. **Passive captive audience:** Panhandler makes a gesture or request of a captive audience in a normal speaking voice, brief and polite, which is made only once.
  10. **Obstruct, continue, verbal threaten, captive audience:** The panhandler makes a gesture or request of a captive audience using loud and/or threatening verbal request; makes physical contact; obstructs; makes repeated requests after initial request is denied; does not move away after denial; or, uses violent, obscene or threatening gestures during the course of solicitation.

The Observation Matrix (Table 3.1), based on the typology above, was used to record the panhandling methods observed during sweeps of the survey area. Whether the panhandler was male or female, alone, with a pet, or with others was recorded. If with others, the number of people together was also noted. The panhandling location, address and description, the date and time of the panhandling event, and weather conditions were also noted.

**Table 3.1. Panhandling Observation Matrix**

| Date:                      |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Time:                      |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Weather conditions:        |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| General location:          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| Specifics: location        |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Stationary                 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Non-obstructive Approach   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Obstructive Approach*      |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| OTM, Obstructive*          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| OTM, Non-obstructive       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Captive Audience*          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Non-verbal Passive         |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Verbal Polite Passive      |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Verbal, Repeat*            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Verbal, Loud/ Threatening* |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Follows*                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Gestures*                  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Touches*                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Alone                      |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Alone with Pet             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| With Others, # **          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| With Others and pet(s) #** |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Polite reply               |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Nasty reply*               |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

\* Denotes By-Law Violation    \*\* Violation if Group of 3 or more

### 3.2 Still vs. OTM and Passive vs. OCT

Key panhandling methods were distinguished for the purpose of mapping and to allow for more accurate analysis:

- **OTM** (On-The-Move) refers to a panhandler who, for the most part, is walking and panhandling people along the way. Other than short stops made to rest or to gather money, movement is constant.
- **Stationary** is when the panhandler is either seated or standing in one place.
- **Approach** is when the panhandler is standing and moves towards a passerby when making a request. The solicitation space is very small; only a couple of steps are taken.
- **Still** is a category which includes both Stationary and Approach, but not OTM.
- **OCT** – refers to obstruct, continue and threaten as descriptors of the following specific parts of the amended By-Law 7700/2000 (2005):
  - a) In the course of solicitation, to **obstruct** or impede the convenient passage of any pedestrian or vehicular traffic in a street;
  - b) To **continue** to solicit from or follow a pedestrian after that person has made a negative response to solicitation; or
  - c) To verbally **threaten** or insult a pedestrian in the course of, or following a solicitation.

For a panhandling event to be considered OCT, it must be recorded on the observation matrix as at least one of the following categories: Obstructive Approach, OTM Obstructive, Verbal Repeat, Verbal Loud/Threatening, Follows, Gestures, Touches, or Nasty Reply.

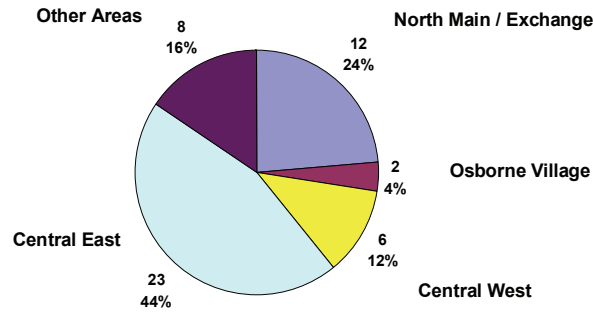
Passive methods of panhandling involve no violation of the above three rules (they could be considered non-OCT).

The Panhandling Observation Matrix was used to gather all data on panhandling event observation, which was then used to map panhandling methods. These maps illustrate the distribution and frequency of occurrence of different methods of panhandling according to the By-Law.

Table 3.2 and Figure 3.1 – 3.5 illustrate frequency and distribution of panhandling methods by the study area and by the sub-areas in which the greatest number of panhandling events were observed: North Main/Exchange, Osborne Village, Central West, and Central East.

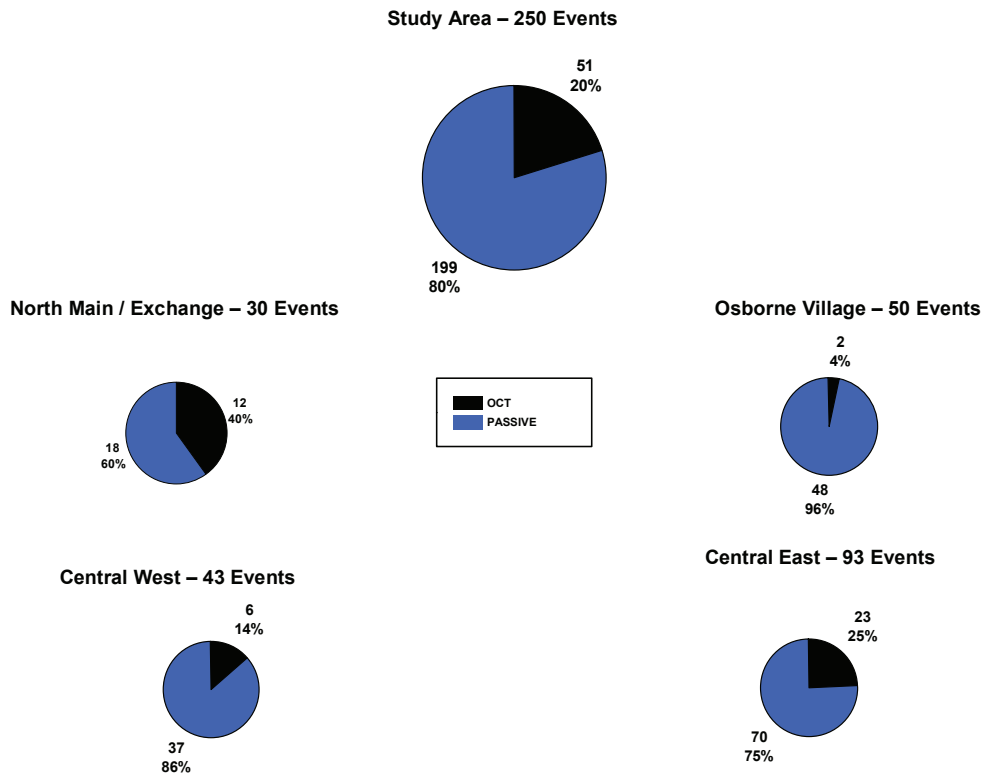
Out of 250 panhandling events observed, the majority - 199 events or 79.6% - were passive or not OCT (not obstructive, continued nor threatening). Note that among the 199 some are other types of violations. The sub-area with the highest proportion of passive methods observed was Osborne Village (96%), followed closely by Central West (86%), and Central East (75.3%). The highest proportion of OCT panhandling activity was observed in the North Main/Exchange sub-area at 40%, followed by Central East where a quarter of that sub-area's observed panhandling activity was OCT. North Main/Exchange was also the sub-area with the largest proportion of OTM (53%) and OTM OCT (23%) panhandling methods observed.

**Figure 3.1 SUB-AREA OCT VIOLATIONS AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL OCT VIOLATIONS**



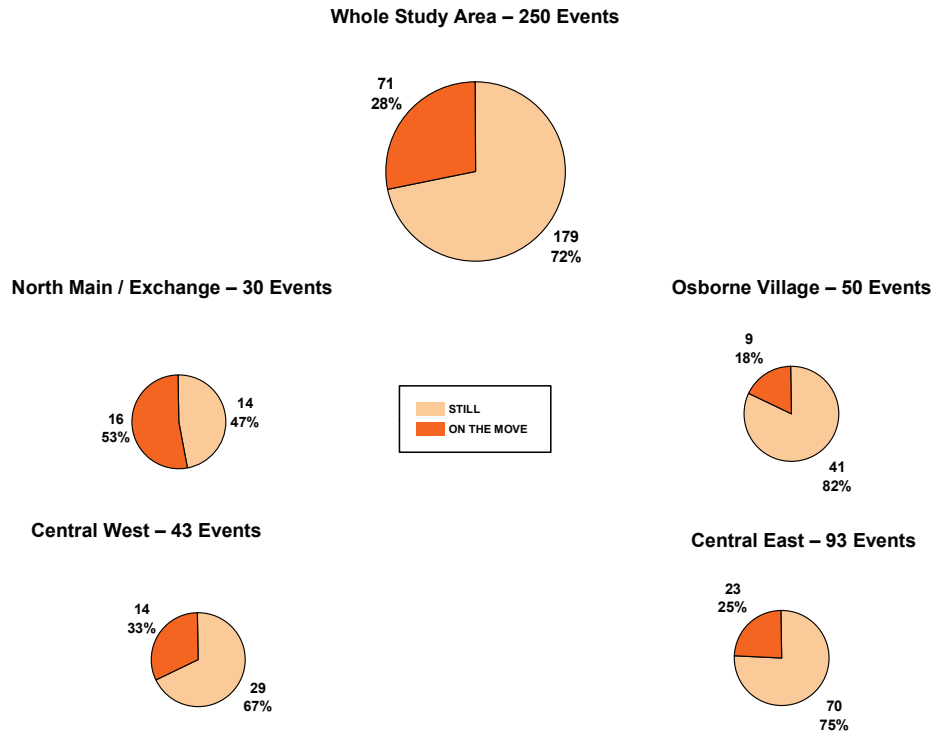
Out of 51 Total OCT Violations in Whole Study Area

**Figure 3.2 OCT vs. PASSIVE PANHANDLING BY SUB-AREA**



Within the entire study area, only fifty-one (20.4%) of all 250 panhandling events were identified as being OCT. Of the 51 OCT violations within the entire study area, twenty three (44%) were observed in Central East. This is where 37 percent of all panhandling events were observed. Twelve (24%) of all OCT events were recorded in the North Main/Exchange, six (12%) in Central West, only two (4%) in Osborne Village, and a mere eight (16%) for all other study sub-areas combined.

**Figure 3.3 OTM vs. STILL PANHANDLING BY SUB-AREA**



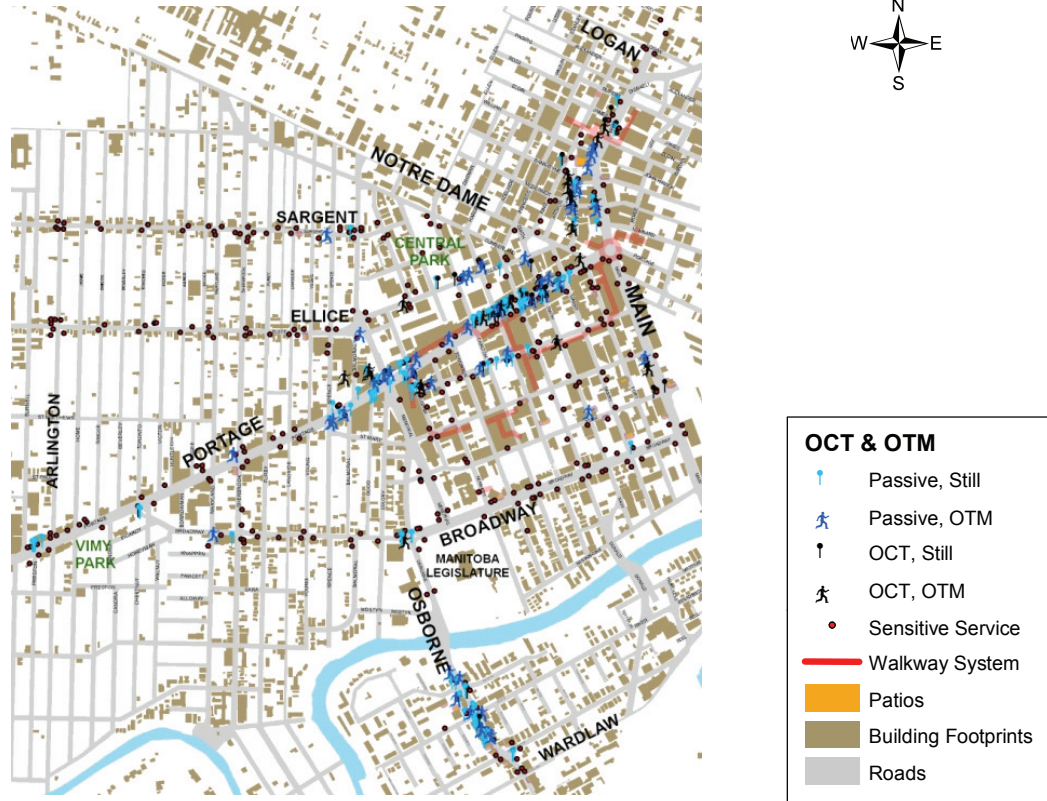
Note: See Appendix C for maps of panhandling methods for Osborne Village and Central East.

**Table 3.2. Panhandling Methods by Area**

| Area/Sub-area           | Total      | All Still  | Still %     | All OTM   | OTM %       | All OCT   | OCT %       | All Pass   | Pass %      | Still, Pass | Still pass % | Still, OCT | Still OCT % | OTM OCT   | OTM OCT %  | OTM Pass  | OTM Pass %  |
|-------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|------------|-------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| <b>Study area - all</b> | <b>250</b> | <b>179</b> | <b>71.6</b> | <b>71</b> | <b>28.4</b> | <b>51</b> | <b>20.4</b> | <b>199</b> | <b>79.6</b> | <b>152</b>  | <b>60.8</b>  | <b>27</b>  | <b>10.8</b> | <b>24</b> | <b>9.6</b> | <b>47</b> | <b>18.8</b> |
| North Main/Exchange     | 30         | 14         | 46.7        | 16        | 53.3        | 12        | 40.0        | 18         | 60.0        | 9           | 30.0         | 5          | 16.7        | 7         | 23.3       | 9         | 30.0        |
| Osborne Village         | 50         | 41         | 82.0        | 9         | 18.0        | 2         | 4.0         | 48         | 96.0        | 39          | 78.0         | 2          | 4.0         | 0         | 0.0        | 9         | 18.0        |
| Central West            | 43         | 29         | 67.4        | 14        | 32.6        | 6         | 14.0        | 37         | 86.0        | 28          | 65.1         | 1          | 2.3         | 5         | 11.6       | 9         | 20.9        |
| Central East            | 93         | 70         | 75.3        | 23        | 24.7        | 23        | 24.7        | 70         | 75.3        | 56          | 60.2         | 14         | 15.1        | 9         | 9.7        | 14        | 15.1        |
| All other sub-areas     | 34         | 25         | 73.5        | 9         | 26.5        | 8         | 23.5        | 26         | 76.5        | 20          | 58.8         | 5          | 14.7        | 3         | 8.8        | 6         | 17.6        |



**Map 3.1. PANHANDLING METHODS: OCT / PASSIVE & OTM / STILL**



Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative

**Figure 3.4 OCT vs. PASSIVE and OTM vs. STILL PANHANDLING BY SUB-AREA**

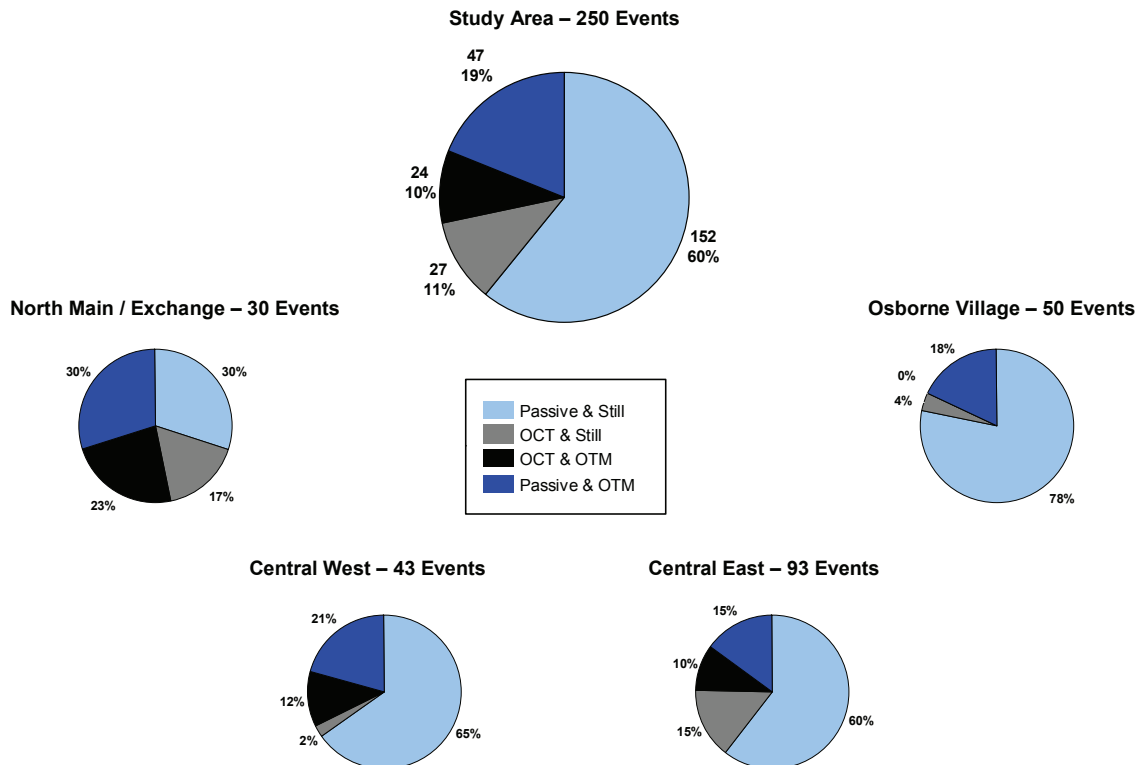
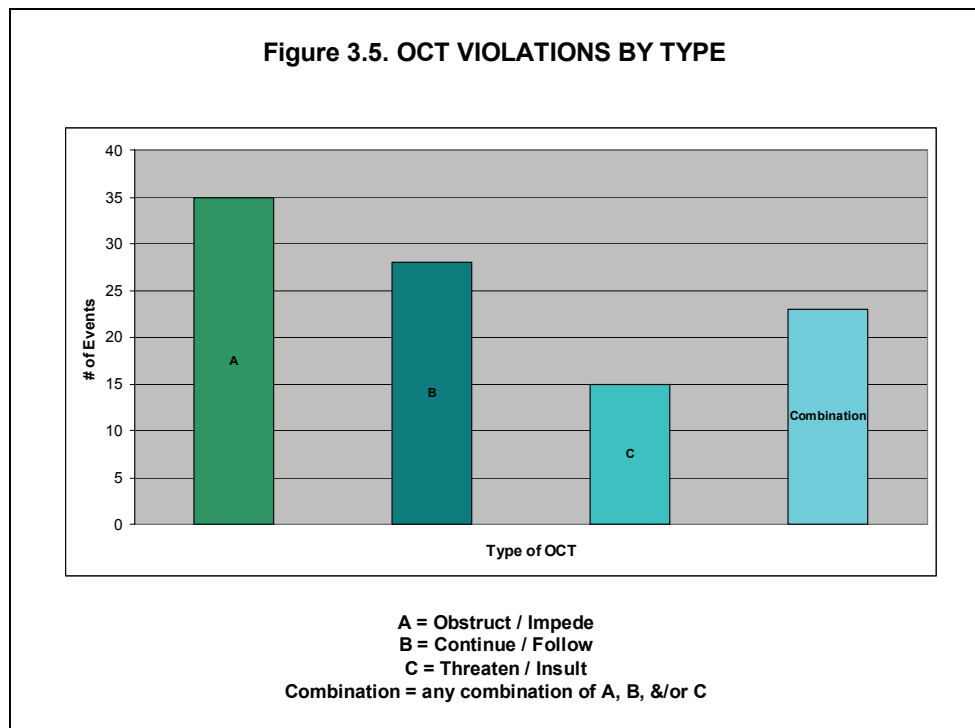


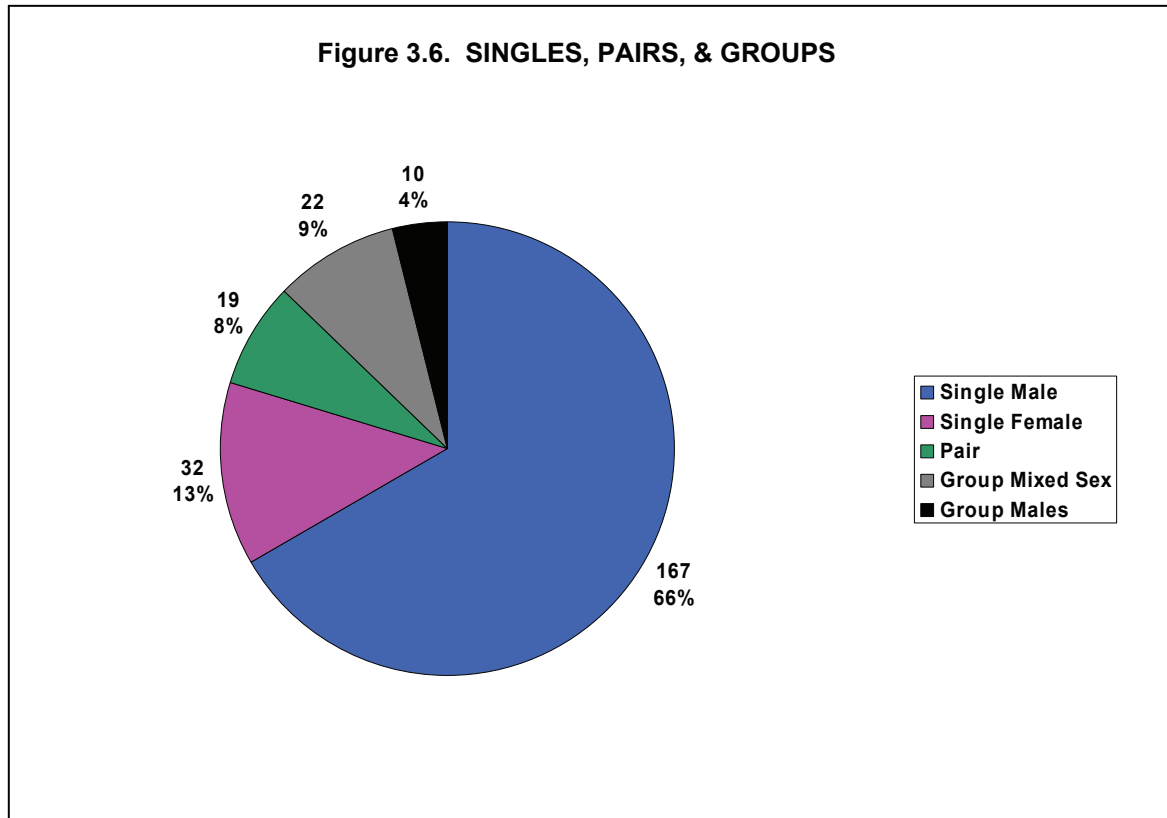


Figure 3.5 illustrates the proportion of OCT panhandling by type of violation described in the amended By-Law No. 7700/2000: (A) to obstruct or impede; (B) continued solicitation or following after a negative response; (C) verbally threaten or insult; and, any combination of these violations. The greatest number of violations observed were those which obstructed or impeded (A), with only 14% or 35 out of the total of 250 panhandling events, and 68.6 % of all OCT events observed. 28 events involved continued solicitation or following (B), which amounts to only 11.2% of all panhandling events, and 54.9% of OCT events. Only 15 (6%) of the 250 panhandling events observed involved threats or insults, which is only 29% of the 51 OCT events. Note that the absolute numbers of violations add up to more than the total of 51 OCT events here because 23 of these events involved more than one - a combination - of OCT methods and are, therefore, counted under each type of OCT in the combination. 9.2% of all panhandling events involved some combination of one, two or all three types of violations. This works out to be 45.1% of OCT events.



### 3.3 Male/Female and Individual Versus Group

Observation activities included recording whether panhandlers were male or female, and whether they were panhandling alone or with others. Of all panhandling events recorded, 79% involved panhandlers working alone: 32 events (12.8% of 250) involved females alone while 167 events (66.8% of 250) involved males alone. That means that 83.9% of panhandlers observed to be working alone were male and only 16.1% were female. Panhandlers working in pairs were recorded for 8% of events, and the remaining 13% included groups of three or more: 4% included males only, and 9% had both females and males. There were no observed panhandling events by groups composed entirely of females. See Figure 3.6.



Part (d) of the 2005 By-Law's "causes an obstruction" defines a group of panhandlers as three or more persons. Because singles and pairs are not in violation of the "group" reference in the By-Law, and for ease of mapping and comparisons, singles and pairs are combined within the male and female categories for Table 3.3, Figure 3.7 and Map 3.2. Although some pairs may have a male and female together, in the table, figure and map, the sex of the pair is identified by that of the primary solicitor. As in the previous sections, mapping and statistical analysis focused on four study areas: North Main/Exchange, Osborne Village, Central West, and Central East.

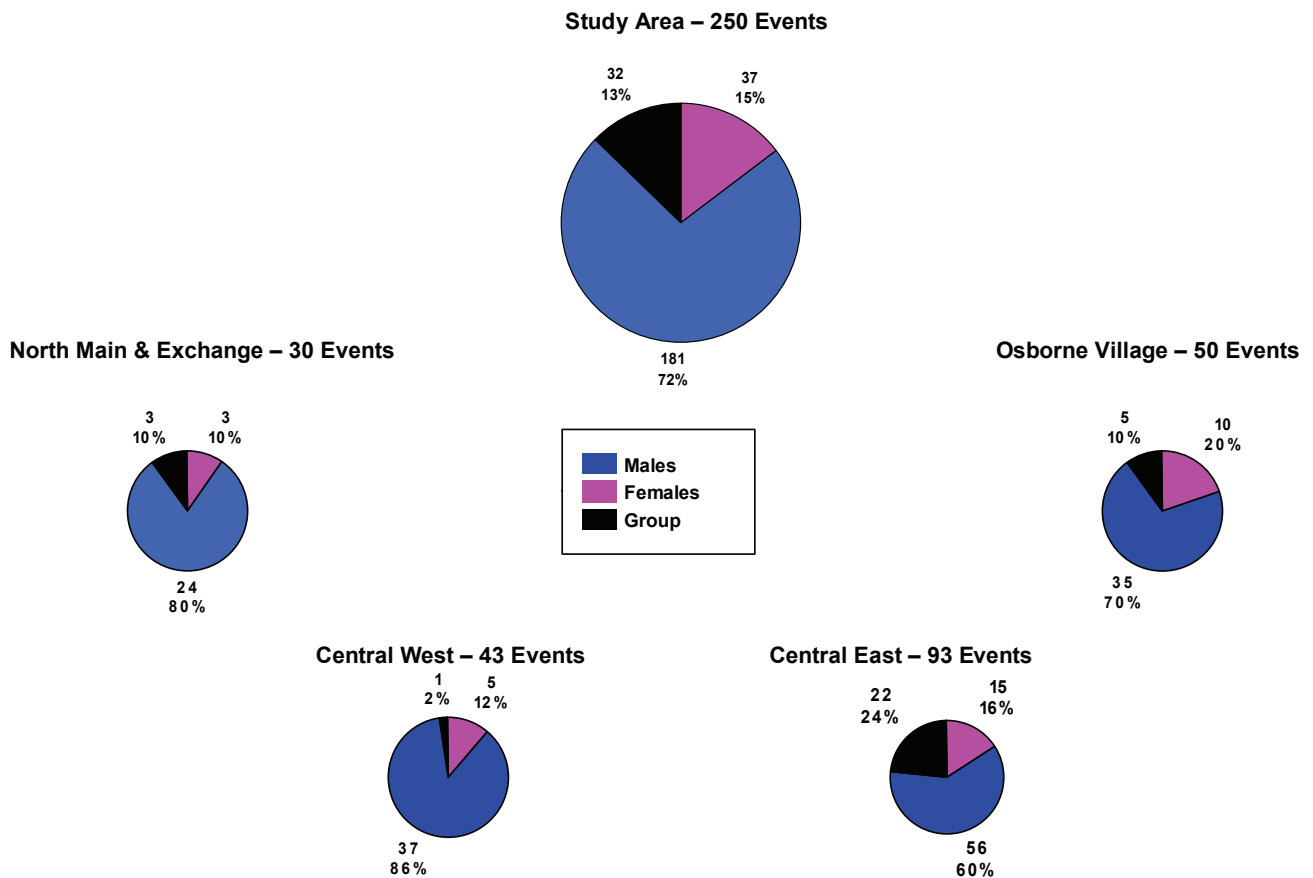
**Table 3.3. Panhandling Activity by Sex and Group**

| Area                   | Total Events | Female Events |                 | Male Events |                 | All Group Events |                 |
|------------------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
|                        |              | #             | % of Area Total | #           | % of Area Total | #                | % of Area Total |
| <b>All</b>             | 250          | 37            | 14.8            | 181         | 72.4            | 32               | 12.8            |
| <b>North Main</b>      | 30           | 3             | 10.0            | 24          | 80.0            | 3                | 10.0            |
| <b>Osborne Village</b> | 50           | 10            | 20.0            | 35          | 70.0            | 5                | 10.0            |
| <b>Central West</b>    | 43           | 5             | 11.6            | 37          | 86.0            | 1                | 2.3             |
| <b>Central East</b>    | 93           | 15            | 16.1            | 56          | 60.2            | 22               | 23.7            |
| <b>Other Areas</b>     | 34           | 4             | 11.8            | 29          | 85.3            | 1                | 2.9             |

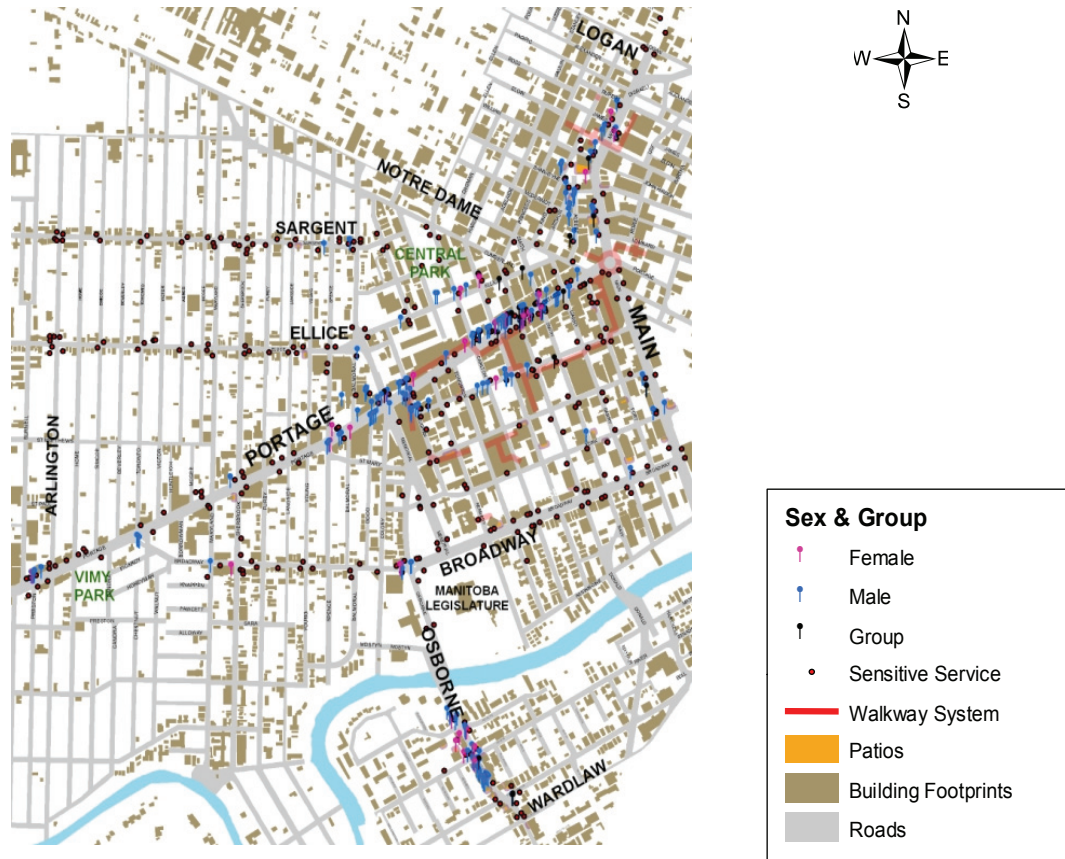
Only 12.8%, or 32 of the total 250 panhandling events, involved groups of three or more. The majority of these (22) were observed in the Central East sub-area, which is also where the greatest proportion of group panhandling was observed: 23.7% of the total 93 events in the sub-area.

Female panhandlers, as singles or as the primary solicitor in pairs, were observed in only 14.8% or 37 of the total 250 events, compared to 181 (72.4%) that involved male panhandlers. A slightly higher proportion of panhandling events by females were observed in Osborne Village and Central East than in other sub-areas. The sub areas with the highest proportion of male panhandling events were Central West (86%), and North Main (80%).

**Figure 3.7. PANHANDLING BY SEX & GROUP BY SUB-AREA**



Map 3.2. PANHANDLING METHODS: SEX &amp; GROUP



Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative

### 3.4 Conclusions

The research indicates that the majority of panhandling in the study area -199 events or 79.6% - was undertaken in a passive manner that is not obstructive, continued or threatening. In Osborne Village 96% of all events observed were passive, followed closely by Central West at 86%. Central East also had a high rate of passive panhandling events, at 75.3% or 70 of the 93 events within its boundaries. This is interesting because the remaining 23 events in Central East were OCT, which means that it is also the sub-area with the highest number of OCT observed, and the second highest proportion at 24.7%. The highest proportion of OCT panhandling activity was observed in the North Main/Exchange sub-area at 40%, but that accounts for only 18 out of 30 observed events. OCT violations of the By-Law certainly do occur, but in this study, these accounted for 20.4% of the 250 panhandling events observed. Most of the OCT acts recorded in the observation component of this study involved obstruction of the convenient passage of pedestrians or vehicular traffic in a street. Panhandling in groups of three or more does not make up a large proportion of the observed activity (only 12.8%), and tends to be most concentrated in the Central East area. Panhandling in pairs only accounted for eight percent of observed events. The majority of panhandling acts observed were performed by individuals (79%), of which the majority were male.

#### 4.0 Frequency of Panhandling by Time of Day

##### 4.1 Developing a Time Frame for Analysis

In order to understand more about panhandling activity in the study area in general, the time of day, day of week, and month were recorded for each event observed during the observational component of research study. A sweep is defined as a 3–4 hour time period of panhandler activity field observation. For mapping purposes, four discrete daily timeframes were used that corresponded with general categories identified by panhandlers themselves. Table 4.1 illustrates the number of observational sweeps of the study area completed during these timeframes:

**Table 4.1 Number of Sweeps in Study area by Time of Day**

|    | Time of Day                 | # of Sweeps |
|----|-----------------------------|-------------|
| 1. | Morning (8:00 AM – Noon)    | 5           |
| 2. | Afternoon (Noon – 5:00 PM)  | 9           |
| 3. | Evening (5:00 PM – 9:00 PM) | 7           |
| 4. | Night (9:00 PM – 2:00 AM)   | 6           |
|    | <b>Total</b>                | <b>27</b>   |

Table 4.2 shows the number of observational sweeps by sub-area, according to the time of day, whether it was during the week or on the weekend, and by the month.

**Table 4.2 Sweeps by sub-area and by Time of Day, Week/end, and Month**

| Area                  | Total # of Sweeps | Time of Day |           |         |       | Weekday/End* |         | Month (2006) |       |     |      |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------|---------|-------|--------------|---------|--------------|-------|-----|------|
|                       |                   | Morning     | Afternoon | Evening | Night | Weekday      | Weekend | Jan/Feb      | April | May | June |
| All                   | 27                | 5           | 9         | 7       | 6     | 18           | 9       | 2            | 11    | 7   | 7    |
| North Main / Exchange | 19                | 2           | 6         | 6       | 5     | 10           | 9       | 1            | 6     | 5   | 7    |
| Central East          | 20                | 3           | 6         | 6       | 5     | 11           | 9       | 1            | 7     | 5   | 7    |
| Central West          | 20                | 3           | 6         | 6       | 5     | 11           | 9       | 1            | 7     | 5   | 7    |
| Sargent Ellice West   | 9                 | 1           | 3         | 4       | 1     | 7            | 2       | 1            | 5     | 1   | 2    |
| Portage Broadway West | 12                | 2           | 4         | 5       | 1     | 8            | 4       | 1            | 5     | 2   | 4    |
| Broadway / Osborne    | 23                | 3           | 7         | 7       | 6     | 14           | 9       | 1            | 10    | 5   | 7    |
| Main / Broadway       | 16                | 3           | 3         | 6       | 4     | 9            | 7       | 1            | 7     | 4   | 4    |
| Osborne Village       | 18                | 2           | 5         | 6       | 5     | 10           | 8       | 1            | 5     | 5   | 7    |
| Walkway               | 2                 | 1           | 1         | 0       | 0     | 2            | 0       | 0            | 0     | 2   | 0    |

\* Note: Weekday includes all day Monday to Thursday, plus Friday morning and afternoon

*Weekend includes Friday evening and night, and all day Saturday and Sunday*

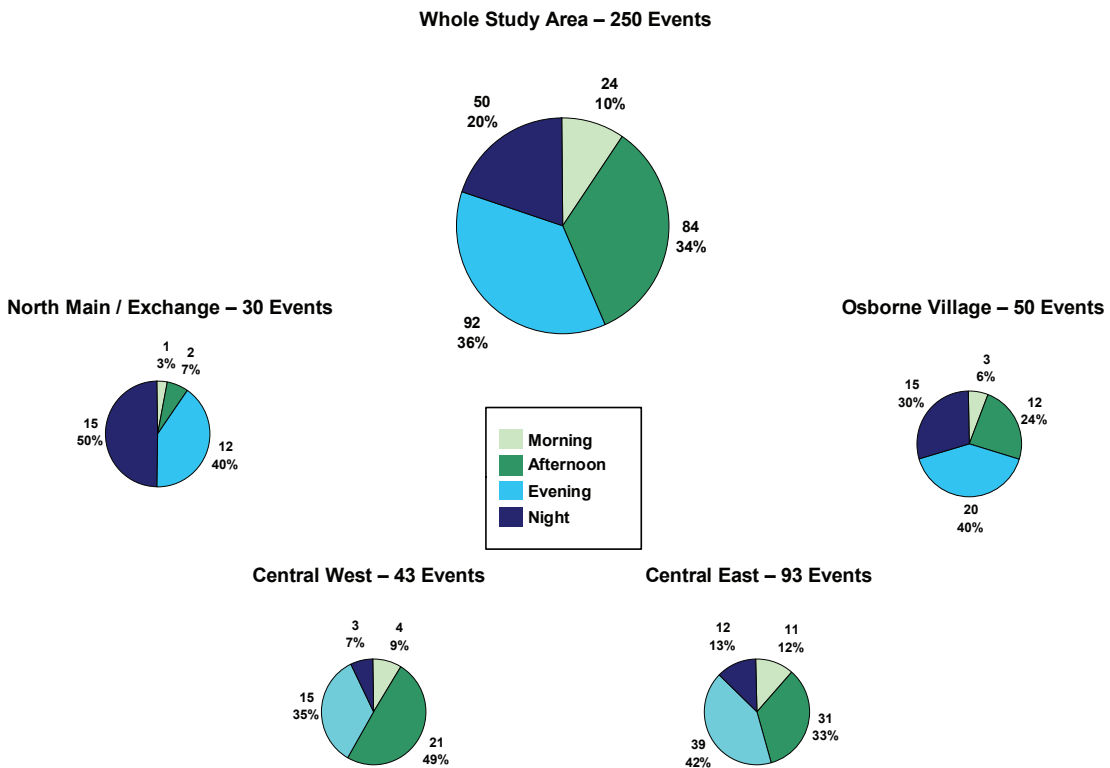
### 4.2 Frequency of Panhandling by Time of Day

When the number of panhandling events observed per sweep is calculated according to time of day, it appears that the most panhandling activity in this study took place during the evening (13.1 events per sweep), followed by the afternoon (9.3 events per sweep) and the night (8.3 events per sweep). Refer to Table 4.3. Far fewer were recorded during each morning observation, with an average of only 4.8 events per sweep.

**Table 4.3 Time of day events per sweep**

|                  | # of events | # of sweeps | # events/sweep |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| <b>Morning</b>   | 24          | 5           | 4.8            |
| <b>Afternoon</b> | 84          | 9           | 9.3            |
| <b>Evening</b>   | 92          | 7           | 13.1           |
| <b>Night</b>     | 50          | 6           | 8.3            |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>250</b>  | <b>27</b>   | <b>9.3</b>     |

**Figure 4.1. PANHANDLING BY TIME OF DAY AND SUB-AREA**





Observation showed that for different study sub-areas the ratios of panhandling activity by time of day varied:

- 50% of panhandling events in North Main/Exchange were observed during night hours, compared to only 7% in Central West.
- While almost half of the panhandling events in Central West (49%) were observed during the afternoons, that time period accounted for only 7 percent in North Main/Exchange.
- The lowest proportion of morning panhandling observed (3%) was also in North Main/Exchange.
- Central East had the highest proportion of morning panhandling events at 12 percent.
- Evening panhandling was consistent through the study area within a narrow range of 35 to 42 percent.

Map 4.1 presents panhandling activity by time of day in the entire study area. Maps for the Osborne Village and Central East sub-areas as examples are presented in Appendix D.

**Map 4.1. PANHANDLING: TIME OF DAY**



Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative

### 4.3 Conclusions

Observational research indicated that overall, and in most sub-areas of the study, panhandling is most prevalent during afternoon and evening hours. Half of all panhandling within the North Main/Exchange was observed during the night time hours. There seems to be a correlation between panhandling events, the volume of pedestrian traffic and the business hours in certain sub-areas. There are quite a few entertainment venues (night clubs, theatre, dance etc.) in North Main/Exchange that operate in the evening and night hours, which is when 90% of this sub-area's panhandling events were observed. This attracts patrons and this in turn attracts panhandlers. Activity in Osborne Village is also somewhat higher than other sub-areas in the evening and night time; probably for the same reason. Activity drops in sub-areas like Central East and Central West where businesses and services are generally closed during night hours, leading to decreased foot traffic nearby.



## 5.0 Summary of By-Law Violations

### 5.1 Violations by Area and Sub-Area

Of the total 250 panhandling events recorded in the research study area, 120 were found to not violate any part of the amended By-Law 7700/2000 (2005). 130 (52%) were considered to have been in violation. The highest ratio of violations compared to total events per sub-area was observed in Broadway/Main (85.7%), although there were only seven events observed here. For North Main/Exchange 70% of events were violations, 60% in Portage Broadway West 60%, and 58.1% in Central East. Broadway/Osborne had the lowest proportion of violations at only 12.5% (1 out of 8 observed). Table 5.1 presents data by sub-area on panhandling events recorded that violated the panhandling By-law by study area:

**Table 5.1 Panhandling Violations by Area and sub-area**

| Area/Sub-area         | Total | Violation | Non-Violation | % in Violation | %of Total Violations |
|-----------------------|-------|-----------|---------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Study Area            | 250   | 130       | 120           | 52.0%          | 100.0%               |
| North Main / Exchange | 30    | 21        | 9             | 70.0%          | 16.2%                |
| Osborne Village       | 50    | 21        | 29            | 42.0%          | 16.2%                |
| Portage Broadway West | 15    | 9         | 6             | 60.0%          | 6.9%                 |
| Ellice Sargent        | 4     | 2         | 2             | 50.0%          | 1.5%                 |
| Broadway / Main       | 7     | 6         | 1             | 85.7%          | 4.6%                 |
| Central West          | 43    | 16        | 27            | 37.2%          | 12.3%                |
| Central East          | 93    | 54        | 39            | 58.1%          | 41.5%                |
| Broadway / Osborne    | 8     | 1         | 7             | 12.5%          | 0.8%                 |

Figures 5.1 and 5.2 below illustrate the distribution of the By-law violations by study area and by sub-areas. Once again, analysis focuses on four sub-areas where significant numbers of panhandling events were recorded (North Main/Exchange, Osborne Village, Central West, and Central East). The proportion of violations to total events ranged from a high of 70% in North Main/Exchange to a low of 37% in Central West in these four areas.

Out of 130 violations observed in the entire study area 42% of violations were recorded in Central East, 16% in each of Osborne Village and North Main/Exchange, 12% in Central West, and 14 % in the rest of the study area. However, these results can be partially explained by the range in overall numbers of panhandling events observed in the different sub-areas.

Figure 5.1. PANHANDLING BY-LAW VIOLATIONS BY SUB-AREA

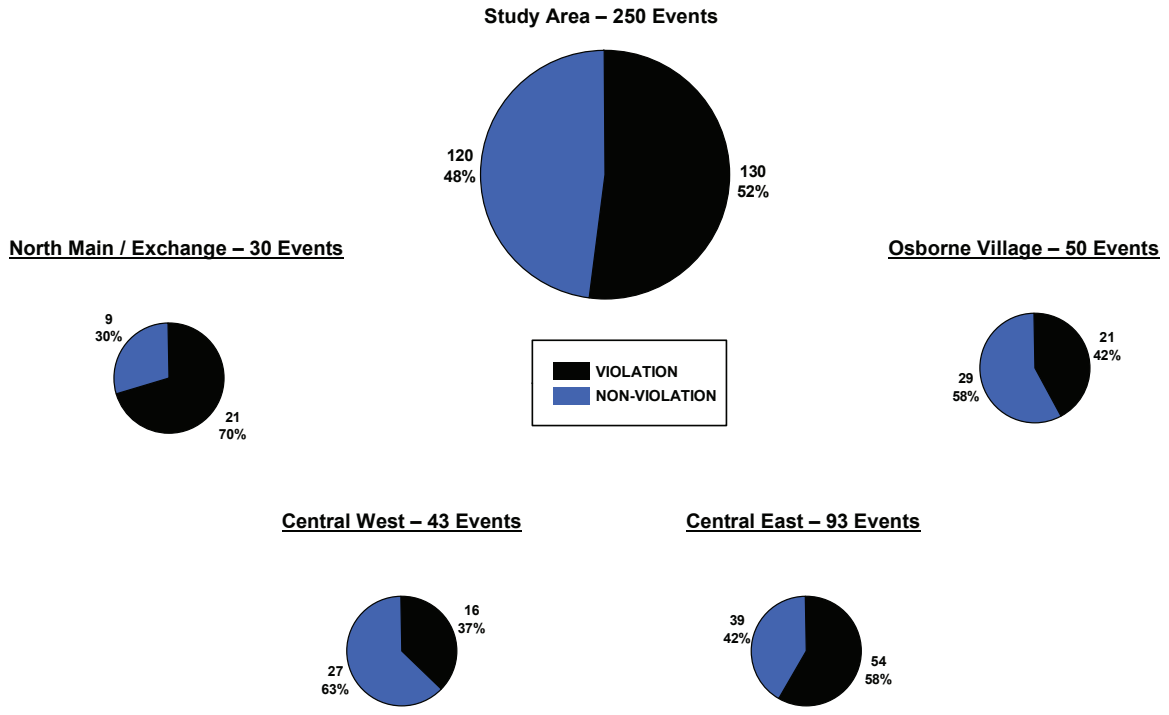
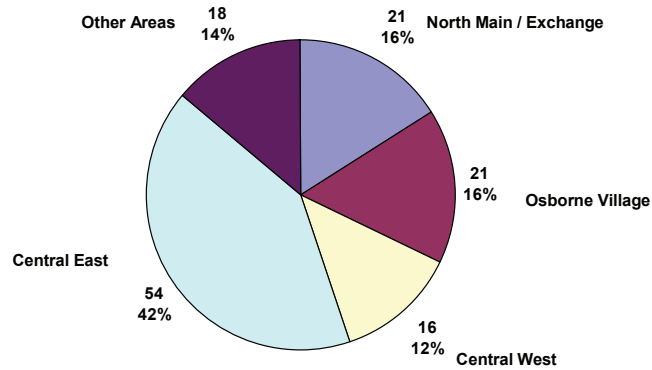


Figure 5.2 SUB-AREA BY-LAW VIOLATIONS AS PROPORTION OF TOTAL



Out of 130 Total Violations in Study Area

## 5.2 Mapping of By-Law Violations

Of the 250 panhandling events mapped, 130 could be considered to be in violation of the amended By-Law 7700/2000 (2005) according to Cause an Obstruction (section a-c), Group of Three or More (section d), and Captive Audience (section e) - features characterizing panhandling activity. Violations of these types were mapped according to the specifics of the By-Law:

### “Causes an Obstruction” means:

#### **OCT**

- (a) In the course of solicitation, to obstruct or impede the convenient passage of any pedestrian or vehicular traffic in a street.
- (b) To continue to solicit from or follow a pedestrian after that person has made a negative response to the solicitation.
- (c) To verbally threaten or insult a pedestrian in the course of or following a solicitation.

#### **Group:**

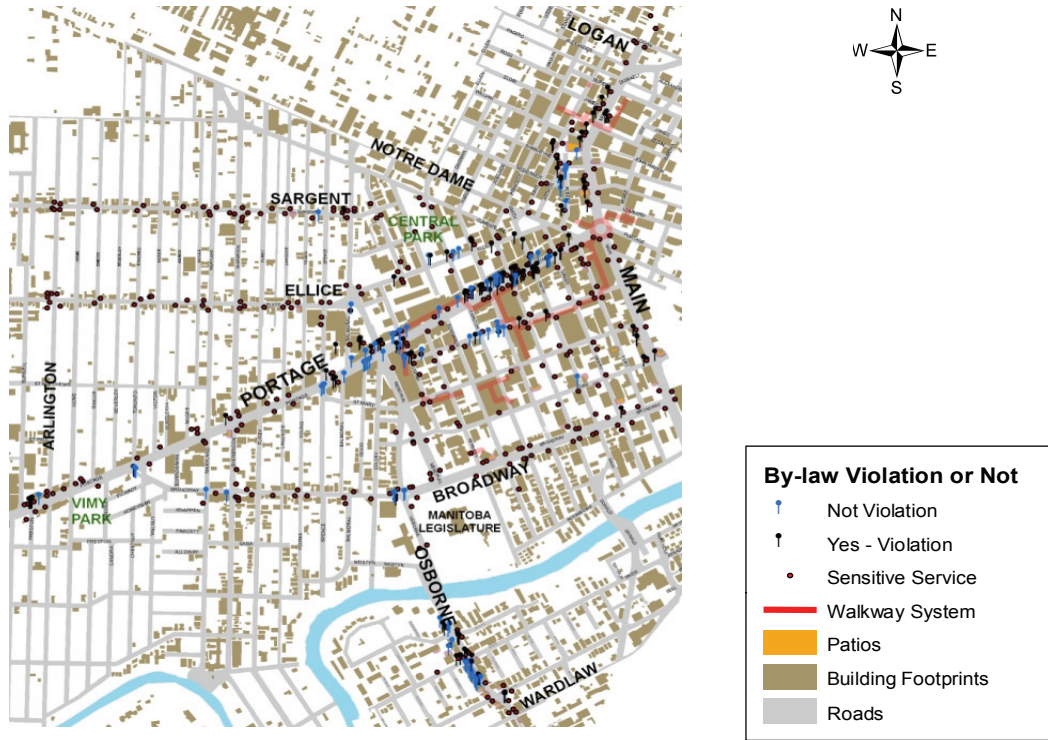
- (d) To physically approach and solicit from a pedestrian as a member of a group of three or more persons.

#### **Captive Audience:**

- (e) To solicit a captive audience – person(s) at sensitive services.

Map 5.1 illustrates all violations as above that were observed in the study area. Detailed maps of violations in eight study sub-areas are presented in Appendix E.

Map 5.1. ALL VIOLATIONS



Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative

Figure 5.3. 130 By-Law Violations by OCT, Captive, and Group Method

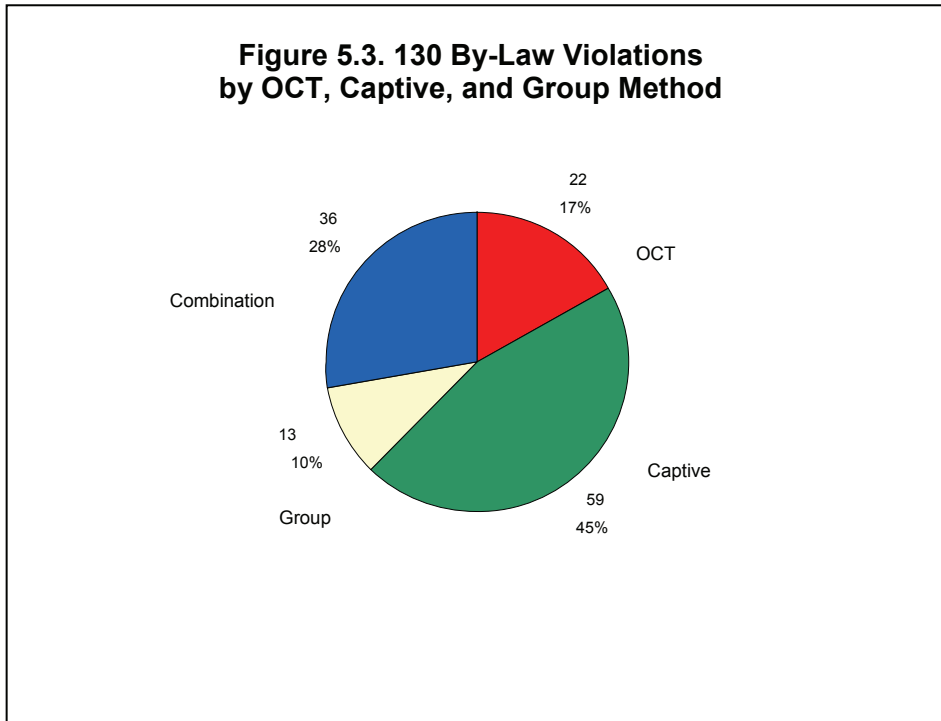
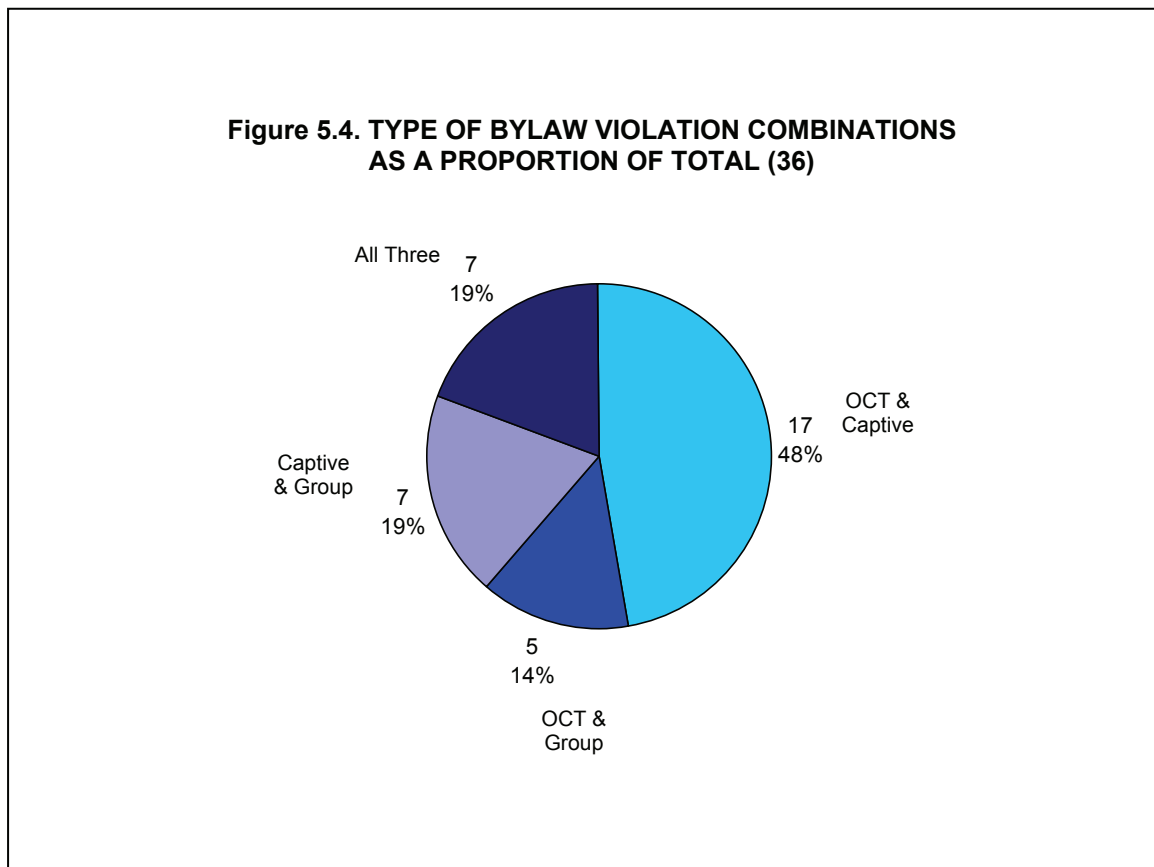


Figure 5.3 illustrates the breakdown of the total panhandling By-Law violations by type of violation: OCT, Captive, and Group. The largest share (45%) was panhandling involving captive audience situations. OCT panhandling constituted 17% of violations, followed by Group at 10%. Any combinations of violations represented 28% of all By-Law violations.

Figure 5.4 illustrates panhandling activities that included combinations of violations. Almost half of them were OCT involving captive audience situations. Panhandling events that combined “captive audience” with “group of three or more” violations comprised 19%. Events that involved all three (captive, group and OCT) also comprised 19%. Within combinations, OCT panhandling by a group of three or more was the least common at 14%.



### 5.3 Conclusions

When all aspects of By-Law 7700/2000 (2005) are considered, just over half of all panhandling events observed in this study would be considered to be violations. The highest proportions of violations within study sub-areas were recorded in Broadway/Main, North Main/Exchange, Central East, and Portage Broadway West. Broadway/Osborne had the lowest proportion of violations. Out of 130 total violations observed in the entire study area, one third were recorded in Central East. The share of violations for other areas ranged from 12 to 16 percent.

Captive audience situations comprised almost half of all panhandling violations observed, followed by events involving OCT panhandling (17%) and panhandling by a group of three or more (10%). Violation combinations represent just over a quarter of all By-Law violations. Almost half of the combinations were OCT involving captive audience situations. The share of panhandling combining “captive audience” with “group” violations, and the share of methods combining all three types of violations, each comprised 19% of the total combinations. Within combinations, OCT panhandling by group was the least common.

## 6.0 Discussion of Observational Findings and Interpretation of the By-Law

### 6.1 Introduction to Discussion

When all aspects of the City of Winnipeg's By-Law 7700/2000 (amended 2005) are considered together, of the 250 panhandling events observed in this study, 130 would be considered to be violations. Does this mean that over half of all the panhandling events observed in this study are truly of a nature that warrants them being considered against the law? This section will consider additional aspects of panhandling methods that are not captured in the By-Law's categories of violation but were examined in this research study. Discussion of these factors, with the use of specific examples, will illustrate how an expanded understanding of the spectrum of panhandling methods that more accurately reflects reality can put into question the By-Law's determination of what constitutes a violation. **This section then examines and compares the results of two different interpretations of the By-Law: one narrow and one broad.** Final comments are provided about possible variations in findings due to methodological limitations of this study.

### 6.2 Revisiting Panhandling Methods

In the observational component of this research study, recording of the details of each panhandling event included a determination of whether a panhandler was stationary, used an approach, or was "On-the-Move" (OTM) when soliciting. Any panhandler identified as stationary was observed sitting or standing in one place without any movement toward those being solicited. In this study, 105 or 42% of the 250 panhandling events observed were stationary (see Table 6.1). Although stationary vs. non-stationary is not taken into consideration in the By-Law, it could certainly be argued that a stationary panhandler would not cause most people as much concern as one that approaches. In this study, thirty-four violations involving a stationary panhandler were observed. This included only two OCT violations and 8 events involving groups of three or more. Twenty-five violations by stationary panhandlers involved a captive audience.

Difficulties arose when categorizing the method of panhandling events observed by those "On-the-Move"(OTM). As discussed in section 2.3 above, because it was often necessary to watch a panhandler for a brief period to determine method, when observing an OTM panhandler he/she could briefly pass through sensitive service areas while walking. This would be indicated and mapped as a violation, when in fact that panhandler would have been considered to not be in violation for the vast majority of the time. In the 24 cases of OTMs observed, then, the number of sensitive service violations is likely overstated.

Another aspect of panhandling behaviour not captured in the By-Law is that of whether the request by the panhandler is verbal or non-verbal. Non-verbal requests would include an extended hand, a sign, a cup or hat held out or placed on the ground. The literature indicates that non-verbal requests are generally considered less threatening than verbal requests. There were sixty-seven non-verbal panhandling interactions observed, eleven of which were recorded as violations (See Table 6.1). One was obstructive, two were Group, and eight involved captive audiences at sensitive services. Could all eleven of these non-verbal solicitations truly be considered threatening?

**Table 6.1 Event Type by Stationary, Approach, On the Move (OTM), Sex, and (non)Verbal**

| Panhandling Event Type     | Stationary (105) |                 |          | Approach (75) |               |          | On The Move (70) |          |          | Male (181) |            |          | Female (37) |             |          | Verbal (183) |             |          | Non-Verbal (67) |                 |          |
|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------|----------|---------------|---------------|----------|------------------|----------|----------|------------|------------|----------|-------------|-------------|----------|--------------|-------------|----------|-----------------|-----------------|----------|
|                            | #                | % of Stationary | % of All | #             | % of Approach | % of All | #                | % of OTM | % of All | #          | % of Males | % of All | #           | % of Female | % of All | #            | % of Verbal | % of All | #               | % of Non-Verbal | % of All |
|                            |                  |                 |          |               |               |          |                  |          |          |            |            |          |             |             |          |              |             |          |                 |                 |          |
| <b>All (250)</b>           |                  |                 |          |               |               |          |                  |          |          |            |            |          |             |             |          |              |             |          |                 |                 |          |
| <b>Obstruct / Impede</b>   | 35               | 0               | 0        | 17            | 22.7          | 48.6     | 18               | 25.7     | 51.4     | 25         | 13.8       | 71.4     | 0           | 0.0         | 0.0      | 34           | 18.6        | 97.1     | 1               | 1.5             | 2.9      |
| <b>Continue / Follow</b>   | 28               | 1               | 3.6      | 17            | 22.7          | 60.7     | 10               | 14.3     | 35.7     | 21         | 11.6       | 75.0     | 2           | 5.4         | 7.1      | 28           | 15.3        | 100.0    | 0               | 0.0             | 0.0      |
| <b>Threaten / Insult</b>   | 15               | 1               | 6.7      | 9             | 12            | 60       | 5                | 7.1      | 33.3     | 11         | 6.1        | 73.3     | 0           | 0.0         | 0.0      | 15           | 8.2         | 100.0    | 0               | 0.0             | 0.0      |
| <b>OCT Combinations</b>    | 23               | 0               | 0        | 13            | 17.3          | 56.5     | 10               | 14.3     | 43.5     | 17         | 9.4        | 73.9     | 0           | 0.0         | 0.0      | 23           | 12.6        | 100.0    | 0               | 0.0             | 0.0      |
| <b>Groups of 3 or more</b> | 32               | 8               | 7.6      | 15            | 20            | 46.9     | 9                | 12.9     | 28.1     |            |            |          |             |             |          | 30           | 16.4        | 93.8     | 2               | 3.0             | 6.3      |
| <b>Captive - 10M</b>       | 90               | 25              | 23.8     | 41            | 54.7          | 45.6     | 24               | 34.3     | 26.7     | 60         | 33.1       | 66.7     | 16          | 43.2        | 17.8     | 82           | 44.8        | 91.1     | 8               | 11.9            | 8.9      |
| <b>All Violations</b>      | 130              | 34              | 32.4     | 57            | 76            | 43.8     | 39               | 55.7     | 30       | 81         | 44.8       | 62.3     | 17          | 45.9        | 13.1     | 119          | 65.0        | 91.5     | 11              | 16.4            | 8.5      |
| <b>All Non-Violations</b>  | 120              | 71              | 67.6     | 18            | 24            | 15       | 31               | 44.3     | 25.8     | 100        | 55.2       | 83.3     | 20          | 54.1        | 16.7     | 64           | 35.0        | 53.3     | 56              | 83.6            | 46.7     |



According to the literature, other factors which can influence feelings of ease or discomfort in those being panhandled include:

- The sex of the panhandler: The public generally perceives female panhandlers to be less threatening than males. 12.8% of the 250 panhandling events observed involved lone females.
- Whether there are a lot of other people in the vicinity or not.
- Stature or robustness of the panhandler. Panhandling by a person of small stature or poor physical health would likely not seem very threatening.
- time of day: events occurring during daylight hours are generally considered to feel more safe than those in the dark.

According to the By-Law, the following examples could be considered violations:

- An elderly man sits with his hat in front of him on the sidewalk. Some passersby have to veer slightly as they pass in order to avoid stepping on him.
- A short, slight man stands leaning against a wall, asking people if they have spare change as they pass by. Upon being asked, one passerby looks the panhandler in the eye and hesitates before saying gently “No...sorry”. The panhandler replies “Please?”
- A group of five youth are sitting on a grassy area beside a sidewalk and chatting. Beside them is a cup and a sign that says “Spare some change?”
- A few metres off to the side of a bank machine, an elderly woman is sitting alone on a bench holding a cup out. She smiles, makes eye contact, and gestures a request to someone in line for the ATM. The man shakes his head, and smiles back at the panhandler.
- A young man with a pronounced limp, walking down a crowded sidewalk and making requests as he goes, asks a man standing at a bus stop for a quarter.

### **6.3 Broad vs. Narrow Interpretation of the By-Law**

Some aspects of the By-Law are open to a range of interpretations, which would result in a corresponding range of violations. This study used a broad interpretation of the By-Law for a few reasons. Two of the most compelling of these reasons surfaced in the course of interviewing panhandlers. Reports of interviewees overwhelmingly indicated that those who enforce the By-Law do so in a way that reflects a very broad interpretation. In addition to this, interviewees indicated that the information they had been given about what is or is not allowable also reflects a very broad interpretation of the By-Law.

The use of a broad interpretation regarding captive audiences at sensitive services has been discussed in Section 2.3 above. In this case, additional reasons for choosing a broad interpretation using a ten metre distance restriction included 1) there is no distance restriction specified in the current By-Law; 2) a narrow interpretation requires the judgement of the observer as to the intentions of those to be/being panhandled; 3) 10 metres is the distance restriction specified in the repealed 1995 By-Law; and, 4) a similar distance has been incorporated in many panhandling by-laws in other cities.

In this study, any panhandling event taking place within ten metres of a sensitive service was considered to involve a “captive audience” and was therefore considered to be in violation of the amended 2005 By-Law - part (e) of “causes an obstruction”. Under this interpretation, 49 panhandling events observed in this study were counted as violations.

A narrow, or literal, interpretation of the By-Law refers to use of or intended use of a service, rather than a specified distance restriction. When this narrow interpretation is applied to the same panhandling events to determine captive audience violations, the number of observed violations drops considerably. Table 6.2 shows a comparison of observed panhandling events when a 10 metre distance restriction is used to determine a violation, compared with a narrow interpretation of the By-Law of “is seated at”, “waiting to use”, “waiting at”(according to the research observer’s judgement). Included in the table are only those sensitive services that would illustrate a change under a narrower interpretation of the By-Law.

**Table 6.2 Sensitive Service Violations: Narrow and Broad**

| <b>Sensitive Service</b> | <b>10 Metre restriction</b> | <b>Narrow interpretation</b> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| ATM                      | 14                          | 0                            |
| Pay Day Loans            | 1                           | 0                            |
| Public Phones            | 17                          | 2                            |
| Taxi Stands              | 3                           | 0                            |
| Patios                   | 14                          | 8                            |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>49</b>                   | <b>10</b>                    |

The difference in total number of sensitive service violations under a broader interpretation of the By-Law (49) compared to the narrower interpretation (10) illustrates a considerable range. This illustrates difficulties in determining what actually constitutes a violation according to one aspect of this By-Law.

A second part of the By-Law which is open to broad and narrow interpretation is found under the definition of “causes an obstruction” which includes (d) “to physically approach and solicit from a pedestrian as a member of a group of three or more persons”. The understanding of panhandlers interviewed, as passed along to them by those who enforce the By-Law, was that any panhandling activity by a group of three or more was not allowed. This broad interpretation was used in the course of conducting the observational component of this research. Under this broad interpretation, thirty-two of the 250 panhandling events would be considered a violation of the ‘group’ aspect of the By-Law.

A narrow interpretation of this part of the By-Law would include, if taken literally, only those groups of three or more of which at least one member actually physically moved towards a person when making a request. Under this narrow interpretation, the number of violations of the ‘group’ aspect of the By-Law would fall to only twenty-four. This number, however, includes those groups of three or more that were “On-The-Move”(OTM). It could certainly be argued that OTM groups might not necessarily be considered to be “physically approaching” because they are already in the course of simply walking down a sidewalk and may not actually be approaching anyone for the specific purpose of panhandling, but may simply be asking as they pass by. If OTM groups are removed from the equation, then a narrow interpretation of this part of the By-Law would mean that only 15 of the ‘groups’ observed in this study would actually be considered to be in violation - as compared to 32 under a broad interpretation.

Table 6.3 shows the range of variation in numbers of violations according to a narrow and a broader interpretation of the By-Law.

**Table 6.3 Narrow vs. Broad Interpretation of By-Law re: Violations**

| Type of Violation                            | Sub-Type of Violation                  | Interpretation of By-Law               | # of Violations* | Decrease, Broad to Narrow                        |             |             |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
|                                              |                                        |                                        |                  | # change                                         | % change    |             |
| <b>All Violations</b>                        |                                        | Broad                                  | 130              | <b>40</b>                                        | <b>30.8</b> |             |
|                                              |                                        | Narrow                                 | 90               |                                                  |             |             |
| <b>Combinations</b>                          | <b>Captive &amp; Group</b>             | Broad                                  | 14               | <b>7</b>                                         | <b>50.0</b> |             |
|                                              |                                        | Narrow                                 | 7                |                                                  |             |             |
|                                              | <b>Captive &amp; OCT</b>               | Broad                                  | 24               | <b>11</b>                                        | <b>45.8</b> |             |
|                                              |                                        | Narrow                                 | 13               |                                                  |             |             |
|                                              | <b>OCT &amp; Group</b>                 | Broad                                  | 12               | <b>0</b>                                         | <b>0.0</b>  |             |
|                                              |                                        | Narrow                                 | 12               |                                                  |             |             |
|                                              | <b>All 3: Captive, Group &amp; OCT</b> | Broad                                  | 7                | <b>4</b>                                         | <b>57.1</b> |             |
|                                              |                                        | Narrow                                 | 3                |                                                  |             |             |
| <b>Captive Audience [Part (e) of By-Law]</b> | <b>Bus Stop</b>                        | Broad                                  | 37               | <b>0</b>                                         | <b>0.0</b>  |             |
|                                              |                                        | Narrow                                 | 37               |                                                  |             |             |
|                                              | <b>Car</b>                             | Broad                                  | 2                | <b>0</b>                                         | <b>0.0</b>  |             |
|                                              |                                        | Narrow                                 | 2                |                                                  |             |             |
|                                              | <b>Patio</b>                           | Broad                                  | 14               | <b>7</b>                                         | <b>50.0</b> |             |
|                                              |                                        | Narrow                                 | 7                |                                                  |             |             |
|                                              | <b>Public Phone</b>                    | Broad                                  | 17               | <b>15</b>                                        | <b>88.2</b> |             |
|                                              |                                        | Narrow                                 | 2                |                                                  |             |             |
|                                              | <b>ATM</b>                             | Broad                                  | 14               | <b>14</b>                                        | <b>100</b>  |             |
|                                              |                                        | Narrow                                 | 0                |                                                  |             |             |
|                                              | <b>Taxi Stand</b>                      | Broad                                  | 3                | <b>3</b>                                         | <b>100</b>  |             |
|                                              |                                        | Narrow                                 | 0                |                                                  |             |             |
|                                              | <b>Liquor Mart</b>                     | Broad                                  | 2                | <b>2</b>                                         | <b>100</b>  |             |
|                                              |                                        | Narrow                                 | 0                |                                                  |             |             |
|                                              | <b>Money Mart</b>                      | Broad                                  | 1                | <b>1</b>                                         | <b>100</b>  |             |
|                                              |                                        | Narrow                                 | 0                |                                                  |             |             |
|                                              | <b>Group [Part (d) of By-Law]</b>      | <b>All Groups of 3 or more (Broad)</b> |                  | 32                                               | <b>8</b>    | <b>25.0</b> |
|                                              |                                        | <b>Group Approach only (Narrow)</b>    |                  | 24                                               |             |             |
| <b>OCT [Part (a-c) of By-Law]</b>            | <b>All OCT</b>                         |                                        | <b>51</b>        | <b>No change narrow vs. broad interpretation</b> |             |             |
|                                              | <b>Obstruct / Impede (a)</b>           |                                        | 35               |                                                  |             |             |
|                                              | <b>Continue / Follow (b)</b>           |                                        | 2                |                                                  |             |             |
|                                              | <b>Threaten / Insult (c)</b>           |                                        | 15               |                                                  |             |             |
|                                              | <b>Combinations of OCT</b>             |                                        | 23               |                                                  |             |             |

\* Out of a Total of 250 panhandling events observed.

**Table 6.4 Violations\* by Narrow By-Law Interpretation**

| Type of Violation                                                                         | Sub-Type of Violation                   | Narrow interpretation, # of Violations** |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>All Violations</b>                                                                     |                                         | <b>90</b>                                |
| <b>OCT (a-c) ***</b>                                                                      |                                         | <b>51</b>                                |
| <b>Group Approach(d) ***</b>                                                              |                                         | <b>24</b>                                |
| <b>Captive Audience (e) *** by "Use"</b>                                                  | <b>All Sensitive Services</b>           | <b>48</b>                                |
|                                                                                           | <b>Bus Stop</b>                         | 37                                       |
|                                                                                           | <b>Car</b>                              | 2                                        |
|                                                                                           | <b>Patio</b>                            | 7                                        |
|                                                                                           | <b>Public Phone</b>                     | 2                                        |
|                                                                                           | <b>ATM</b>                              | 0                                        |
|                                                                                           | <b>Taxi Stand</b>                       | 0                                        |
|                                                                                           | <b>Liquor Mart</b>                      | 0                                        |
|                                                                                           | <b>Money Mart</b>                       | 0                                        |
| <b>Combinations</b>                                                                       | <b>Captive &amp; Group</b>              | 7                                        |
|                                                                                           | <b>Captive &amp; OCT</b>                | 13                                       |
|                                                                                           | <b>OCT &amp; Group</b>                  | 12                                       |
|                                                                                           | <b>All 3: Captive, Group, &amp; OCT</b> | 3                                        |
| * Out of a Total of 250 panhandling events observed.                                      |                                         |                                          |
| ** Numbers when added not equal to 90 because combinations counted as more than one event |                                         |                                          |
| *** Indicates section of By-Law addressed by term.                                        |                                         |                                          |

### 6.4 Methodological Limitations

There were a few sensitive services specified in the By-Law that could not be included in the observation and mapping component of this research. Public transit vehicles were not map-able because transit vehicles are not stationary. Elevators, parking spots and parking lots were not included because they are far too numerous in the study area to effectively map. Any attempt to plot every one of them on a map in the study area would have resulted in a map that looked like one solid sensitive service. Such an image, however, would have served to illustrate that there are few, if any, places in the study area in which panhandling would not violate a sensitive service, particularly when considering a 10-meter distance restriction.

This study's methodology required that the geographic range of the research be narrowed. The study area chosen within Winnipeg was the downtown area where it is generally believed that the majority of panhandling activity occurs. This is also, however, the part of the city in which it is generally believed that the greatest proportion of panhandling violations occur. It must be kept in mind that although panhandling occurs in other parts of the city, the study area does not represent the level of panhandling activity nor the proportion of violations for the entire city of Winnipeg. The perceived level of unsafeness in the study area might also necessitate panhandling methods that are not passive, and panhandling in groups of three or more for safety reasons. The limitations of resources and time also meant that a limited number of observational sweeps were possible within the study area, and the research had to shift to focus only on the sub-areas with the highest frequency of panhandling activity.

## 7.0 Conclusions

This volume of the report focused on different panhandling methods and panhandling By-Law violations in Winnipeg, with a secondary focus on general geographic distribution of panhandling events observed. For research purposes, the study was narrowed to include only the central area of the city where panhandling activity is most concentrated, but panhandling is not restricted to this area: it can certainly also be found in less central areas such as St. Vital and St. Boniface. Like poverty itself, panhandling is not confined to the downtown and inner city in Winnipeg.

According to the observation and mapping component of this study:

- panhandling activity was concentrated in the Central East and Central West sub-areas along Portage, and in the North Main/Exchange and Osborne Village sub-areas.
- most panhandling acts, about three quarters, were performed by individuals.
- group activity (13% of panhandling events) tended to be concentrated in the Central East sub-area.
- for the most part panhandling was most prevalent during afternoon and evening hours.
- there is a correlation between panhandling events, the volume of pedestrian traffic, and the business hours in certain sub-areas.
- at night, panhandling seems most likely to occur in the North Main/Exchange and Osborne Village sub-areas.
- according to the amended By-Law 7700/2000 (2005) a little over half of all panhandling events in the study area would be considered violations.
- Broadway/Osborne had the lowest proportion of violations at 12.5%.
- out of 130 total violations observed, one third were recorded in Central East. The share of violations for other areas ranged from 12 to 16 percent.
- when considering proportions of violations within each study sub-area, the highest were recorded in the Broadway/Main, North Main/Exchange, Central East, and Portage Broadway West sub-areas.
- "captive audience at sensitive service" situations made up almost half of all violations and accounted for the largest proportion of panhandling events in Central East. This sub-area also represents more than a third of all sensitive service violations in the study area.
- when using the ten-metre distance restriction chosen, the most often violated sensitive services were bus stops.

- OCT (obstruction, continued, threatening) panhandling methods were used in 17% of all panhandling events observed.
- a total of 199 or 79.6% of all panhandling events were passive or not OCT (not obstructive, continued nor threatening).
- the sub-area with the highest proportion of passive methods observed was Osborne Village (96%), followed closely by Central West (86%), and Central East (75.3%).
- the greatest number of OCT panhandling events observed were in the Central East sub-area where panhandling was most concentrated. However, the rate of occurrence was highest in the North Main/Exchange sub-area.
- Most of the OCT events recorded involved obstructing the passage of pedestrians or vehicular traffic, followed by continued solicitation.
- combinations of violations represented just above a quarter of all By-Law violations. Almost half of them were OCT methods involving captive audience situations. Within combination methods OCT panhandling by a group of three or more was least common.

Some methodological limitations within the observation and mapping of this project include:

- Not being able to include some types of sensitive services
- Need to narrow the research study area
- Within the study area, needing to focus observational sweeps on sub-areas of high panhandling activity
- Ability to have only a limited number of observational sweeps

Although the typology of panhandling methods created for use in this study could be refined, it did capture a broader range of methods than represented in the By-Law, and served to illustrate additional factors that (if present) could lead to a range of judgements regarding the degree of threat of panhandling activities. A comparison of a narrow versus a broad interpretation of the By-Law also indicates that there is a great deal of variation as to what may be considered a violation.

## Appendix A

### Project Methodology

The general methodology of the study in many respects is breaking new ground using a combination of several quantitative and qualitative approaches. The interviews with panhandlers yield specific quantitative information about the characteristics of panhandlers, the frequency of panhandling, the amount of money collected, and their use of supportive services. The mapping of locations of panhandlers also provides quantitative material on the location and nature of the activity. Additionally, the literature review presents facts and figures from other surveys and Statistics Canada data. The interviews also incorporate many qualitative, open-ended questions that elicit opinion panhandlers' opinions. The development of a typology of panhandling methods is another qualitative tool and a subjective exercise based on the researchers' observations. There has been little work undertaken elsewhere in developing a typology of panhandling approaches.

There are five basic components to the research methodology that were used to undertake and complete this project. Each component is described in more detail below.

#### 1.0 The Review of Literature

The first component is a review of academic, legal, government, advocacy and professional literature. This informs the project by providing information on the characteristics of panhandlers, how they panhandle, why they panhandle and what services or initiatives might help this group of people reduce their dependence on panhandling. It also provides background on recent legislation that has been introduced in Canadian cities, the nature and effectiveness of this legislation and the reason(s) it was introduced. In addition, the review presents an overview of other non-legislative initiatives (Canada, the United States and abroad) to reduce the number of panhandlers through provision of services and support programs that reduce the need for panhandling. The literature sheds some light on programs and support services that have been introduced to address the systemic causes that drive people onto the streets to panhandle. The three components of the literature review are described in more detail below.

The focus of the literature review is Canadian material, but relevant works from the United States and other countries are included. The review of the literature attempts to highlight recent change in panhandling, including the changing nature, number and characteristics of panhandlers, reactions by the public, business and government sectors as well as changing attitudes toward the use of public space and the debate surrounding private versus public space in the urban environment.

The review of legislation focuses on Canadian cities where there have been recent changes in the legislation affecting panhandling. The review also highlights any appropriate legislation in American cities. It presents a detailed account of recent changes in panhandling by-laws in Winnipeg and compares the nature of legislation in Winnipeg with legislation in other key cities. A matrix, accompanied by a detailed written explanation, has been developed to compare the regulations.

The review of initiatives providing resources to reduce the need for panhandling takes an approach similar to the review of legislation. It focuses on key cities in Canada, the U.S. and other countries to



determine what programs and support services have been introduced. Initiatives in selected cities and those available in Winnipeg illustrate that criminalizing panhandling is not the only solution.

## **2.0 Mapping of Panhandling Locations**

A second component of the research is the mapping of panhandling locations. It identifies where people panhandle in the city, and whether they panhandle in close proximity to “sensitive services”. There were three approaches to this component of the methodology: 1) recording the locations of panhandlers based on observation of panhandling activity throughout the study area; 2) mapping of these locations using Geographic Information Systems and mapping software; and, 3) using information gathered through observation to indicate if panhandlers are active near “sensitive services.” Several maps were produced indicating the distribution of panhandlers throughout the study area, priority or high traffic locations for panhandling, and proximity to “sensitive services.”

The necessary steps in preparing the maps included:

- a) Preparation of base maps for the downtown area and Osborne Village. For the purposes of this research, the downtown study area extends as far west as Arlington and north to include Ellice and Sargent Streets, as panhandling has been observed in these areas. Downtown also includes Main Street north to Higgins and south to include Broadway. The commercial portion of Osborne Village to Wardlaw Avenue was also included in the study area. It was limited to Osborne Street itself and the adjoining Safeway Shopping Complex, as this is where most panhandling activity in Osborne Village was observed occurring.
- b) The locations of sensitive services were plotted on the base maps as was the walkway system;
- c) The nature of the sensitive services was determined in consultation with the client based on by-law No. 7700/2000 and a review of the literature, and included ATMs, bus stops, banks, liquor stores, money marts, etc.;
- d) Fieldwork observation identified panhandling locations; and,
- e) Locations were plotted to illustrate proximity of panhandlers to sensitive services. Proximity was based on a 10-metre distance restriction.

## **3.0 Interviews with Panhandlers**

A third and major component of the methodology was the interviewing of panhandlers. Representatives of three social service agency partners - Resource Assistance for Youth, The Main Street Project, and Siloam Mission - assisted the researchers in developing a structured questionnaire to be administered through confidential personal interviews. Their input ensured the research tool was comprehensive, appropriately worded, and sensitive in addressing topics of concern. It was agreed upon with the client that the “squeegee kids” and buskers would not be included because they do not clearly fall within the definition of “panhandlers” (as they offer a service in exchange for donations) and the current legislation has not targeted these activities.

The questionnaire contains both defined and open-ended questions, focusing on a number of themes: demographic and socio-economic characteristics of panhandlers, their housing circumstances, where and why they panhandle, how much money they make and what they spend it on, the services they use and need, and how the legislation has affected their methods and locations of panhandling. The panhandlers were asked if they were aware of the current By-Law and whether they had changed



their method of panhandling since it came into effect. Interview questions also asked about panhandlers' experiences with authorities and how street patrols and police have changed their approach since the passage of legislation: Are they asking panhandlers to "move along" from certain locations? Do they warn panhandlers not to work in certain areas?, etc.

Because the actual number of panhandlers in Winnipeg is unknown, it was difficult to determine a representative sample size of this population. Consultation with the client and social service agency partners resulted in a decision of seventy five as the total number of panhandlers to be interviewed. Some of the interviews were conducted during the winter months of February and March when there were fewer panhandlers on the street, but interviews were extended into April, May and June to ensure that those who might not panhandle in colder weather were also included as research subjects.

Two approaches were taken in finding panhandlers to interview. The agency partners are established organizations that have developed trusting relationships with clientele, among which are individuals who panhandle. Agency employees discreetly approached potential interviewees to ask them to participate. It was believed this strategy would be most effective because potential interviewees would be more trusting and, therefore, be more likely to participate and more open with their responses if the research was endorsed and supported by an organization they trusted. Thirty six interviews were undertaken at the social service agencies: 15 at Siloam Mission, 9 at Mainstreet Project, and 12 at Resource Assistance for Youth (RaY). These interviews took place in a quiet, private room at the respective agencies.

Because not all panhandlers use services, it was necessary to find and ask panhandlers on the street for interviews as well. This second approach to finding interviewees was undertaken at various times of the day (ranging from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.), in areas frequented by panhandlers and resulted in thirty-nine interviews. Of those asked for an interview in this way, only 6 declined. Seven interviews were conducted on the street at the request of the interviewees. When the researcher approached, a brief explanation was given about the research, and the panhandler was asked if s/he would like to participate. The interview was most often conducted in a quiet location such as a coffee shop.

One interviewer was present for each interview. Two interviewers conducted interviews, and the primary interviewer met each interview subject to ensure that no panhandler was interviewed more than once. Before beginning the actual interview, the process and purpose of the research was explained, with emphasis given to the confidentiality and voluntary participation. Then the interviewee was given an opportunity to ask questions about the research, and was asked to sign a consent form (Appendix B). On average, the duration of the interview was one hour. Each interviewee was given an honorarium of ten dollars for their participation, whether they completed the interview or not. There were no interviews started that were not completed.

Findings were analyzed using appropriate database software. The write up of the interviews highlights the key socio-economic and demographic characteristics of panhandlers, provides insights into the reasons they are on the street, what services they use or need, how much money they collect and how they spend the money. The report also highlights the geographic distribution of those surveyed and the effect of current legislation.

#### 4.0 Characterizing Panhandling Methods

A fourth component of the methodology was the observation of panhandling techniques to characterize panhandling methods. To collect and analyze data in the observation component of this research study, a typology of panhandling methods was developed based on the categories of panhandling offences identified in By-Law 7700/2000 and the 2005 amendment to this By-Law. The typology also incorporates other categories in order to collect information upon which to develop a broader understanding of panhandling. This includes factors such as technique used (eg. sign, cap in hand), how the request is indicated (eg. verbal, gesture), and level of activity (sitting, standing, walking). It was recorded as to whether or not upon refusal any further communication followed, and if so, whether it was polite (“thank-you”, “have a nice day”, etc.) or impolite (nasty reply, perhaps including obscenities, gesturing or raised voice). The intention was to capture a more comprehensive range of panhandling methods than is achieved by the By-Law and to better reflect the truly broad spectrum of panhandling methods that exist. Community agency partners, a review of the literature and legislation in other cities, and panhandlers themselves provided insights into the development of the typology.

Fieldwork was required to document the nature of the methods through simple “observation.” The researcher simply observed from a discreet distance and recorded how panhandlers indicate their need to people.

The Observation Matrix (Table 3.1), based on the typology above, was used to record the panhandling methods observed during sweeps of the survey area. Whether the panhandler was male or female, alone, with a pet, or with others was recorded. If with others, the number of people together was also noted. The panhandling location, address and description, the date and time of the panhandling event, and weather conditions were also noted.

Key panhandling methods were distinguished for the purpose of mapping and to allow for more accurate analysis:

- **OTM** (On-The-Move) refers to a panhandler who, for the most part, is walking and panhandling people along the way. Other than short stops made to rest or to gather money, movement is constant.
- **Stationary** is when the panhandler is either seated or standing in one place.
- **Approach** is when the panhandler is standing and moves towards a passerby when making a request. The solicitation space is very small; only a couple of steps are taken.
- **Still** is a category which includes both Stationary and Approach, but not OTM.
- **OCT** – refers to **ob**struct, **co**nfigure and **th**reaten as descriptors of the following specific parts of the amended By-Law 7700/2000 (2005):
  - d) In the course of solicitation, to **obstruct** or impede the convenient passage of any pedestrian or vehicular traffic in a street;
  - e) To **continue** to solicit from or follow a pedestrian after that person has made a negative response to solicitation; or

- f) To verbally **threaten** or insult a pedestrian in the course of, or following a solicitation.

For a panhandling event to be considered OCT, it must be recorded on the observation matrix as at least one of the following categories: Obstructive Approach, OTM Obstructive, Verbal Repeat, Verbal Loud/Threatening, Follows, Gestures, Touches, or Nasty Reply.

Passive methods of panhandling involve no violation of the above three rules (they could be considered non-OCT).

The Panhandling Observation Matrix was used to gather all data on panhandling event observation, which was then used to map panhandling methods. These maps illustrate the distribution and frequency of occurrence of different methods of panhandling according to the By-Law.

### **5.0 Consultation with Service Agencies**

A fifth key component of the methodology is consultation and work with service agencies. Through contact and meetings representatives of the three agencies expressed a strong interest in the research, the issue of panhandling, the legislation currently in place, and alternative solutions or initiatives to reduce people's reliance on panhandling. Staff at these agencies have regular interaction with many of the people who panhandle and have thus developed a strong understanding of their situations. Consultation with these service agencies on aspects of the research and obtaining their insights on the issues has substantially enhanced the report.

**Appendix B: By-Law No. 7700/2000**

This document is an office consolidation of by-law amendments which has been prepared for the convenience of the user. The City of Winnipeg expressly disclaims any responsibility for errors or omissions. For a certified copy of the original enactment and amending by-laws, contact City Hall Information Service at 986-2171.

CONSOLIDATION UPDATE: JUNE 29, 2005

**THE CITY OF WINNIPEG**

**THE OBSTRUCTIVE SOLICITATION BY-LAW**  
**NO. 7700/2000**

**A By-law of THE CITY OF WINNIPEG to control  
obstructive solicitation for donations.**

**WHEREAS** people need a safe and civil environment in public places within the City of Winnipeg where residents and visitors may freely engage in the usual activities and enjoyments of the urban milieu;

**AND WHEREAS** residents and visitors in the City are entitled not to be obstructed while enjoying public places;

**THE CITY OF WINNIPEG**, in Council assembled, enacts as follows:  
*amended 8162/2002*

1. This by-law may be cited as "**The Obstructive Solicitation By-law**".
2. In this by-law:

"**captive audience**" means:

- (a) a person who is using, waiting to use, or departing from an automated teller machine, a bank or credit union;
- (b) a person who is using, waiting to use, or departing from a public pay telephone;
- (c) a person who is waiting at a public transit stop or taxi stand;
- (d) a person who is in or on a public transit vehicle;
- (e) a person who is in an elevator;
- (f) a person who is in an area of the downtown pedestrian walkway system designated in red on the map attached as Schedule "A" or in an area designated on the map as a future designated walkway once it is constructed and becomes part of the walkway system;
- (g) a person who is in the process of getting in, out of, on or off a vehicle, or who is in a parking lot;
- (h) a person who is seated in an outdoor area of a restaurant or bar in which food or beverages are being served.

*added 128/2005*

**"causes an obstruction"** means:

- (a) in the course of solicitation, to obstruct or impede the convenient passage of any pedestrian **or vehicular** traffic in a street;  
*amended 128/2005*
- (b) to continue to solicit from or follow a pedestrian after that person has made a negative response to the solicitation;  
*amended 128/2005*
- (c) to verbally threaten or insult a pedestrian in the course of or following a solicitation;  
*amended 128/2005*
- (d) to physically approach and solicit from a pedestrian as a member of a group of three or more persons; or  
*amended 128/2005*
- (e) to solicit a captive audience.  
*added 128/2005*

**"solicit"** means to ask, whether by spoken, written or printed word, or gestures, for donations of money or other things of value for one's self or for any other person, and solicitation has a corresponding meaning;  
*amended 128/2005*

**"street"** has the same meaning as in The City of Winnipeg Charter.  
*amended 8162/2002*

- 3. No person shall solicit in a manner which causes an obstruction.
- 4. *repealed 8162/2002*
- 5. The City of Winnipeg By-law No. 6555/95 is hereby repealed.

**DONE AND PASSED** in Council assembled, this 20<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2000.

Schedule A to By-law No. 7700/2000  
added 128/2005

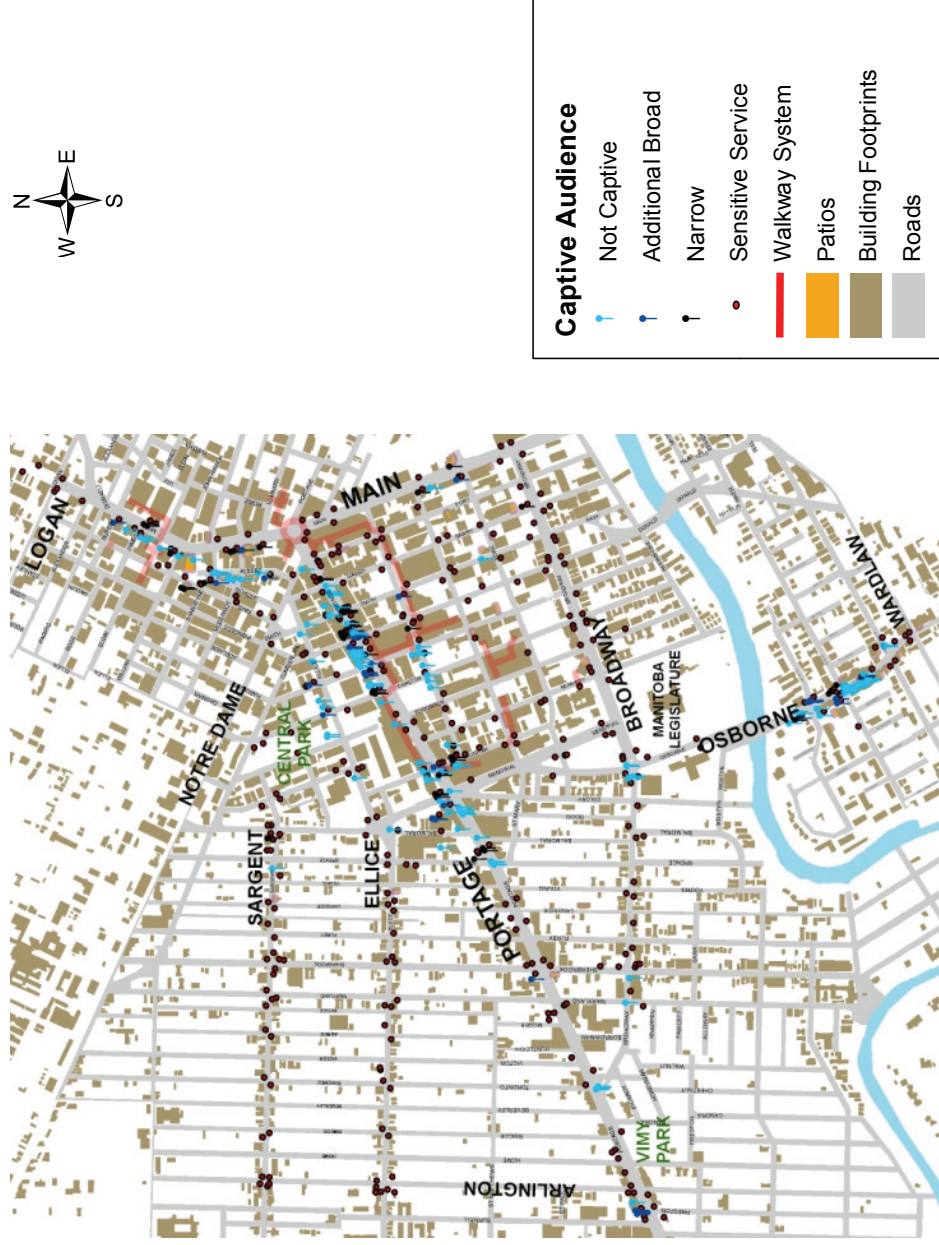
Schedule "A" to By-law No. 7700/2000





**Appendix C: Location of Sensitive Services and Panhandling Events in Violation of a Captive Audience at a Sensitive Service**  
 Additional Broad includes violations within the 10 Metre distance restriction. Narrow excludes the 10 Metre distance restriction.  
 See Tables 6.1, 6.2, & Section 6 discussion for further clarification.

**Map C.1. VIOLATIONS OF SENSITIVE SERVICES**



Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative

Map C.2. NORTH MAIN / EXCHANGE



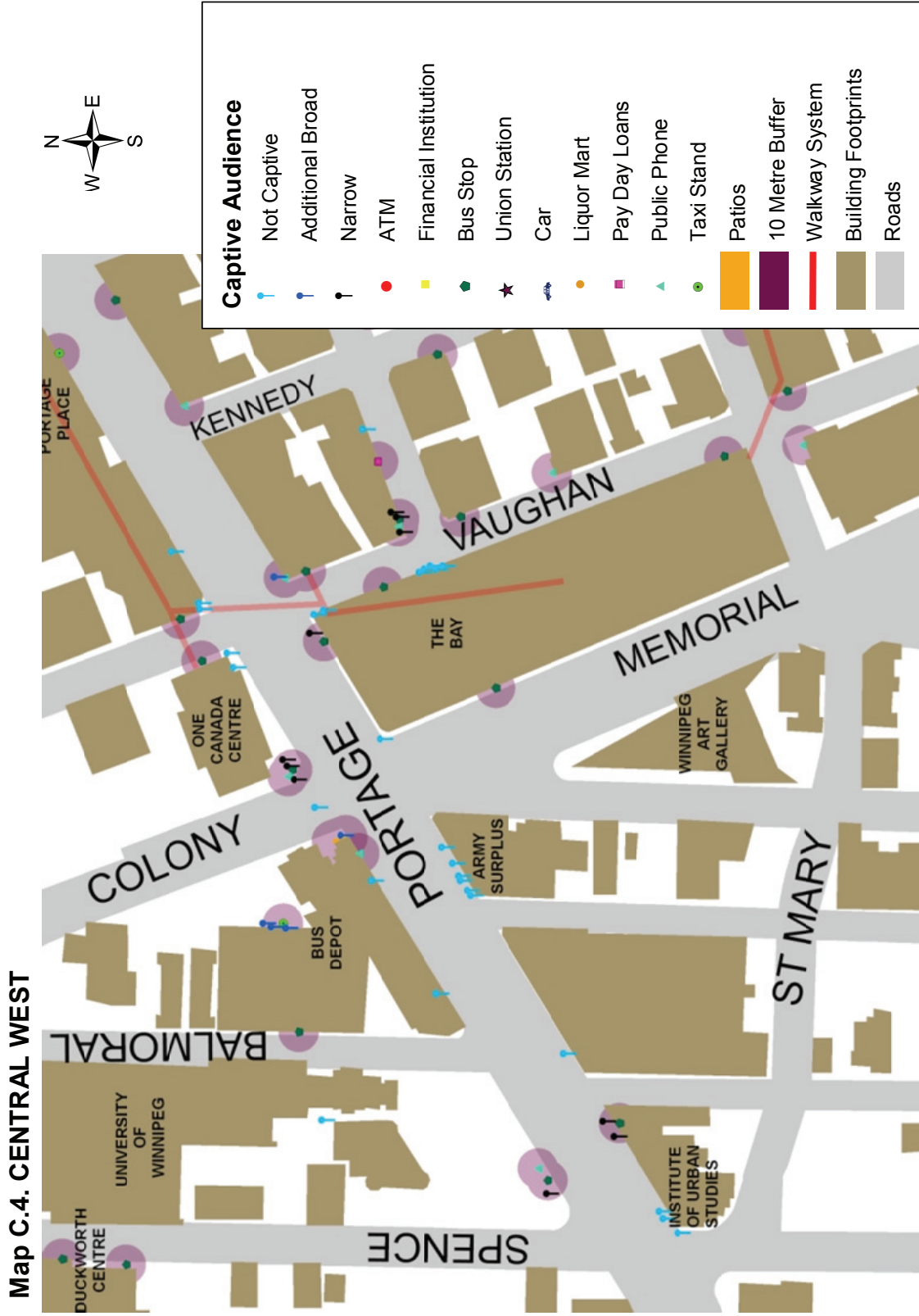
Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative



Map C.3. CENTRAL EAST



Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative



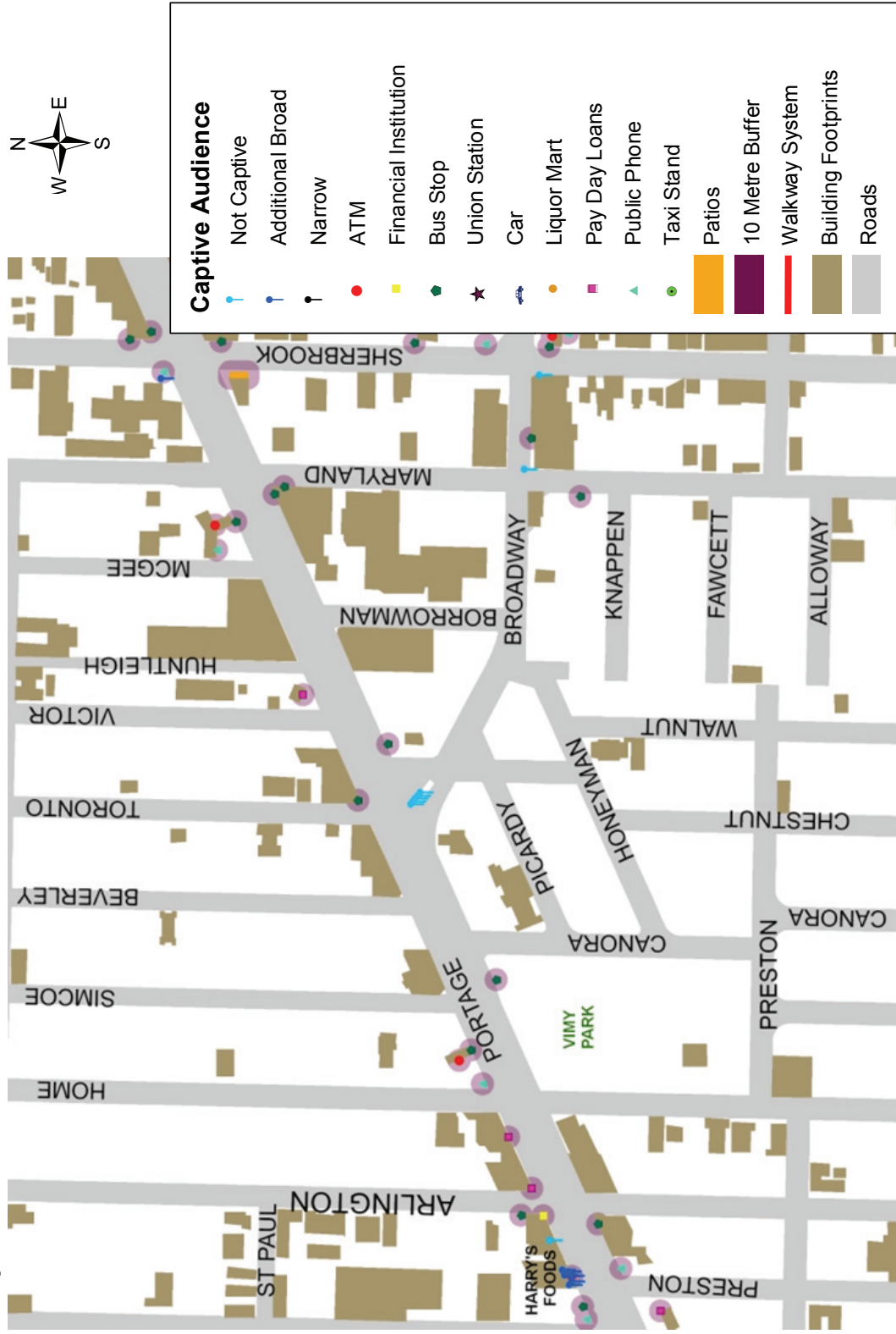
Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative

Map C.5. SARGENT ELLICE WEST



Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative

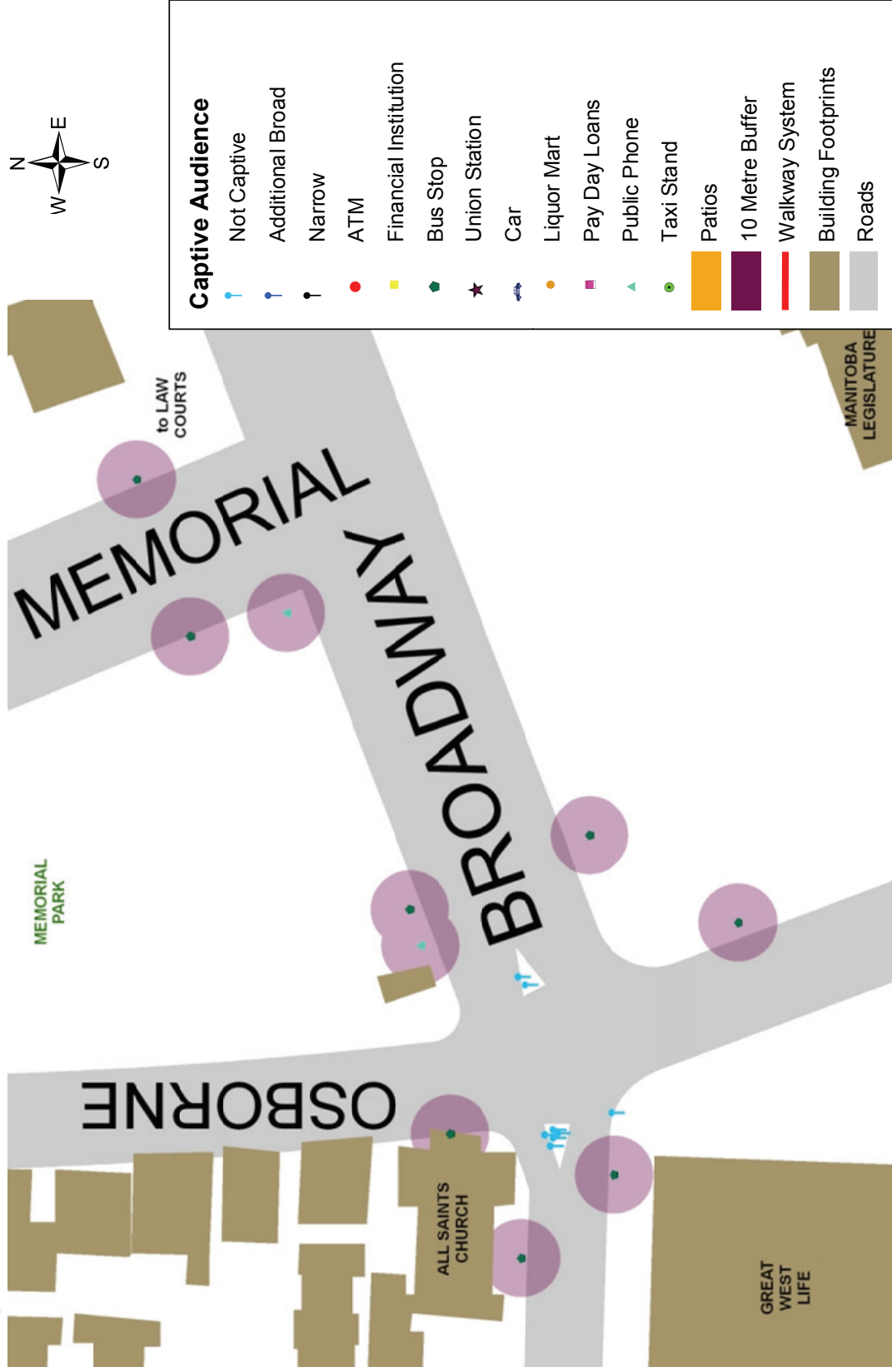
Map C.6. PORTAGE BROADWAY WEST



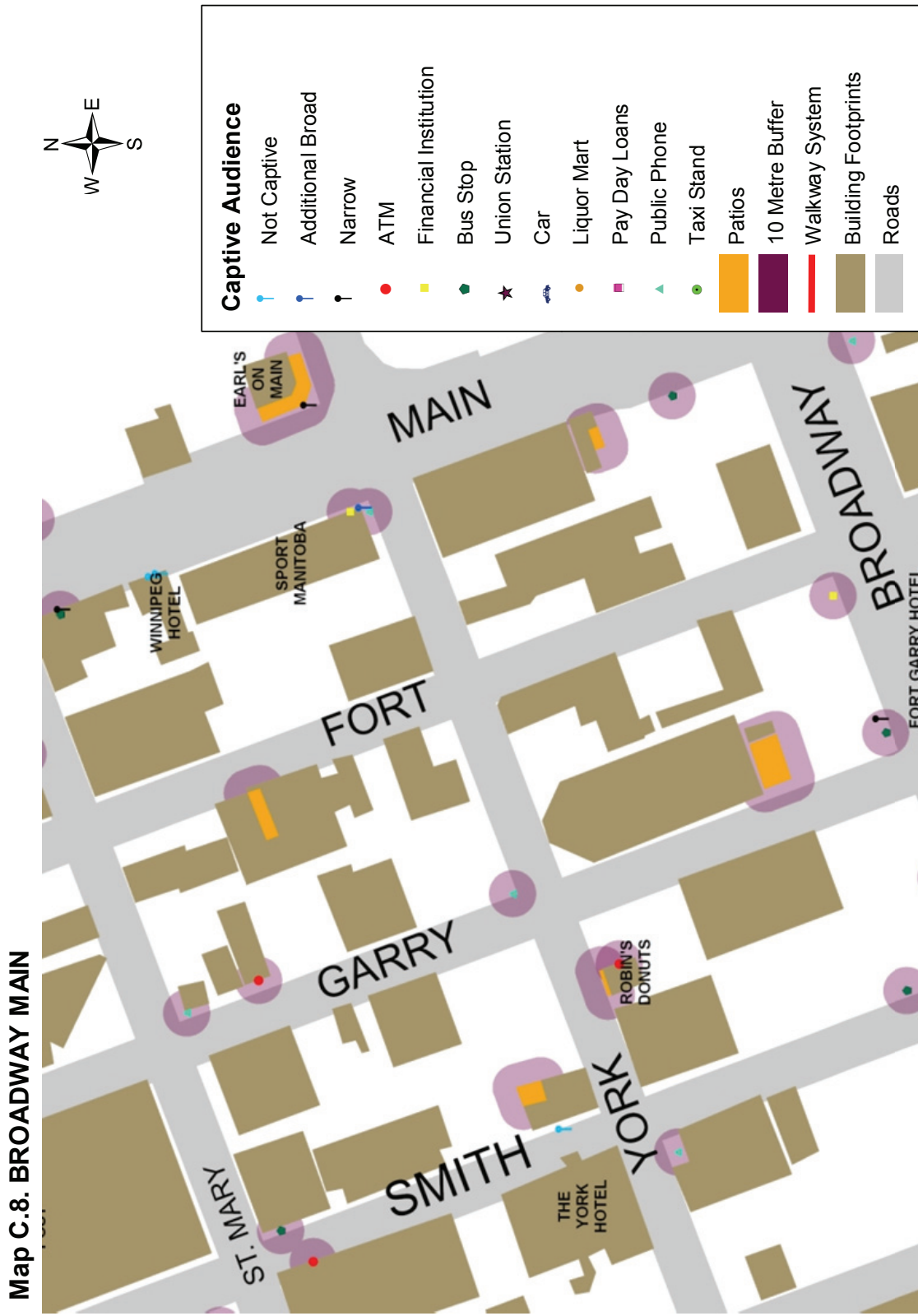
Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative



Map C.7. BROADWAY OSBORNE



Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative



Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative

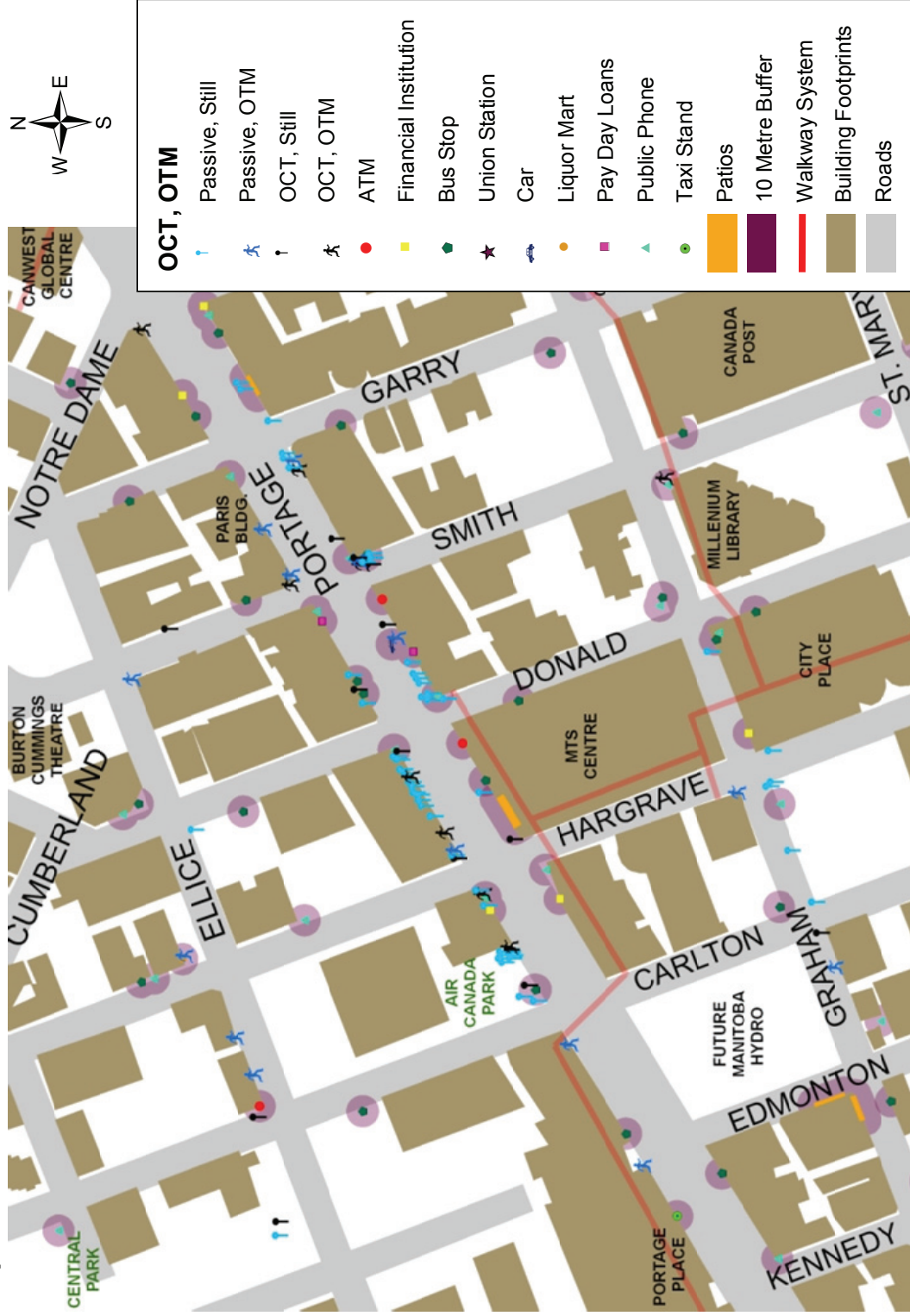
Map C.9. OSBORNE VILLAGE



Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative

Appendix D: Mapping of Panhandling Methods

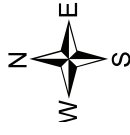
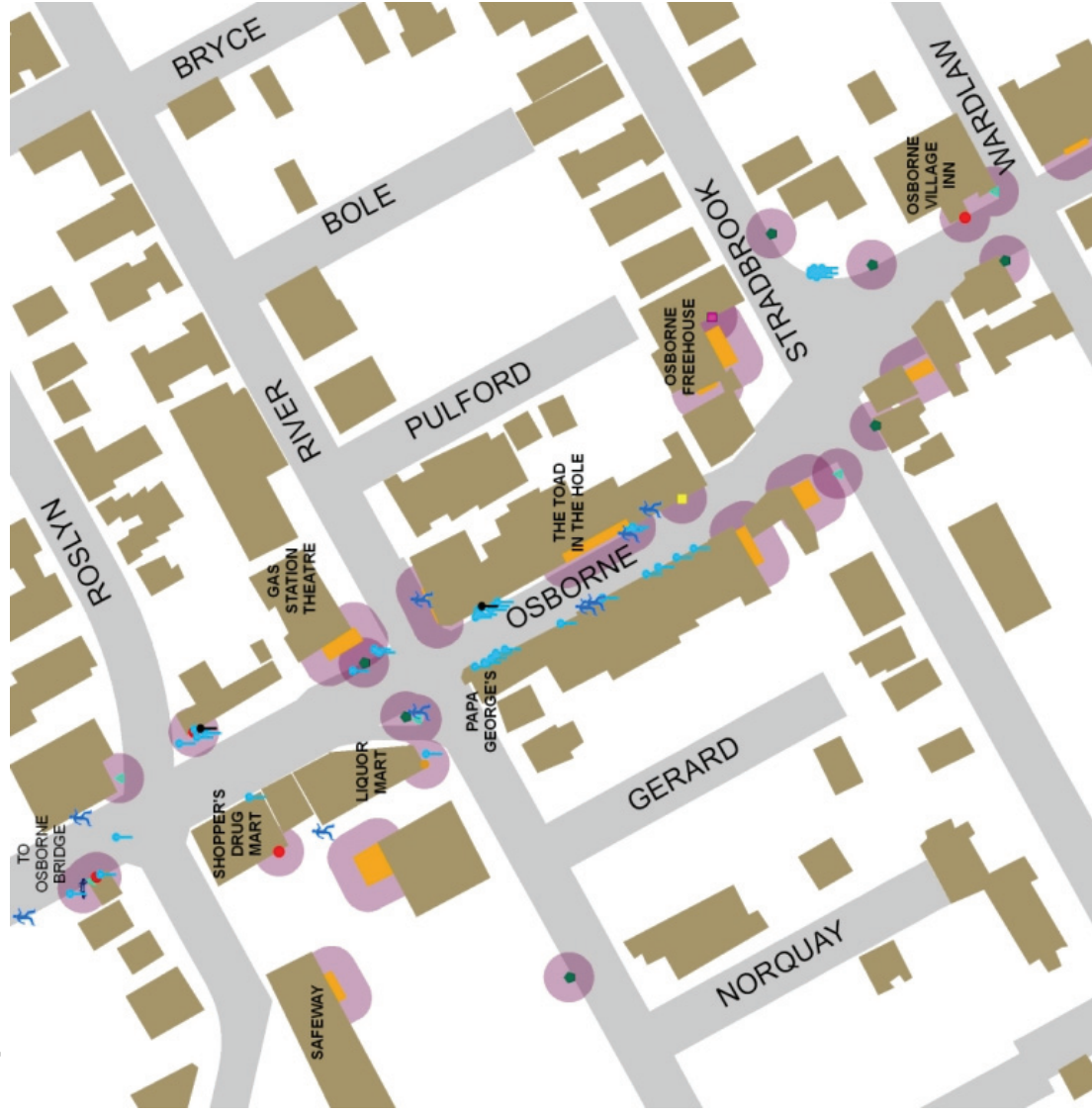
Map D.1. CENTRAL EAST



Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative



Map D.2. OSBORNE VILLAGE

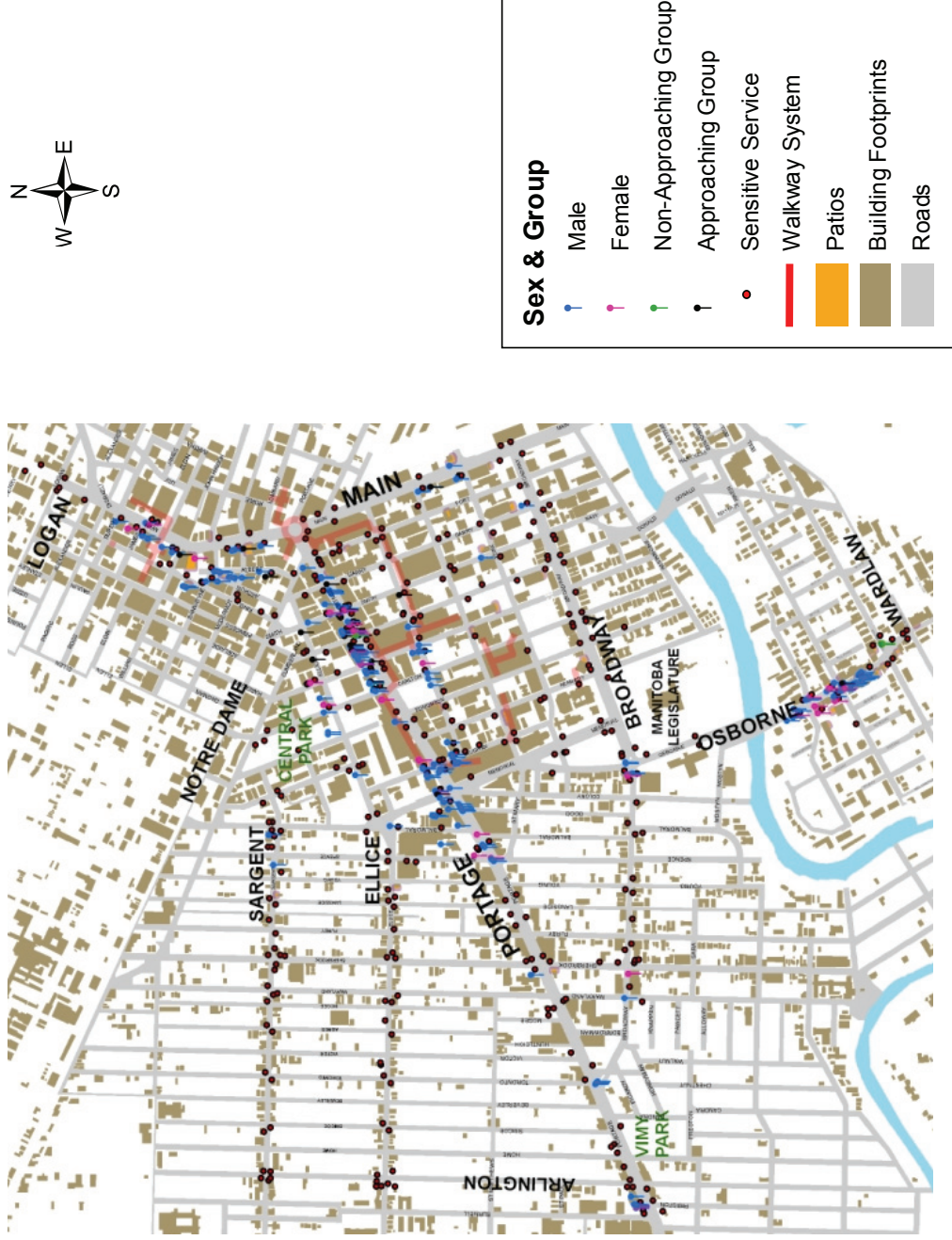


| OCT, OTM |                       |
|----------|-----------------------|
| ↑        | Passive, Still        |
| ↖        | Passive, OTM          |
| ↑        | OCT, Still            |
| ↖        | OCT, OTM              |
| ●        | ATM                   |
| ■        | Financial Institution |
| ●        | Bus Stop              |
| ★        | Union Station         |
| ↖        | Car                   |
| ●        | Liquor Mart           |
| ■        | Pay Day Loans         |
| ▲        | Public Phone          |
| ●        | Taxi Stand            |
| ■        | Patios                |
| ■        | 10 Metre Buffer       |
| ■        | Walkway System        |
| ■        | Building Footprints   |
| ■        | Roads                 |

Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative

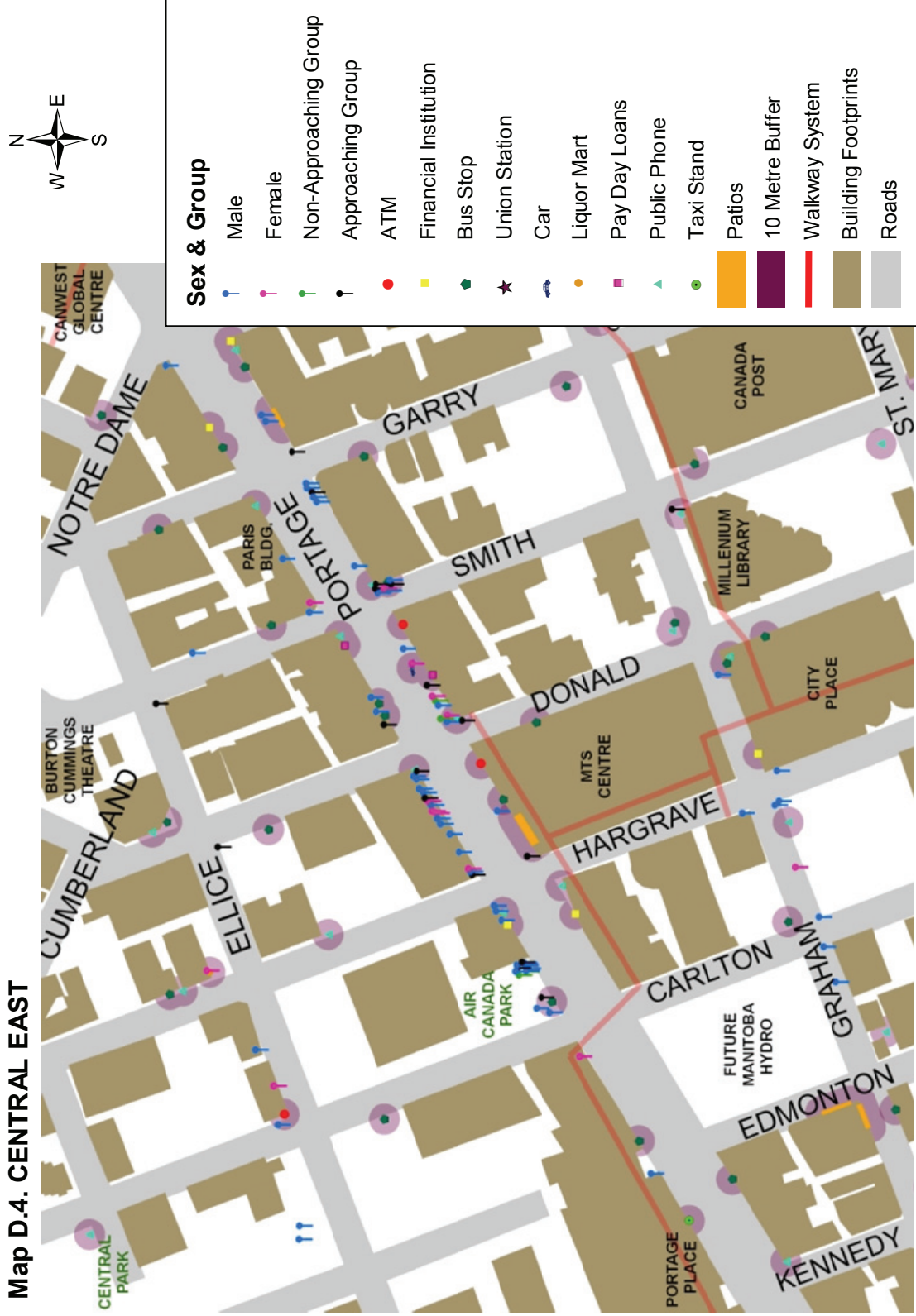
See Tables 6.1, 6.2, & Section 6 discussion for further clarification of Approaching Group & Non-Approaching Group terms.

**Map D.3. PANHANDLING METHODS: SEX & GROUP**



Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative

Map D.4. CENTRAL EAST



Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative



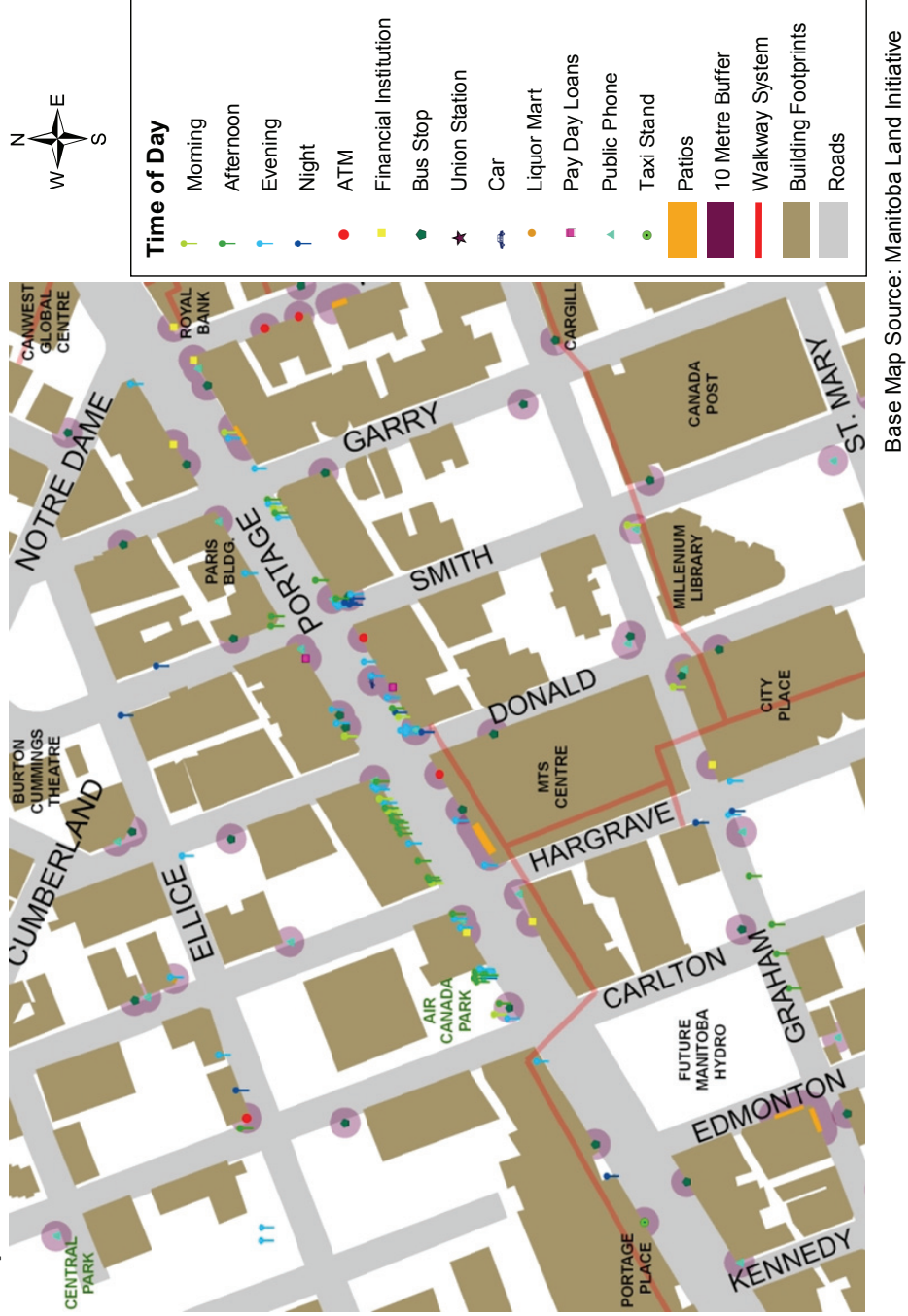
Map D.5. OSBORNE VILLAGE



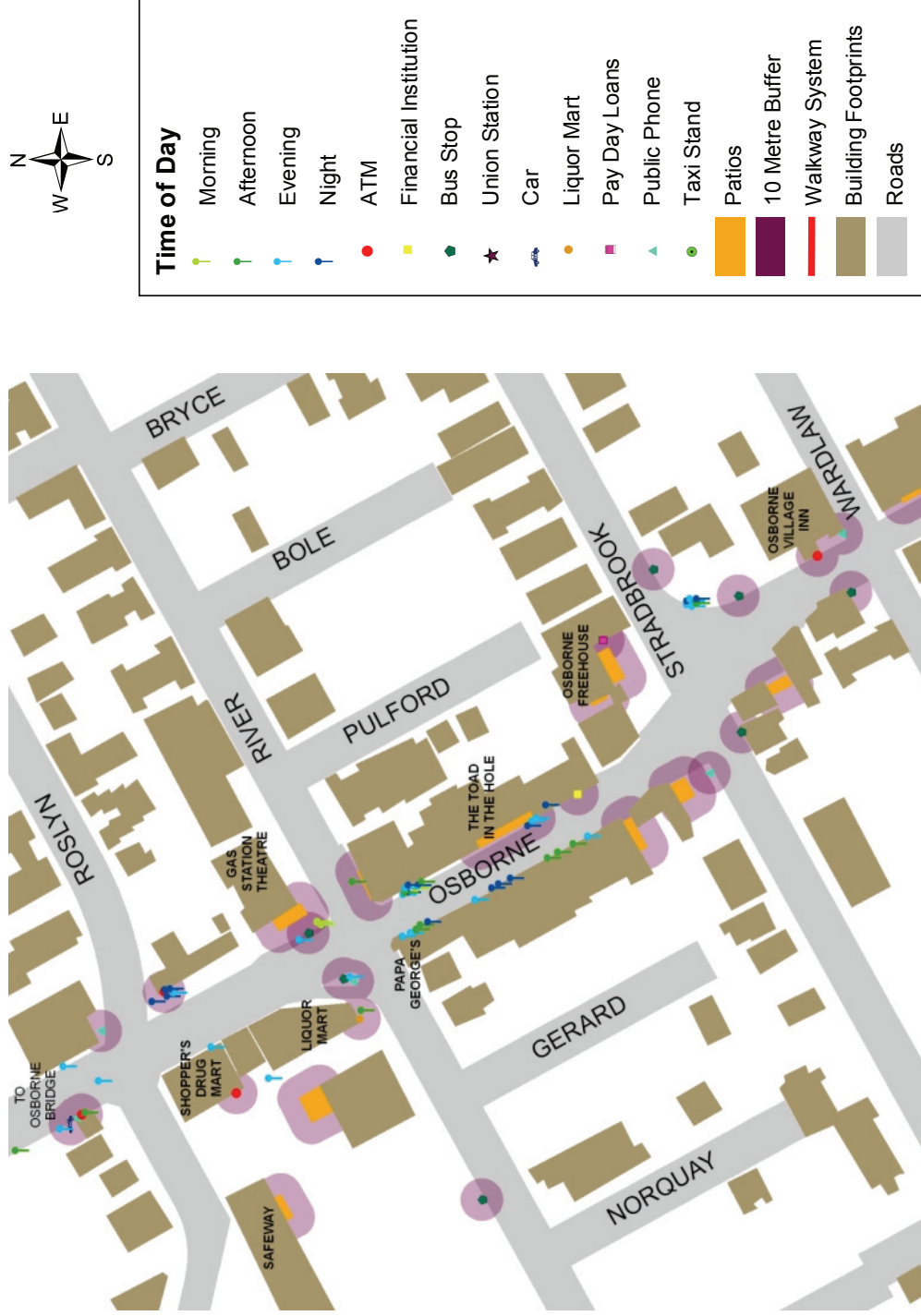
Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative

**Appendix E**  
**Mapping of Panhandling by Time of Day**

**Map E.1. CENTRAL EAST**



Map E.2. OSBORNE VILLAGE

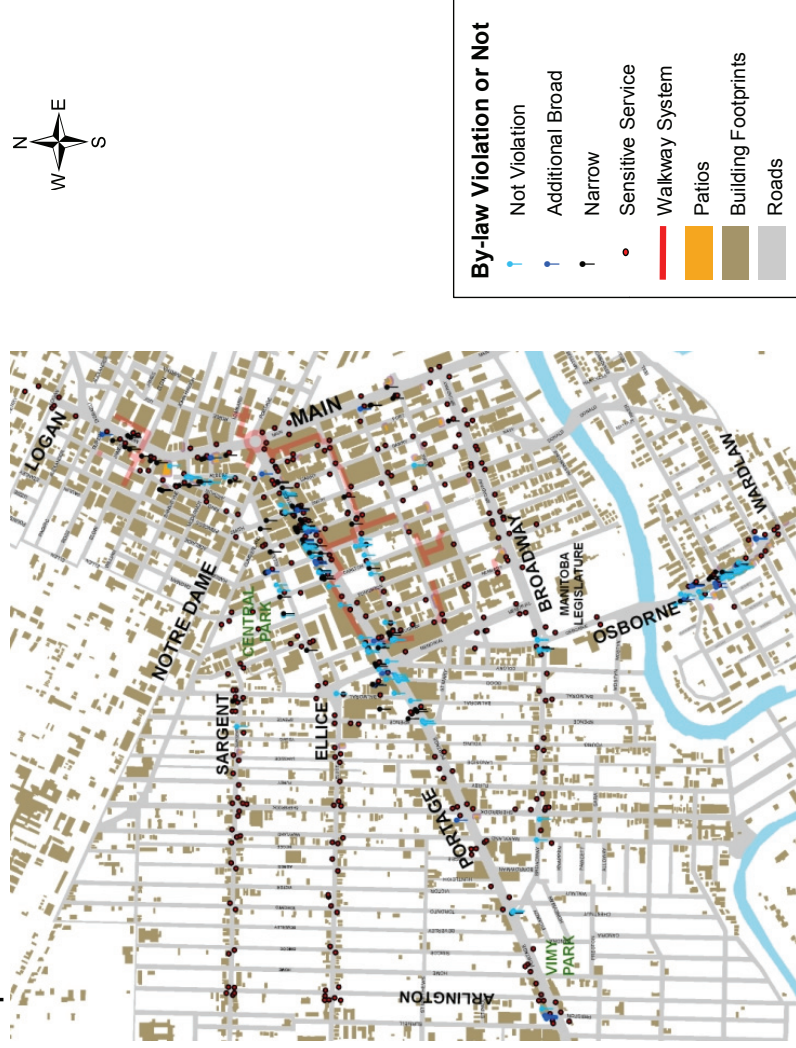


Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative

### Appendix F Total By-Law Violations Mapping

Additional Broad includes violations within the 10 Metre distance restriction and all Groups. Narrow excludes the 10 Metre distance restriction and includes Groups that are only Approaching. See Tables 6.1, 6.2, & Section 6 discussion for further clarification.

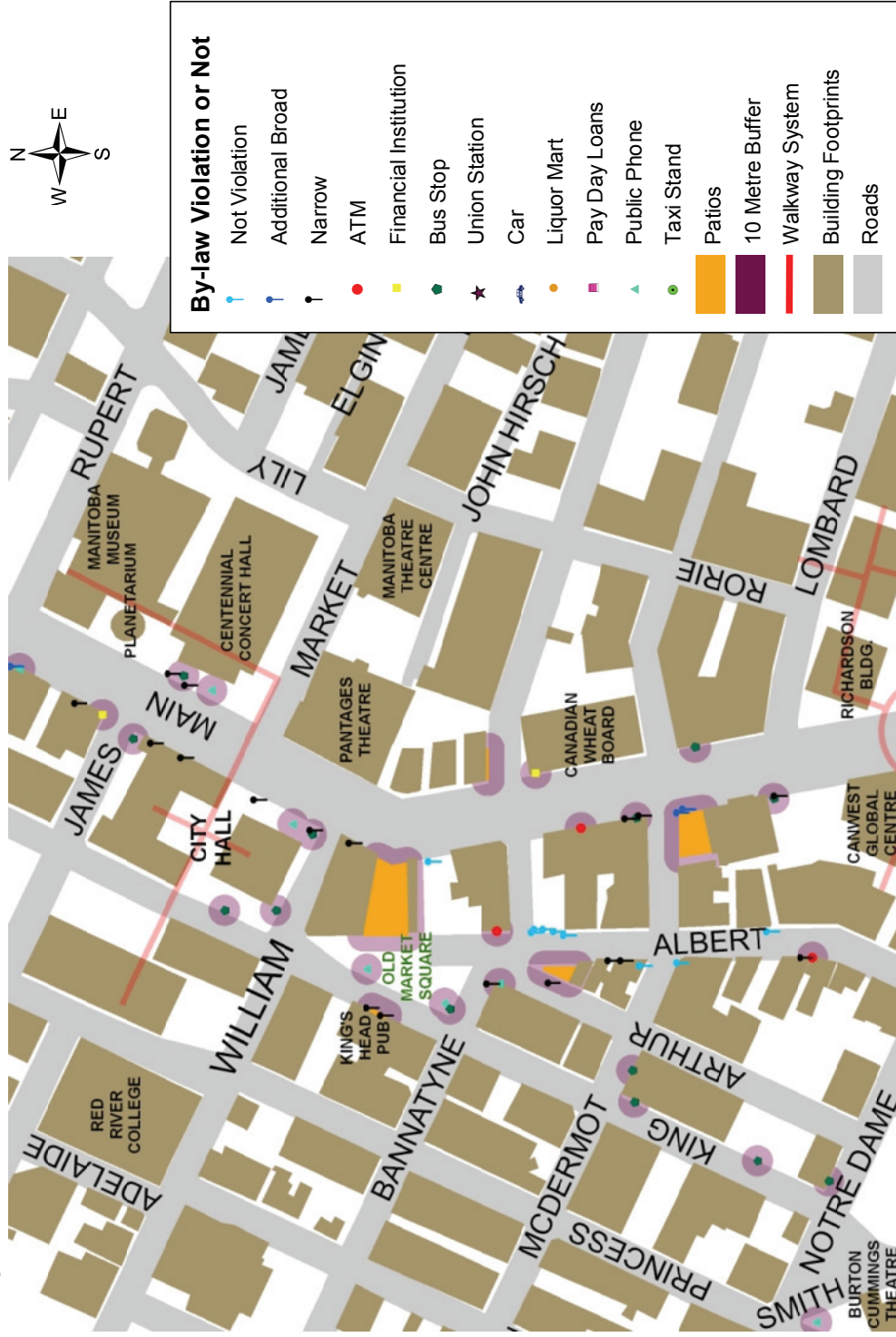
Map F.1. ALL VIOLATIONS



Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative



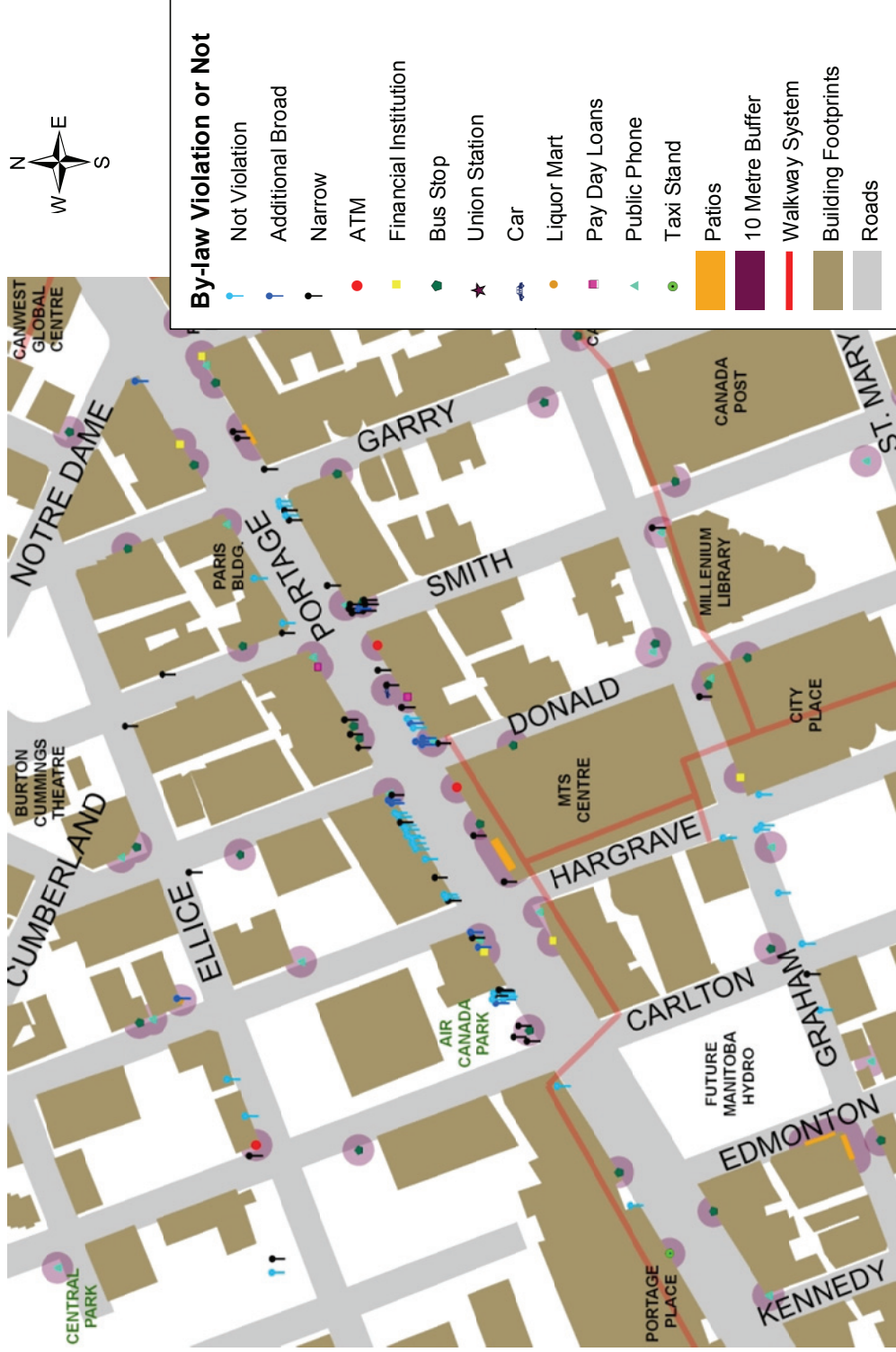
Map F.2. NORTH MAIN / EXCHANGE



Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative

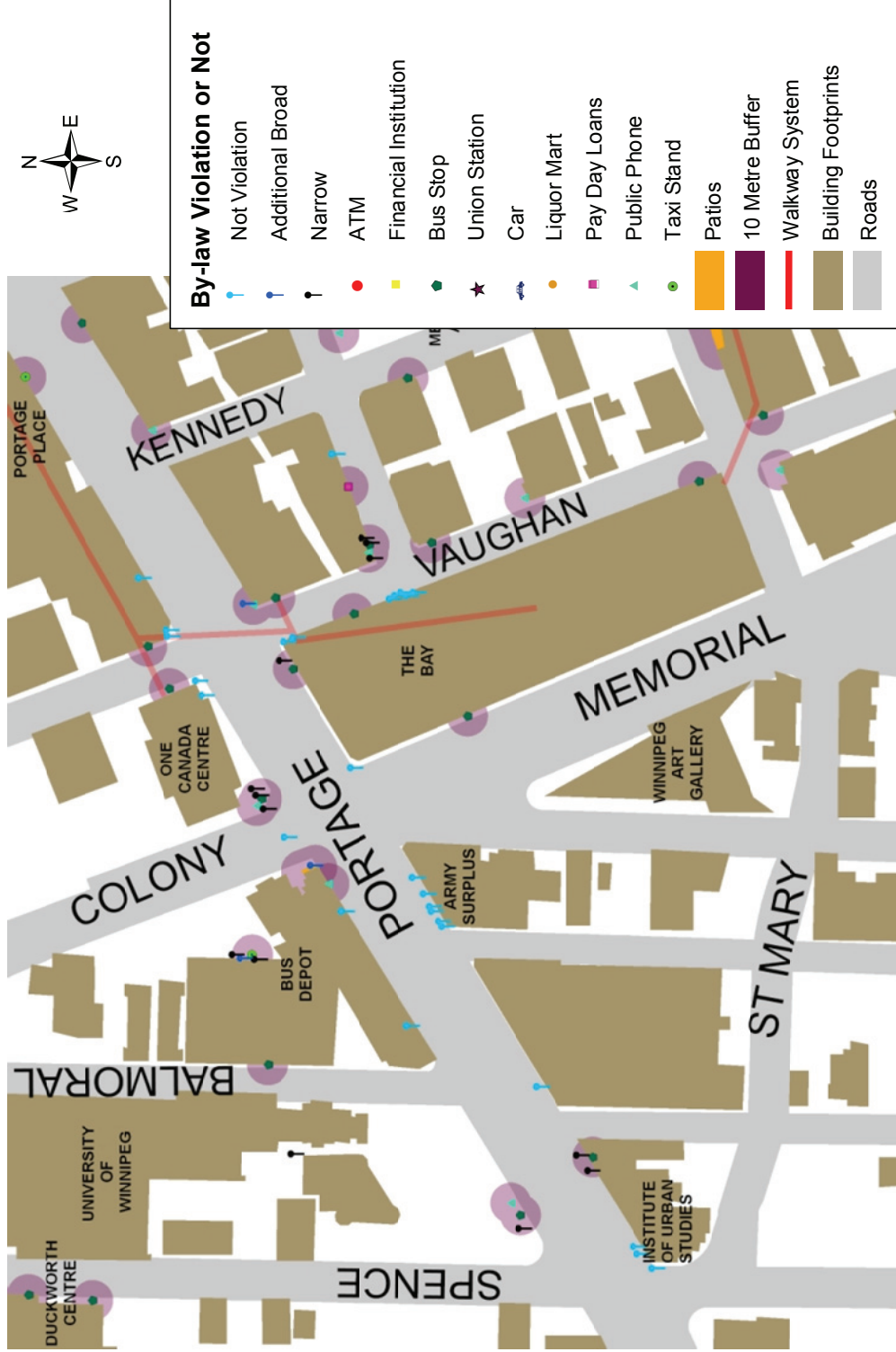


Map F.3. CENTRAL EAST



Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative

Map F.4. CENTRAL WEST



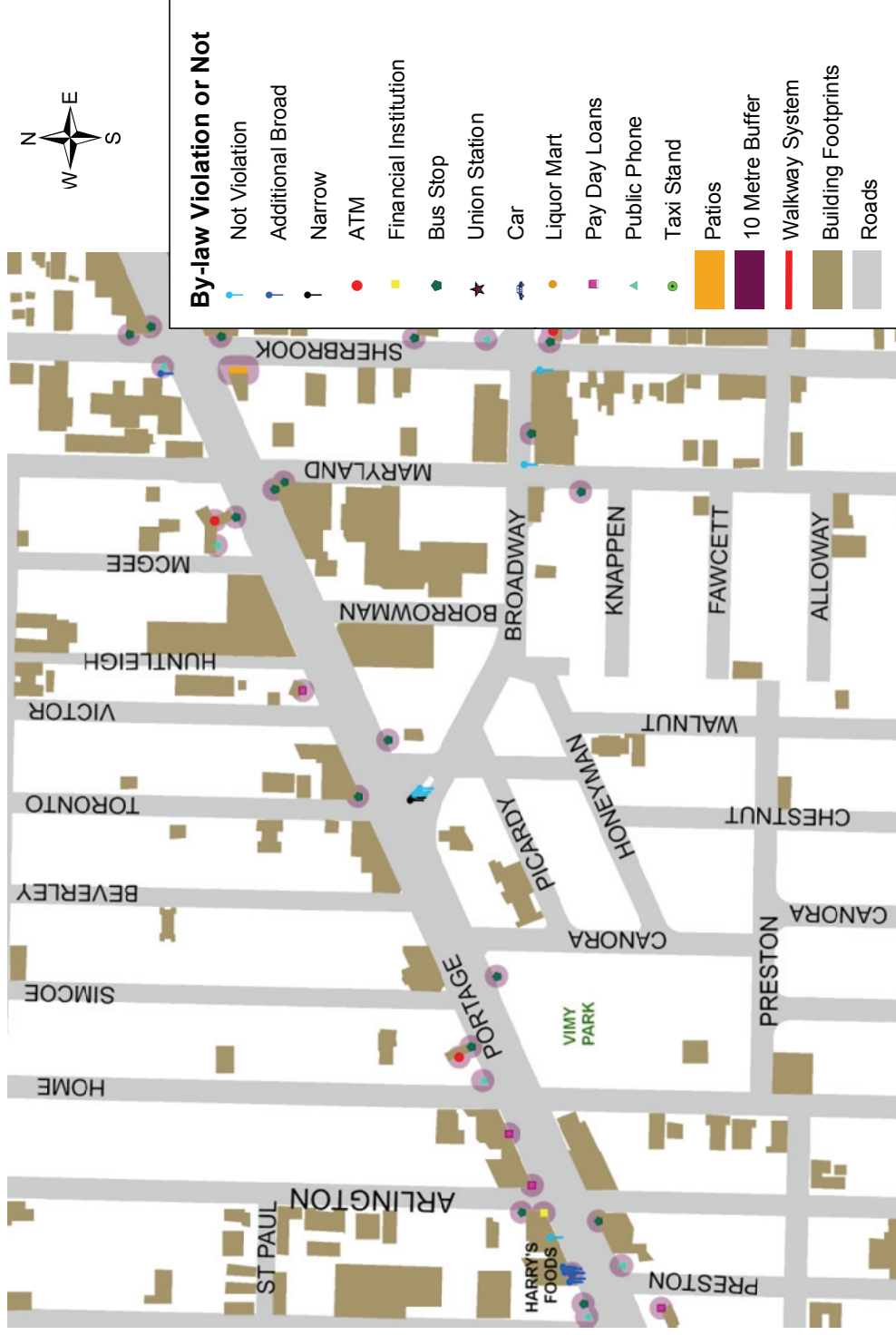
Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative

Map F.5. SARGENT ELLICE WEST



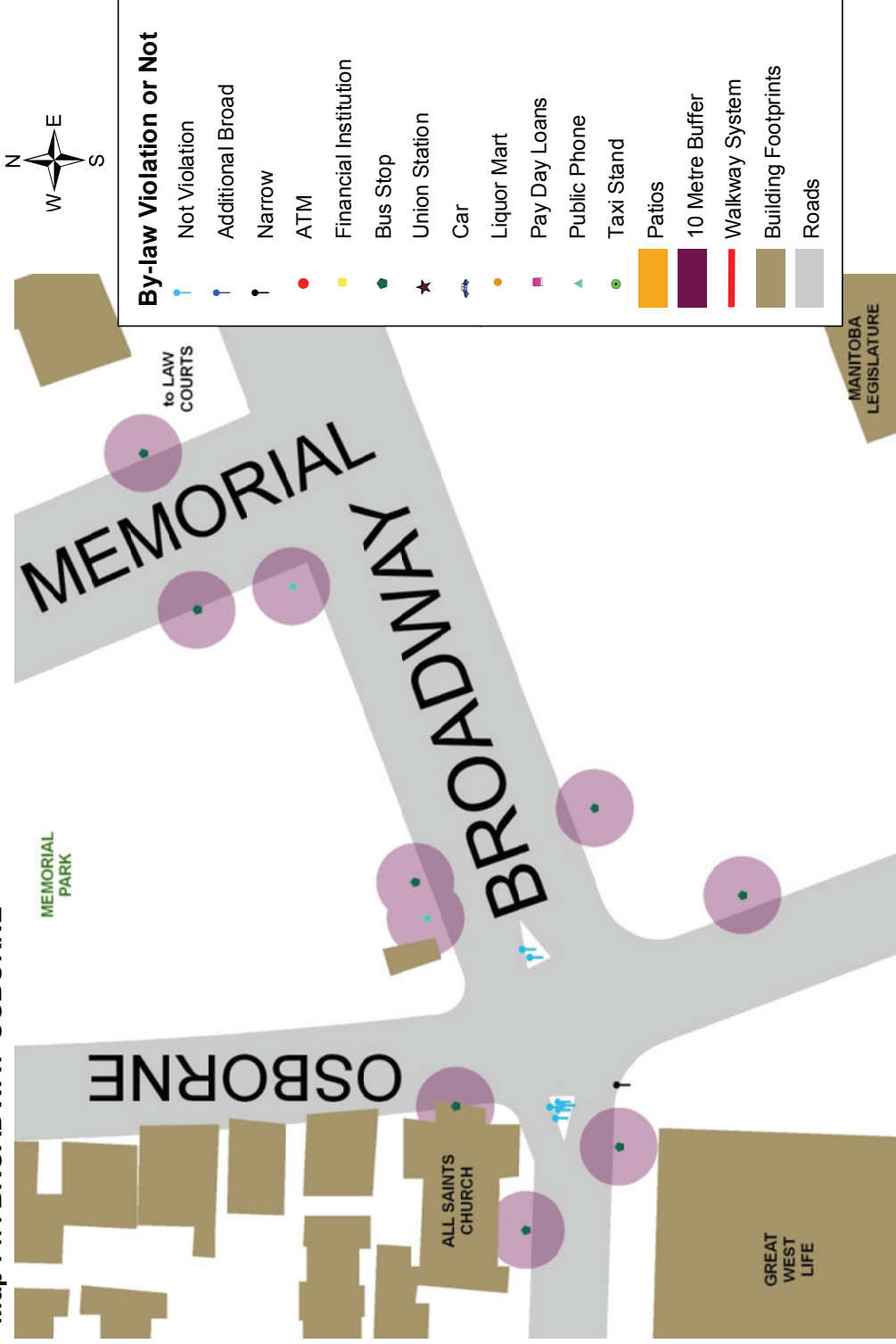
Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative

Map F.6. PORTAGE BROADWAY WEST



Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative

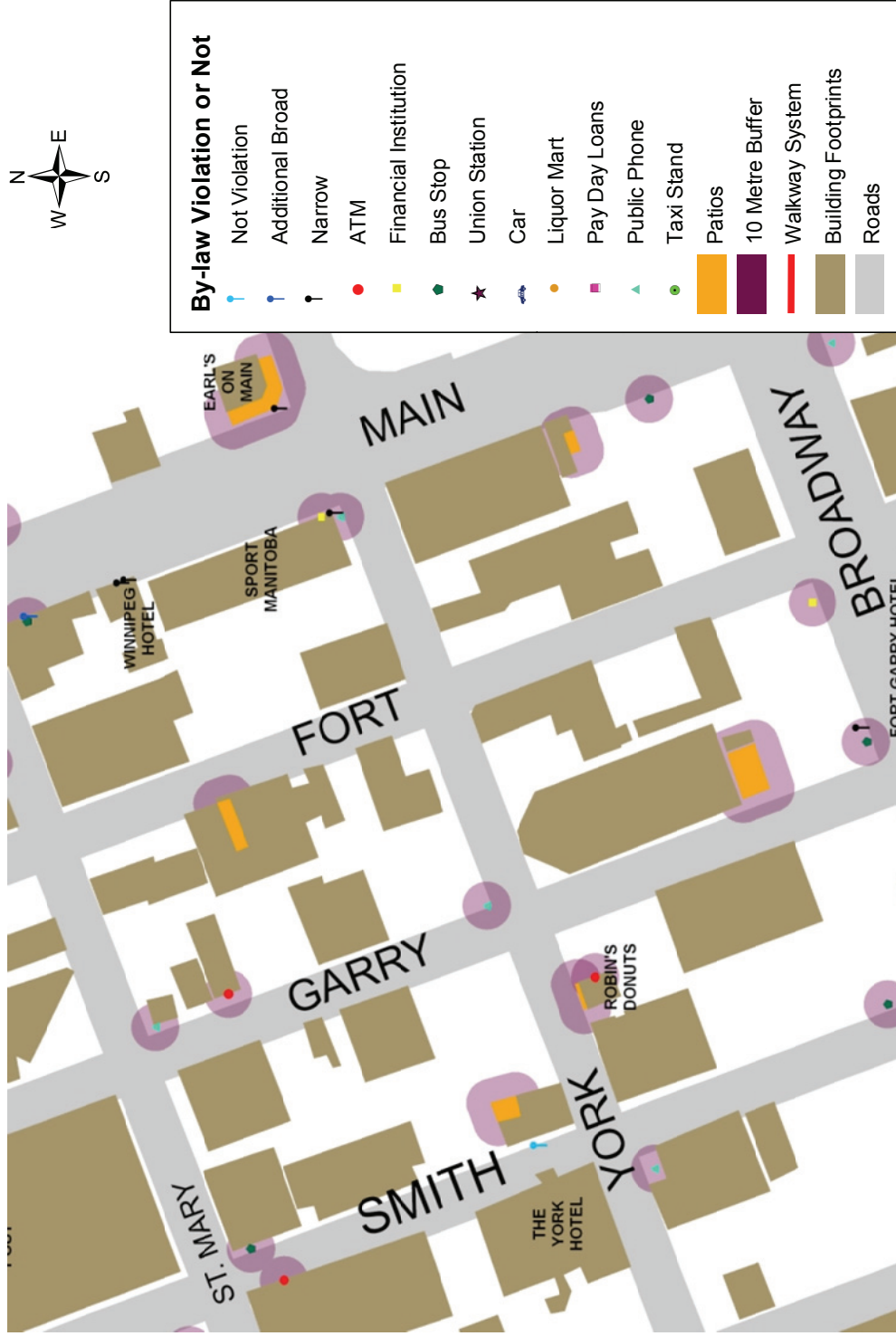
Map F.7. BROADWAY OSBORNE



Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative



Map F.8. BROADWAY MAIN

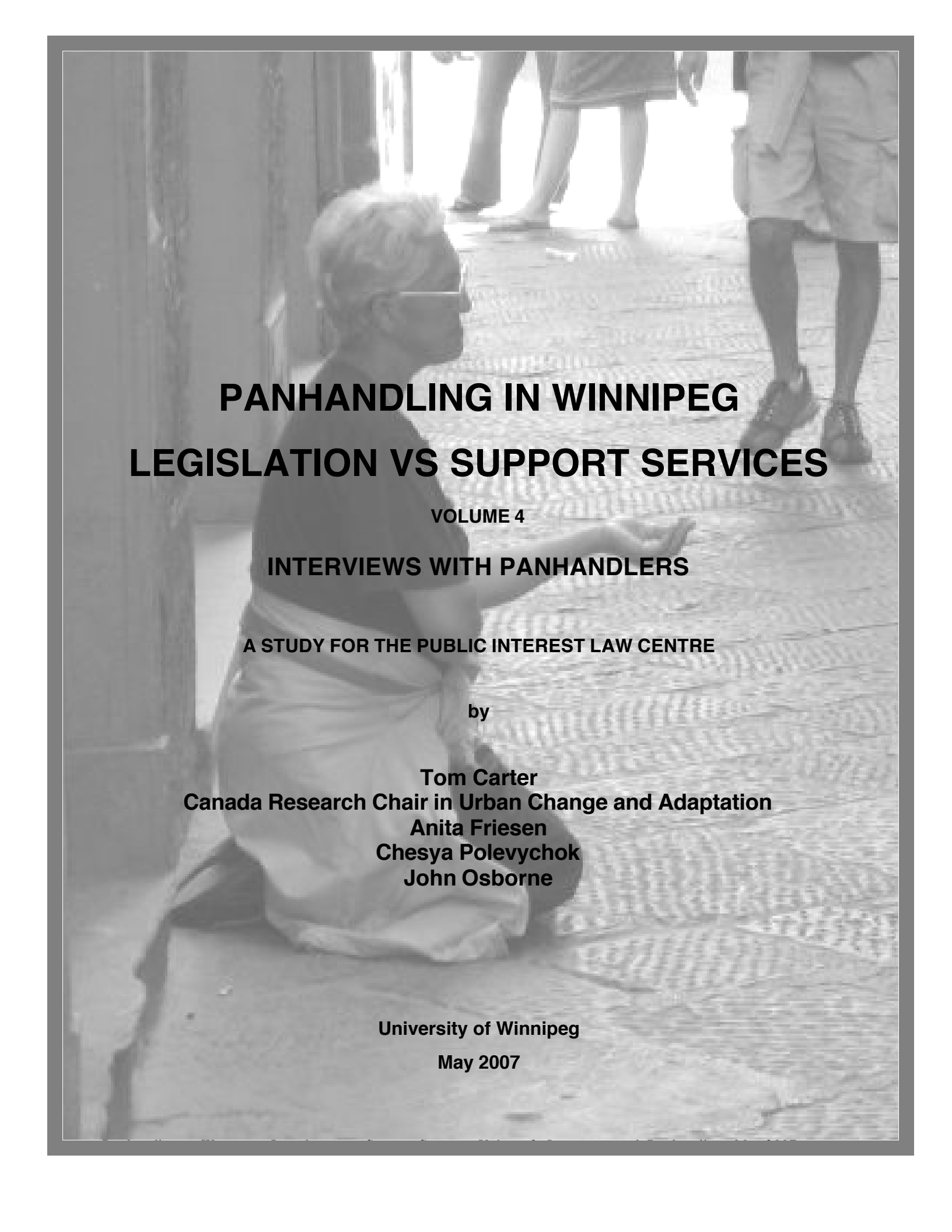


Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative

Map F.9. OSBORNE VILLAGE



Base Map Source: Manitoba Land Initiative



**PANHANDLING IN WINNIPEG  
LEGISLATION VS SUPPORT SERVICES**

**VOLUME 4**

**INTERVIEWS WITH PANHANDLERS**

**A STUDY FOR THE PUBLIC INTEREST LAW CENTRE**

**by**

**Tom Carter  
Canada Research Chair in Urban Change and Adaptation  
Anita Friesen  
Chesya Polevychok  
John Osborne**

**University of Winnipeg**

**May 2007**



## **Table of Contents**

|                                                               |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Glossary of Terms                                             | i  |
| Executive Summary                                             | iv |
| 1.0 Introduction                                              | 1  |
| 2.0 The Demographic Characteristics Of Panhandlers            | 3  |
| 3.0 Employment, Education And Income Characteristics          | 6  |
| 4.0 Residency And Housing Characteristics                     | 10 |
| 5.0 What Are Panhandlers Like In Winnipeg?                    | 11 |
| 6.0 Why Do Panhandlers Panhandle?                             | 14 |
| 7.0 Does Panhandling Provide A Living?                        | 20 |
| 8.0 Panhandlers And The Number And Nature Of Services Used    | 24 |
| 9.0 What Do Panhandlers Need To Stop Panhandling?             | 31 |
| 10.0 Location, Time of Day, Methods And Reactions             | 35 |
| 11.0 Panhandlers Knowledge Of The By-Law                      | 48 |
| 12.0 By-Law Enforcement from the Panhandlers' Perspective     | 53 |
| 13.0 Addiction And Substance Use Problems Amongst Panhandlers | 55 |
| 14.0 Conclusions                                              | 58 |
| Appendices                                                    |    |
| A. Project Methodology                                        | 60 |
| B. Interview Questionnaire                                    | 65 |
| C. Consent Form                                               | 74 |
| D. Panhandlers' Ideas                                         | 76 |

## Glossary of Terms

**ADHD** – Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder - a condition characterized by inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsiveness

**ATM** – automated teller machine

**BIZ** – Business Improvement Zone. Includes and represents the retail, commercial and professional businesses in the area. There are 16 Business Improvement Zones in Winnipeg. Sometimes the term “BIZ” is used by panhandlers to refer to the BIZ Ambassadors.

**BIZ Ambassadors** - Staff and/or volunteers of the BIZ associations that walk the area, offering directions, tourist info, first aid, and assistance wherever needed. They also participate in community events, watch for and deal with minor problems, and report larger issues to the Winnipeg Police Service. Downtown, they are known by the panhandlers as the “Red Coats.”

**Blue Key/Help Key** - an alternative for people to give to panhandlers instead of spare change. Part of the Winnipeg Downtown BIZ’s “Change for the Better” campaign (below).

**By-Law** – In this report is used to refer to the City of Winnipeg’s “The Obstructive Solicitation By-Law No. 7700/2000”, with amendment added June 29, 2005.

**Change for the Better** – Program of the Winnipeg Downtown BIZ that encourages people to drop change into collection boxes at participating businesses, instead of giving change to panhandlers who may use the money to feed an addiction. People then take a brochure containing a Help Key (Blue Key) that can be given to panhandlers instead of spare change. The key can be redeemed for a range of services at six agencies.

**Couch surfing** - staying for short periods of time with friends or family, usually sleeping on the couch or floor.

**Crackhead** - a habitual user of cocaine in the form of crack

**Detox:** 1) used as a noun, is short for detoxification.

- a period of medical treatment, usually including counselling, during which a person is helped to overcome physical and psychological dependence on alcohol or drugs.

- a place where one would undergo detoxification

2) Used as a verb, is short for detoxify: to undergo detoxification

**Drop** – noun: a single donation given to a panhandler

**Drunk tank** – in Winnipeg, the Intoxicated Persons Detention Area at Main Street Project

**Dumpster diving** – is the practice of rummaging through trash, whether commercial or residential, to find items of use that have been discarded. It takes advantage of the fact that as a whole, people and businesses are very wasteful.

**EI** – Employment Insurance

**FASD** – Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. An umbrella term used to describe fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) and the less noticeable, but sometimes equally serious, fetal alcohol effects (FAE). FAS and FAE are permanent, and often devastating, birth-defect syndromes caused by maternal consumption of alcohol during pregnancy

**Feed My Addiction Campaign** – part of the Winnipeg Downtown BIZ’s “Change for the Better” Campaign. Posters and pamphlets were distributed that showed a man from the neck down holding a hand lettered sign that reads “Please Feed my Addiction”. The poster also says: “Typically 7 out of 10 panhandlers will use your spare change to buy drugs, alcohol or cigarettes”

**Flag** – (*See Fly a Sign, below*)

**Fly a sign:** To stand or walk on a meridian or street corner with a handmade sign asking passers-by (usually in vehicles) for donations. A term used by youth. Synonym: Flag (v).

**GED:** General Educational Development. A test that certifies the taker has attained high school-level academic skills.

**GLBTT:** Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Two-Spirit community

**Half in the bag** - Drunk

**Homebums** – Panhandlers who are not travellers, but stay in their city of residence throughout the year. It is generally a term of endearment used by travellers when referring to these local panhandlers. Many of them help out travellers by giving them advice and guidance, or just hang out with them while the travellers are in town.

**Inhalants** - include solvents and aerosols, are products that people inhale to get high. They are commonly known as “sniff.” Inhalants are in the class of drugs called sedative/hypnotic/anaesthetic. (Sedatives have a calming effect; hypnotics make you sleepy; anaesthetics cause loss of physical feeling and/or consciousness so pain can’t be felt.) Inhalants are taken into the body by sniffing, snorting or by breathing them in through the mouth, which is called huffing.

**Jack** – to rob with violence or threat of violence

**Jib-tech** – a habitual user of methamphetamine (Meth) displaying visible characteristics including paranoia, sleeplessness, psychosis, sores on body, weight loss.

**Jumped** – to be attacked on the street, and usually robbed in the process

**Methadone** - A potent synthetic narcotic drug, that is less addictive than morphine or heroin and is used as a substitute for these drugs in addiction treatment programs.

**Methamphetamine** - a powerful stimulant (a drug that increases energy and alertness). It can be smoked in a pipe, snorted, taken by mouth or injected. Other street names are crystal meth, speed, glass, shards, the lady and krank.

**OTM** – on-the-move, non-stationary

**Panhandle** – To indicate a request, whether by spoken, written or printed word, or gesture, for donations of money or other things of value for one’s self or for any other person.

**Panhandler** – Someone who panhandles. A person who makes a request for money, food, etc.

**Pick butts** – On sidewalks and streets, to collect used cigarettes that have some tobacco remaining. Later the unused tobacco is removed, combined, rolled into cigarettes and smoked.

**Pick cans:** To collect pop and beer cans for the purposes of cashing them in for the deposit money.

**POW** – Panhandlers of Winnipeg – a group of about 16 mostly homeless panhandlers who can usually be found on Portage Avenue downtown.

**RaY** – Resource Assistance for Youth (formerly Operation Go Home) strives to provide youth (under 30) with what they need, on their terms, to better their lives, by offering a range of services.

**Red Coats** – (*see Downtown Watch Ambassadors*)

**Rolled** – to be robbed, generally with force but without the threat of violence, usually while sleeping or passed out.

**Rubbies:** mainly entrenched solvent/substance abusers who “look dirty and rough.” May also include alcoholics who are “constantly drunk and often smell bad.”

**Sniffers** – inhalant users (*see inhalants*)

**Squeegee** – people at street intersections (mostly teenagers and young adults) offering to clean car windows while cars are stopped at a red light in order to make some money.

**Travellers** : young homeless transients who spend the warmer months of each year travelling across the country and settle down somewhere with a milder climate, such as Vancouver, for the winter months. They generally have backpacks and look like punks i.e. piercings, tattoos, and ratty mostly black clothes. In Winnipeg, you only see them during summer. Each stays only for a couple of weeks before moving on to another city.

**Working Under-the-table** – refers to employment that is not reported to the government. The employer and employee do not pay the related taxes. This term alludes to money being passed under a table in some shady transaction, such as a bribe.

**Youth** – 15 – 24 years old, for the purposes of this study and comparisons to census data figures. Note that HRSDC, and services receiving funding from HRSDC for youth services, use their definition of youth as under 30.

## **Executive Summary**

Panhandlers in Winnipeg are a diverse population, exhibiting a range of characteristics. One characteristic they certainly all share, however, is that of living in extreme poverty.

This study found that panhandlers are predominantly male. Twice as many as the general population fall into the age bracket of 25–44 years. Although no seniors or children were found panhandling in Winnipeg, the ratio of youth aged 14–24 was considerably higher than the city and inner city averages. The very high proportion of Aboriginal people among the respondents is testament to their marginalized position in society.

Among those interviewed, there is a very high proportion that has never been married, and a correspondingly small percentage that are married. As a result, many may have a smaller social support system that people tend to rely on in difficult times. Many respondents have children but few have children living with them as dependents, and those individuals who do are often their children's sole support.

High levels of unemployment, infrequent and short incidents of employment, and inability to function effectively in the workforce characterize the work histories and employment status of panhandlers. The interviewees identified many common barriers to finding and keeping employment. Sixty percent of the interviewees are homeless – either “couch surfing,” staying in shelters, or sleeping on the streets. Housing and employment are inextricably interconnected: you can't get a place to live without a job, and you can't get a job without a place.

Low levels of education, common among the respondents, often limit the type of work for which they are qualified. Then, if manual labour is not an option due to a physical disability, a job can be impossible to find. Affordable opportunities for further education or retraining for sedentary work were reported to be virtually non-existent. Other disabilities, including cognitive and mental health issues, can be major barriers to employment as well. Many interviewees in this situation reported not receiving disability benefits. In addition, services geared to those with disabilities either are scarce, are not known, or are not convenient to access. Many other barriers to employment, including lack of ID or a criminal record, were reported by respondents, and when multiple barriers coincide, these barriers can become insurmountable.

The rate of unemployment among the panhandlers interviewed is predictably high at eighty-five percent. One might even expect that *all* panhandlers would report being unemployed. But eleven respondents work regularly and still find they have to supplement their wages by panhandling. A job is no guarantee of freedom from poverty. In fact, a few interviewees said they earn more money panhandling than working a full-time job, but generally they have to panhandle for most of their waking hours to do so. The majority of the interviewees reported earning meagre amounts through their panhandling activity. Those for whom it is their only income often rely on other ways of meeting their basic needs, such as collecting cans, and dumpster diving. Many rely on

services such as temporary shelters, foodbanks, soup kitchens, and clothing banks, but for others, these services are not appropriate to their needs or are considered as a last resort.

Panhandling is not an option that many would choose over employment. Although it has some advantages such as meeting new people, being able to relax and be outside, and the freedom to choose where and when to work, it also comes with many disadvantages. These include being the targets of frequent physical and verbal abuse, having to endure all weather conditions, not knowing when the next meal will be, not having the freedom that comes with money, being labelled as a “lazy addict”, living on the margins of society, and associated diminished self-esteem.

The majority would certainly choose to receive a living wage through full-time employment over panhandling, as was indicated at various points throughout the interviews. When asked what they need in order to stop panhandling, interviewees most often mentioned employment and employment related supports, such as training and education, a return to good health, or being free from addictions so they could work again.

In addition to the barriers to employment above, other factors can also contribute to individuals’ reliance on panhandling. For the approximately two thirds of respondents who receive one form or another of government income assistance, they find the amount they receive to be insufficient and, therefore, supplement this income by panhandling. Others reported not being able to even qualify for income assistance. Other significant factors included the ending of relationships, and leaving home at a young age. Alcohol, drug or substance addictions were identified by some respondents as major factors that brought them to panhandling and kept them there, while others developed addictions as a result of the panhandling lifestyle. Interviewees reported various successes with their efforts to overcome their addictions.

Unfortunate events, choices, behaviours or situations, which on their own might easily be dealt with, when combined can become insurmountable and leave panhandling as the only income earning option. Unfortunately, the opposite is also true: in order to have any substantive, positive and lasting change happen in their lives, the multiple compounding issues and barriers have to be dealt with simultaneously. Counselling for depression may be ineffective if the individual still wakes up each day to homelessness and hunger. Without any income until the first payday, and no place to sleep and food to eat, keeping a job is virtually impossible. Undertaking a residential addictions rehabilitation program is of no use if they return to the same surroundings and influences that fostered the addiction in the first place.

For many interviewees, the road to positive change in their lives may seem so unlikely and overwhelming that it isn’t even something they consider. The daily and immediate struggle to meet basic needs monopolizes their efforts and thinking, pushing out dreams of future possibilities. They focus on finding shelter, clothing, food and other things they consider to be necessities. This is reflected in their spending habits and priorities. Ninety-three percent spend their panhandling earnings on food, and for 88%, it ranks as their first

or second priority. Shelter costs, clothing and bus tickets also ranked high. Panhandlers also spend their earnings on cigarettes, alcohol and illegal drugs and substances, but these did not rate as high priorities for many interviewees.

Sources of pride for many of the interviewees are the panhandling skills they have honed and methods they have developed through experience, including very creative strategies. Many expressed pride in their adherence to a panhandlers “Code of Conduct” which outlines basic ethics of considerate behaviour toward each other and polite interactions with those they panhandle. About 40% of panhandlers said they stay stationary when they panhandle and speak only to thank those who give. The majority, however, do use a verbal request. About half panhandle alone and those who choose to panhandle with others generally do so for the company and for personal safety. Overwhelmingly, the interviewees advocated politeness and respectfulness when panhandling, and said they do not agree with aggressive panhandling because it is rude, counterproductive, and reflects badly on all panhandlers. There did not, however, seem to be a clear consensus on a definition of aggressive. What one panhandler would consider aggressive, another would not.

This lack of consensus on what constitutes aggression is probably linked to the interviewees’ lack of understanding of current legal restrictions on panhandling. Only half even knew that changes had been recently made which directly affect how and where they can undertake their income-earning activity. Of those who knew a by-law to this effect had been passed, most are misinformed as to its content. In fact, many are under the impression that all panhandling is illegal.

Since the amendments to By-Law 7700/2000 were put in place in the summer of 2005, relationships with the public have generally taken a turn for the worse for panhandlers. According to some interviewees, this also seems to be the case for relationships with business owners, the BIZ Ambassadors and the police as well, with reports of increased pressures to move along or to stop panhandling altogether.

Less than a third of the interviewees reported having been ticketed for panhandling. Most ignored the tickets because they said they would have had to panhandle to pay any fines, but a few had been arrested. Some reported that the effect this had on their panhandling was to make them more cautious and watchful for those enforcing the By-Law.

Panhandlers are obviously a group living on the “margins of society.” Panhandling is not an option that many would choose. What they need to stop panhandling goes far beyond by-laws that restrict panhandling activity. A range of targeted services are required to address the multiple and often co-existing health, housing, education, employment and social problems that panhandlers face. Solving the “panhandling problem” is complex; far more complex than passing a by-law that simply restricts panhandling activity.



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Stereotypes about panhandlers abound in Winnipeg. Strong negative reaction to panhandling has been the impetus for the creation of legislation to either control and/or eliminate panhandling. The effectiveness of legislation is often questioned on the basis that it only relocates the problem - rather than solving it - and limits or infringes on the rights of a group trying to sustain themselves.

It is unknown whether the stigma attached to panhandlers by many members of the public and many in the business community is justified: there is little solid information about panhandling activity in Winnipeg. This study sheds light on panhandlers' realities and needs which provides an understanding of the gaps in services and supports that need to be bridged, and systemic changes required to improve circumstances and reduce individuals' reliance on panhandling. Essentially, this research provides a foundation from which to better address the personal, systemic, legal, service/support and social issues that make it necessary for individuals to resort to panhandling activity.

There are several components to the research methodology used in this project (for study methodology see Appendix A). This study 1) reviews the current literature on panhandling, and the legislation and initiatives in other jurisdictions used to control and/or reduce panhandling; 2) maps the location of panhandlers relative to "sensitive services"; 3) observes the nature and methods of panhandling; and 4) interviews 75 panhandlers. The study examines the effects of the current legislation on panhandling activities in Winnipeg, and describes inadequacies identified by panhandlers in support services and program initiatives in effectively reducing their need to panhandle.

This volume is the fourth of the study, and presents the findings of the interviews with panhandlers. Seventy-five interviews were conducted with panhandlers in Winnipeg between February and June of 2006. This volume highlights key socio-economic and demographic characteristics of panhandlers, provides insights into the reasons they panhandle, how they panhandle, what services they use or need, how much money they collect and how they spend the money. The report also provides insights into panhandlers' knowledge of the By-Law, and its effect on their panhandling activities.

No count of regular panhandlers has ever been formally attempted in Winnipeg. The researchers were uncertain even as to a rough estimate of numbers. Even the panhandlers themselves were unsure when asked. Thirty-two of seventy-five who were asked wouldn't even try to guess. The 42 who hazarded a guess gave a wide range of estimates from 25 to 2500 in number. Fourteen percent of the respondents who guessed felt there are between 50 and 60 regular panhandlers in Winnipeg, while 45% thought there are between 80 and 150, which is still a wide range.

Although the study was unable to determine how many panhandlers there were in Winnipeg, or even in the downtown area, interviews with 75 panhandlers yielded some very valuable information on the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the population that panhandles. These characteristics are highlighted in this volume.

## 2.0 THE DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PANHANDLERS

Information collected through interviews with 75 panhandlers in Winnipeg indicates that the sector of the population that panhandles has a substantially different socio-economic profile than the population in general in Winnipeg. There are also substantial differences between the panhandlers' profile and the profile of inner city residents.

### Sex

Of the 75 panhandlers interviewed,

- 16 were female (21.3%)
- 59 were male (78.7%)

This would indicate that far more males than females panhandle. Compared to the city and inner city population the sex distribution of the sample of panhandlers interviewed contains 25 percent more males and 25 percent less females. Panhandling seems to be predominantly a male activity.

### Age

The age range of the interviewees spanned from 18 to 60 years, with a median age of 37.

- 17 (22.7%) were youth, between the ages of 15 and 24
- 46 (61.3%) fell in the age range of 25 – 44
- 12 (16%) were 45 – 64 years old.

Although the median age of panhandlers interviewed was almost identical to the general population in the city and the inner city, they were far more concentrated in the 15 to 24, and particularly the 25 to 44 age range. No children or senior citizens were discovered panhandling on the streets of Winnipeg during the study.

**Table 4.1 Demographic Comparison of Panhandlers and Winnipeg Population**

|                       | <b>Winnipeg<br/>2001</b> | <b>Inner-City<br/>2001</b> | <b>Study<br/>Sample</b> |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Age Groups</b>     |                          |                            |                         |
| 15 - 24 yrs           | 13.84%                   | 14.51%                     | 22.70%                  |
| 25 - 44 yrs           | 30.39%                   | 33.48%                     | 61.30%                  |
| 45 - 64 yrs           | 23.34%                   | 20.16%                     | 16%                     |
| <b>Median Age</b>     | 38.3                     | 37.7                       | 37                      |
| <b>Gender</b>         |                          |                            |                         |
| Male                  | 48.5%                    | 49.2%                      | 78.7%                   |
| Female                | 51.5%                    | 50.8%                      | 21.3%                   |
| <b>Marital Status</b> |                          |                            |                         |
| Never Married         | 33.7%                    | 46.7%                      | 65.3%                   |
| Married               | 48.8%                    | 31.5%                      | 5.3%                    |
| Common Law            | 6.9%                     | 9.5%                       | 16.0%                   |
| Separated or Divorced | 10.9%                    | 14.1%                      | 10.6%                   |
| Widowed               | 6.6%                     | 7.7%                       | 2.6%                    |

| <b>Ethnicity</b>                          |             |             |              |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| First Nations                             | 8.6%        | 19.2%       | 38.0%        |
| Métis                                     | 4.7%        | 6.8%        | 17.0%        |
| Inuit                                     | 0.0%        | 0.1%        | 4.2%         |
| Visible Minority                          | 13.4%       | 20.0%       | 2.8%         |
| <b>Unemployed</b>                         | <b>3.9%</b> | <b>5.7%</b> | <b>85.3%</b> |
| <b>Housing Situation</b>                  |             |             |              |
| Homeless                                  | N/A         | N/A         | 62.7%        |
| Renters                                   | 36.4%       | 63.7%       | 37.3%        |
| Owners                                    | 63.6%       | 36.3%       | 0.0%         |
| <b>Education (highest level achieved)</b> |             |             |              |
| Less Than Grade 9                         | 7.8%        | 12.4%       | 16.0%        |
| High School Diploma                       | 32.1%       | 34.9%       | 26.6%        |
| University Degree                         | 18.3%       | 15.0%       | 1.3%         |

### **Marital Status**

A total of 59 (78.7%) of those interviewed were not cohabitating:

- 49 (65.3%) were single and have never been married,
- 2 were widowed/widower
- 8 were separated or divorced

Sixteen of the interviewees, or 21.3%, had a spouse:

- 4 were married (5.3%)
- 12 lived common-law (16%)

Although it wasn't a question asked directly, through the course of the interviews it became clear that almost all had a "significant other" in their lives (i.e. married or common-law spouse, long term girlfriend or boyfriend). Although many panhandlers had "significant others" in their lives they seemed to be far more likely to have never been married and more likely to be living common law than the general population of the city or inner city.

Another question not asked was the number of children each panhandler had. Through the course of the interviews, however, it became clear that the majority of the respondents had kids, many of whom are over the age of 18 and, therefore, independent. In only 9 cases, however, did their children live with them as dependents. Sixty-three percent of the interviewees' dependent children were under the age of six. Seven interviewees were supporting more than one dependent, and all but two of those with dependents were the only income earner for the household. See table 4.2.

**Table 4.2 Dependents' relationship and age**

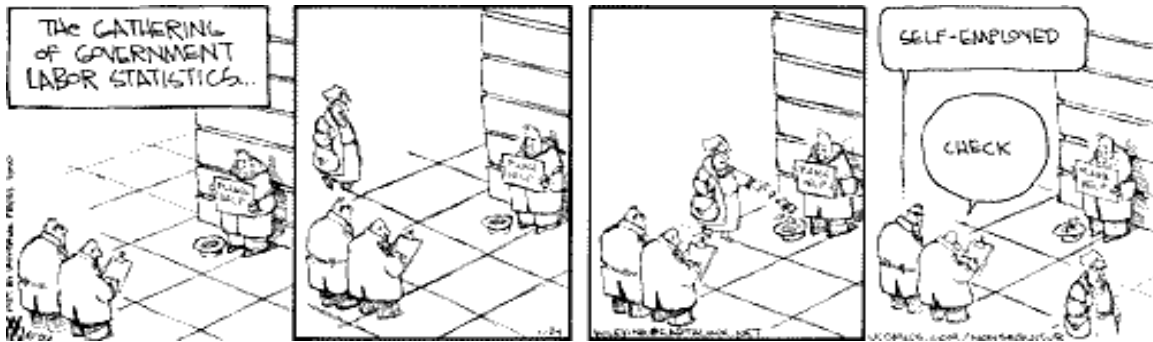
| <b>Respondent</b> | <b>Sole Income Earner?</b> | <b>Dependent Spouse?</b> | <b>Dependent Child?</b> | <b>Age of child</b> |
|-------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Male, 21 yrs.     | v                          | v                        | v                       | 6 months            |
| Male, 27 yrs.     | v                          |                          | v                       | 17 months           |
| Male, 28 yrs.     | v                          |                          | v                       | 9 months            |
|                   |                            |                          | v                       | 3 yrs.              |
| Male, 33 yrs.     | v                          |                          | v                       | 3 yrs.              |
|                   |                            |                          | v                       | 5 yrs.              |
| Male, 37 yrs.     |                            |                          | v                       | 15 yrs.             |
|                   |                            |                          | v                       | 12 yrs.             |
| Male, 43 yrs.     | v                          |                          | v                       | 10 yrs.             |
|                   |                            |                          | v                       | 8 yrs.              |
| Male, 44 yrs.     | v                          |                          | v                       | 18 yrs.             |
|                   |                            |                          | v                       | 17 yrs.             |
|                   |                            |                          | v                       | 17 yrs.             |
|                   |                            |                          |                         |                     |
| Female, 21 yrs.   | v                          |                          | v                       | 15 months           |
| Female, 42 yrs.   |                            |                          | v                       | 24 yrs.             |
|                   |                            |                          | v                       | 21 yrs.             |
|                   |                            |                          | v                       | 19 yrs.             |
|                   |                            |                          | v                       | 16 yrs.             |
|                   |                            |                          | v                       | 9 yrs.              |

### **Ethnicity**

Seventy-one interviewees responded to the question about their ethnic/cultural background:

- 27 (38%) were Caucasian,
- 27 (38%) were First Nations
- 12 (17%) were Metis
- 3 were Inuit
- 2 were "other visible minority"

Approximately 55 percent of the panhandlers identified themselves as either First Nations or Metis, another four percent were Inuit and three percent were other visible minorities. In total over 60 percent were non-caucasian, a proportion almost three times as high as the proportion of non-caucasians in the city as a whole and fifteen percent higher than the inner city.



### 3.0 EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND INCOME CHARACTERISTICS

High levels of unemployment, infrequent and short incidents of employment, and an inability to function effectively in the workforce characterize the work history and employment status of panhandlers.

Eighty-five percent of the 75 panhandlers interviewed were unemployed or not working regularly, compared to just four percent in the city and six percent in the inner city. Of the 15 percent who indicated they were employed, most were only working part time at temporary, seasonal, casual or day labour positions.

Just over 60 percent of those who were working were employed in construction or general labour positions (usually day labour jobs). It was surprising, however, to find that one person worked in auto body repair, another as a market research analyst, one in landscaping, while another sold art on the street.

Although very few of those interviewed indicated they were employed, just over 70 percent indicated they did receive income from other sources: panhandling was the only source of income for just over 25 percent of those interviewed. Other income came from a variety of sources: employment insurance for about two percent; social assistance for approximately 36 percent; disability pension twenty-three percent; seniors benefits two percent, child benefits two percent; money from friends and family five percent; and GST rebate twenty-nine percent. Some of those receiving income from sources other than panhandling were receiving income from more than one source. However, the two most significant sources of income were social assistance and disability pensions. Other sources yielded very little money and the money they did receive was irregular and infrequent.

Most of those on social assistance received the basic shelter and personal allowance given to individuals: \$286 for rent and the basic personal allowance of \$485. A few who had partners or dependents received more. Some received less because if they earned income from other sources during the month, above a certain threshold the amount would be deducted from their personal social assistance allowance. Those on disability pensions received amounts that varied from \$90.00 per month up to \$1325.00. Most, however, received between \$200 and \$500 per month. Because most who were working were only part time, temporary or casual, they received very modest amounts per month. No one

earned over \$500 from employment; most were in the \$200 to \$300 dollar range - not enough to live on.

### **Barriers to Employment**

The fact that the majority of panhandlers receive so little income from any regular source of employment or social safety net sources is a major reason why they are panhandling. An examination of their educational characteristics, as well as reasons given for their inability to work, sheds additional light on why they find themselves panhandling to make “a living.”

*“I would like to work, but the doctor says I can only do sedentary work, and I’ve done heavy work all of my life. I have a grade 7 education, so I need skills- training. I was on welfare, and got cut off because I didn’t go to a job search workshop. I didn’t go because I know how to look for work, I just can’t get any work because I don’t have the training. Welfare wouldn’t help me get the training I need. Now I’m cut off.”*

#### ***Low educational attainment***

Fifty seven (76.0%) of the interviewees had at least some high school education, twenty-five of whom had achieved at least a high school diploma (33.3% of all interviewees). When comparing the highest level of educational achievement, the percentages of those whose highest level was high school are quite similar between the interviewees (26.6%), the inner city (34.9%), and the city overall (32.1%). Large differences are evident, however, when comparing the percentages of the populations that achieved a university degree: only one interviewee (1.3%), but 18.3% of the city and 15.0% of the inner city populations had completed a university degree. Another significant difference between populations is in the percentage that has not even completed elementary school. Among the panhandlers interviewed, sixteen percent had achieved less than grade nine, compared to only 7.8% of the city population and 12.4% of the inner city population. The fact that approximately sixty-seven percent of the panhandlers interviewed had not completed a high school certificate is a clear indication that the majority has a skill and education level that makes access to the labour market difficult.

#### ***Disabilities***

Fifty-four of the interviewees, or seventy-two percent, reported having a disability of some kind. Thirty-eight of the interviewees, or 70% of those who said they have a disability, identified a physical impairment. Nineteen respondents said they have a mental health problem (35% of the disabilities). 18 cases of disabilities reported were equally divided as cognitive (learning/intellectual) and illiteracy. There is overlap in these numbers because twenty interviewees identified multiple disabilities. For example, one man suffers from multiple physical impairments: debilitating migraines, arthritis, recent triple by-pass, and a painful cyst in his knee. Another reported having a heart condition, a metal plate and pins in his hip, vision impairment (blind in one eye), and very high blood pressure.

Others reported combinations of different types of disabilities including:

- Speech impediment, plus anxiety and depression.
- Anxiety and depression, plus poor back and leg.
- Car accident injuries: Metal plate in leg and permanent brain damage
- Hepatitis C, depression and asthma

In addition to brain damage caused by injury, diagnosed cognitive disabilities (intellectual/learning) reported include Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). If severe enough, these disabilities can make it impossible to get or keep a job. Illiteracy can also be a major barrier to employment. One youth reported that he was able to find work a couple of times, but each time he was fired when the employer found out he was illiterate.

Another youth has blackouts periodically, but the health system has been unable to determine what they are caused by or predict when they will occur, so he is not allowed to drive or operate machinery, which limits his employment prospects.

If disabilities are not officially diagnosed, respondents cannot receive disability benefits.

### ***Disabilities not recognized***

Thirty-seven of the interviewees who self-reported a disability in this study, although it may prevent them from working, had not been assessed or had not applied for disability benefits. This seemed to be most common with those with back problems and vehicle accident injuries. Only 23% of the respondents were receiving disability benefits, but 72% reported having a disability.

In some cases, interviewees reported having been assessed by doctors as having disabilities, but were still not receiving disability benefits. One interviewee explained his case:

*“There’s no reason why I shouldn’t have some clean clothes and smokes now and then. I’m lame, I’m broke, and I’m homeless. Eventually the government will figure it out and give me welfare. Instead I have to keep going to the hospital. I just got out of the hospital and everyone else goes home. I have to go stand in line for a mat to sleep on a shelter floor overnight.”*

*“My welfare worker wouldn’t put me on disability, even though three specialists said that I couldn’t work because of my back injury. I appealed and they overturned the decision, but they still wouldn’t put me on.”*

Some of the issues the panhandlers indicated as disabilities may not be readily identified as such. This may be the case with the youth who, when asked if he had a disability of any kind, replied *“Regular jobs make me ‘crazy’.”* Other cases will never qualify. For example, when asked if he has a disability, one respondent replied *“Ya, I keep getting hurt when I’m intoxicated.”* (Note: this was not counted as a disability in this study).



### ***Lack of access to training and education***

Some interviewees, who reported having a physical disability, were deemed by social services as capable of working, just not at a physically demanding job. Many of these individuals, however, had work histories of exclusively physically demanding jobs, had low literacy skills, low educational attainment, and/or lacked computer skills. This combination puts them at an extreme disadvantage when looking for work because they do not have the skills, experience and educational background required for non-physical jobs.

Appropriate training and education to do sedentary work were identified by many of the interviewees as the key to being able to stop panhandling. Unfortunately, those opportunities did not seem to be available to them. Several respondents indicated that most free training is only offered to those on Employment Income or Social Assistance (welfare). One welfare recipient indicated that the only training offered was for job search skills. This was of no use to him because he first needed to gain some employable skills. He stressed that it wouldn't matter how good he was at looking for work, people still wouldn't hire him if he didn't have the appropriate skills to offer. Another welfare recipient reported that he wasn't considered eligible for re-training: "*Social services says that if you're able to take training, then you're able to go to work.*"

Many sedentary jobs also involve working with cash, in which case a criminal background of any kind would be a major deterrent to being hired. Although it was not a question asked in the interview, a few of the respondents mentioned they had criminal records that made it difficult to find any kind of work.

If training and education are not provided free, the costs can be prohibitive for anyone living day-to-day on a panhandling income. One interviewee explained his situation: "*I want to become a welder. I have experience but I need a license. I need \$4,500 to go back to school, but I have bad credit, so I can't get a loan.*" One youth who was abused as a child and kicked out of home at the age of 12 was only able to finish grade nine because it was too difficult to go to school while living on the streets. He has tried to find work, but employers are looking for a higher level of education. He'd like to write the General Educational Development (GED) exam for high school equivalency, but for him the cost of \$65 was not within his reach.

### ***Lack of ID***

Some of the interviewees did not have any identification document (ID). It may have been lost or stolen or, in a time of desperation, sold. Without a social insurance card, the interviewees pointed out that the only work they could get is day labour or odd jobs "under the table." Even day-labour isn't easy to find, as one respondent describes: "*The day-labour agencies have work, but they tend to take the regulars. It takes awhile before you get known and can get regular temp work. It's discouraging.*" Five of the interviewees reported that a lack of ID was the reason they were not working at all. Others who were working day labour said that if they had ID, they could get regular

better paying jobs. The replacement cost for a social insurance card is \$35 – money that most did not have to spare. It also costs to get other ID, such as a health card, birth certificate, or driver’s license.

### ***Homelessness***

While discussing the barriers to employment, one interviewee noted a common Catch-22 situation: *“You need a house to get a job and you need a job to get a house.”* It’s hard for anyone to get a job without a permanent address, or at least a phone number to be reached at. Even if a panhandler is offered work, they often have to turn it down. One interviewee explains: *“If you hired me to start work tomorrow, I would have a hell of a time getting food, having clothes, getting to work, etc. and surviving until the first payday.”*

### ***Other Barriers***

There were many other reasons why panhandlers had difficulty accessing employment. These included problems such as a criminal record, addictions, lack of a phone, and the fact they had been in the city only a short period of time that created barriers to permanent “living-wage” employment. Some freely admitted that it was their choice not to work, they were not prepared to work for minimum wage and they simply were not prepared to accept the regular schedule that a job requires. They preferred, instead, to panhandle as it provided them with more flexibility.

It is clear from the characteristics described above that panhandlers are a group of people living in very deep poverty. Few are working, many lack the skills necessary to access employment, and others reported physical, cognitive or mental issues that are real barriers to employment. Some have “opted out” and are not actively looking for, or interested in obtaining, employment. The income they earn is not sufficient to support them, so they panhandle.

## **4.0 RESIDENCY AND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS**

Seventy of the seventy-five interviewees (93.3%) considered themselves to be residents of Winnipeg. The five who did not are transient youth who referred to themselves as ‘travellers’. They spend the warmer months of each year travelling across the country and settle down somewhere with a milder climate, such as Vancouver, for the winter months. Another fourteen of the interviewees lived elsewhere at other times of the year, either on reserves, or in urban centres in other provinces.

Contrary to popular belief, not all panhandlers are homeless. Thirty of those interviewed (40%) lived in rental accommodation. Interestingly, the proportion that rented is very similar to the proportion of renters in the city as a whole, while 64 percent of the inner city population are renters. The difference is that the non-renters in the population of the

city or inner city are homeowners, but the non-renting panhandlers interviewed were homeless.

A little over half of the panhandlers who were renters have a room in a rooming house or residential hotel. The other half rented an apartment. Rental costs per unit ranged from \$110 to \$700 per month. Half of the rental units cost \$280 or less per month, reflecting the shelter component for a single person on social assistance. All but three included utilities in the cost of the rent. Only nine of the respondents reported sharing household expenses with another person. Two interviewees were staying in a residential rehabilitation centre at the time of the interview.

In this study, sixty percent (45 of 75) of the interviewees were homeless – they either slept outdoors, stayed in a shelter, “couch surfed”, or some combination of the three. A third of all interviewees regularly “couch surfed”, which is to stay for short periods of time with various friends or family, moving frequently from place to place and usually sleeping on the couch or floor. Most who couch surfed said they pay a small amount of money to stay there, buy groceries, or contribute towards other household costs. This can be an awkward arrangement for some. One youth who had been sleeping on a friend’s couch said he feels uncomfortable because he’s violating his friend’s space, and doesn’t want to “wear out his welcome,” which makes him feel stressed sometimes.

Twenty one respondents said they regularly stayed in shelters, with Neeginan and Main Street Project being the most frequently used. Three respondents said they stayed at the Salvation Army on a regular basis.

Seven interviewees indicated that the only place they slept was outdoors. In the winter months they used various techniques to keep from freezing to death. One panhandler said he lights a fire in a dumpster to warm it up, puts the fire out and climbs inside to sleep. Another sleeps outside over an air vent to stay warm in the winter, and when it gets muddy in the spring he sleeps in a window well. Another 15 interviewees reported sleeping outdoors regularly, but when the weather turns cold, they turn to the shelters or stay with friends or family who tend to be more sympathetic at that time of year.

## **5.0 WHAT ARE PANHANDLERS LIKE IN WINNIPEG?**

Who would better understand and be able to describe what panhandlers are like than panhandlers themselves? During interviews, the question was raised “Can you describe the characteristics of the panhandlers you know?” with optional prompt questions of “What are panhandlers like?” and “How do panhandlers act?” The range of answers was indicative of the range within the panhandling population.

Many of the youth described panhandlers primarily according to their situation, rather than their characteristics.

*“They’re survivors. Individuals on the struggle-level, homeless people trying to make ends meet.”*

*“People just trying to survive, the best way they know. It’s not easy. We do what we can.”*

*“Half the ones I know have no homes, no family, and they’re not on welfare. They’re thrown away. People don’t care for them.”*

*“Anybody who’s broke and desperate.”*

When asked the question “What are Panhandlers Like in Winnipeg?” some of the interviewees attributed exclusively positive behaviours, describing them as nice, polite, good, quiet, friendly and decent. *“Most are easy going, non violent. They don’t usually get in trouble with the law. Most would take jobs if we could get them.”*

A smaller number of the panhandlers interviewed held solely unfavourable opinions about others they know, describing their behaviour as rude, “assholes”, obstructive, demanding and violent – *“up in your face”* or *“ready to strangle you.”*

*“Some are very mean and aggressive. They want money right now! They are impolite... they don’t say please or thank you. They have no respect for others or themselves, and are aggressive to other panhandlers, too.”*

*“They verbally harass you to give them change. They feel they deserve it.”*

The majority of the responses, however, indicated that characteristics of panhandlers range greatly. Many explained this diversity by describing the opposite extremes of behaviour exhibited, for example,

*“Some will try to slap you or chase you down the street if you don’t give money. Some are crazies, but most are nice.”*

*“[There are] those who can barely talk, all the way to the very intelligent.”*

*“All sorts. Some are at times violent...fairly aggressive. At times they are very passive, but others they scare people. Some are mean, some are nice.”*

This range of behaviour was described by a few as paralleling that of the general population, or being *“just like everybody else.”* One youth seemed surprised by the question of what panhandlers are like and replied matter-of-factly, *“Some are polite, some are in your face, ignorant. Some are drunk...just like any other subset of people.”*

Some respondents attributed this range of behaviour to individual personalities. Several responses suggested that aggressive or annoying panhandling behaviours surfaced only with drunkenness:

*“Some are nice and calm. Others, it depends if they’ve been drinking or not, if they have, then they get stupid and get in people’s faces, too much aggression.”*

*“Most who have addictions problems are aggressive.”*

*“There’s probably some panhandlers that don’t walk away, and keep asking, especially if they’re using.”*

*“Some of the panhandlers may be “half in the bag” which can cause aggressiveness.”*

Drug, substance and alcohol addictions were mentioned by more than half of the respondents as characteristics common among most panhandlers, and their primary motivating force: *“Most panhandle for booze or drugs, most are dependent on alcohol and drugs and that’s why they’re out there.”* A clear distinction, however, was emphasized between those who panhandle for their addictions and those who do it for basic survival needs:

*“A few probably really need it, the rest don’t ..they have addictions. There are some legitimate ones, though.”*

*“I only panhandle when I’m hungry and need food. Others do it for whatever poison drug. I call it a hustle, but in reality it’s a struggle, too. The majority of these people are homeless. They don’t know if they want to stop their addiction. A lot of doors have been slammed in their faces. Nothing else to turn to. Either panhandle or get into trouble.”*

*“A lot don’t actually need the money. They’re into drugs and booze. They don’t want to work. They spoil it for those who need money for food. And there are those who don’t have a place to stay and they really need to panhandle.”*

Many of the youth interviewed had developed a categorization of panhandlers that clearly divided those who are motivated by their addictions and those who are not. These categories were also seen to be roughly represented by different age groups. There were some minor variations, but generally the categories identified by and described by the youth could be arranged as:

- 1) Those who have addictions and for whom addictions are their primary motivation: (described by one respondent as the “lower class” of panhandlers)
  - a. Drug addicts: *“they look sketchy, skinny, like people you’d be scared of..covered in bruises, cuts.”* Includes “Crackheads” who will *“sell their lives for crack”* and “Jib-techs”(crystal meth users).
  - b. Rubbies: mainly entrenched solvent/substance abusers who *“look dirty and rough.”* May also include alcoholics who are *“constantly drunk and often smell bad.”* *“Their brains are so gone, they’re messed up.”*
  - c. Alcoholics – *“don’t talk properly even when sober. Dirty, they have*

*beards; they're usually around 30 – 50 years old.” “Are older people who will probably die in the streets. Most of them pretty much never eat.”*

2) Those whose main motivation is non-addiction related:

- a. Those who really need the money to survive (usually are much older and panhandle for food). Some have jobs or are on social assistance, and panhandle to supplement their other income.
- b. The mentally ill or those with cognitive disabilities.
- c. Travellers – are young, have backpacks and *“look like punks i.e. piercings, tattoos, and ratty, mostly black clothes”*. In Winnipeg, you only see them during the warmer months, and they stay only for a couple of weeks before they move on to another city. *“People respect them more than homebums.”*
- d. Homebums – Panhandlers who are not travellers, but stay in their city of residence throughout the year. It is generally a term of endearment used by travellers when referring to these local panhandlers. Many of them help out travellers by giving them advice and guidance, or just hang out with them while the travellers are in town.

It was also primarily the youth respondents who noted that the different areas of the city have different types of panhandlers. Generally, the geographic distribution was described as follows: (Refer to Volume 3 for maps of these areas)

- 1) Boulevard/meridian of Broadway/Osborne, and Broadway/Portage – most are local street youth (not travellers) from 17 – 24 years old. *“They’re not sniffers, drug or booze addicts.”*
- 2) North of Portage Avenue, including the Exchange District up to Ellice Avenue – *“they’re aggressive, drunk and belligerent. I don’t go to that side of Portage Ave. They’re all sniffers there and I don’t like sniffers.”*
- 3) Downtown – Along Portage, Vaughn, Graham – *“they’re alright, drunk and belligerent”*; *“I don’t pan at Air Canada building anymore. The Rubbies have taken over.”*
- 4) Osborne Village – *“all are polite and good friends, who just sit around.”* Most are travellers (around the belltower at the corner of Stradbrook), but some are older Homebums.

*“Some have problems and that’s why they pan because there is no other way to make money. Some are out there to get necessities. There are those who are out there for their addictions. Others that are mentally handicapped and don’t know better. Lately I’ve been seeing more and more kids. It’s sad to see this increase.”*

## 6.0 WHY DO PANHANDLERS PANHANDLE?

Many interviewees had difficulty answering the question “What are the main reasons that brought you to panhandling?” Often the immediate response was “*I needed the money.*” So, the question was rephrased as “What happened in your life that made it necessary to panhandle?” Quite often the reply to that was “*I don’t understand...what do you mean?*” Then the final prompt was “Well, generally, people go to school growing up, they graduate, get a job, have a place to live, etc....but that didn’t happen for you...why not? What happened in your life?” Even then, some interviewees seemed to struggle with identifying causes and consequences related to their panhandling activity. Some of the answers to the question of “Why?”, therefore, may be incomplete or inaccurate. In some cases, issues mentioned in other parts of the interview were not identified here as having led to panhandling, even though they would seem to have been major contributing factors. It could not be assumed that these factors were simply forgotten or overlooked and, therefore, only the information provided directly in response to the question above is included here.

For most of the panhandlers interviewed, multiple factors were identified as having contributed to their current situation. Often it was a series of unfortunate events, choices, behaviours or situations. Any one of these might not have been a problem to deal with had it occurred on its own, but when compounded by others, led to a point in their lives where they found themselves relying on panhandling.

A physical disability, including chronic illness and injury was identified by 30 percent of those interviewed as the principal reason why they panhandle. Only three of the interviewees identified a criminal record as a factor contributing to their reliance on panhandling, and only two mentioned illiteracy or low education as a factor. Through the course of the rest of the interview, however, many more respondents indicated they had criminal records or low educational attainment, so these may actually be underreported or unrecognized factors.

Being unable to find work for which they have the skills was reported as a major factor for 28% of the respondents. One sixty-year old interviewee had been employed doing layouts in graphic art for most of his working life. He quit his job and moved to Winnipeg in order to give palliative care to his parents for quite a few years. During that time, however, his type of work became computerized, and he no longer had the skills for the job. He’s unable to do manual labor due to a back problem, and has a low level of literacy so has been unable to find any kind of work. After his parents died, he lived on life insurance money until that ran out, and now only has income from social assistance, which he finds he needs to supplement through panhandling.

Fifteen percent of the interviewees said they have found they have to panhandle to supplement either their employment earnings or their social assistance income. A further eight percent said they panhandle because they don’t qualify for assistance. One interviewee was unemployed for three years during which time he was on social assistance. He said he finally found a job and was no longer on assistance. He thought the

job was secure, but then was laid off, and when he couldn't get back on to social assistance, he had to start panhandling.

Ten respondents provided the following related reasons (including some multiple responses) for panhandling. Three interviewees have never had a job. Eight respondents said they choose to panhandle because they enjoy it. Four indicated they choose to panhandle because they can earn more money at it than by working. Two interviewees declared that they were lazy, and chose not to work. Another said that he can't get enough sleep because he's homeless, so he's too tired to work.

Eleven percent of the respondents identified mental health issues, and 5.3% indicated their cognitive disability as having contributed to their current situation. Drug and substance abuse was identified as a major factor with 11% of respondents, while alcohol abuse was mentioned by 5.3% as leading to reliance on panhandling. Again, this is a factor that was likely under-recognized or underreported as a contributing factor during this part of the interview. One interviewee stated that when he was much younger he was gainfully employed, but then turned to sniffing gas. As a result, he now has permanent brain damage, difficulties with his speech, and has trouble walking and needs crutches, so he can't work anymore.

Four respondents identified the ending of a relationship as a devastating experience that sparked a downward spiral which included job loss, alcohol abuse, depression, and even homelessness.

Nineteen percent of the respondents, all youth, indicated that leaving home at a young age was the first factor in a series that led to having to panhandle. Many reported leaving home or leaving care of Child and Family Services at the age of 12 or 13 and becoming homeless. Without a place to live they were unable to continue with their schooling and so achieved a low level of educational attainment. Because they were too young to work, they began panhandling. One youth was under care of Child and Family services but when he turned 18 he no longer qualified for support. He suffers from multiple disabilities, but when he asked for assistance at 18 he said he was refused help.

There were a number of other miscellaneous factors mentioned by a few interviewees as having contributed to their need to panhandle. One young interviewee said he was feeling guilty for stealing, so he started to panhandle instead because *"it's an honest way to make money."* A couple of respondents indicated they had escaped abusive home situations and had no money or resources. Another lost his family support so when he couldn't find work because of his mental health issues, criminal background and low skill level, he had no one to help him out. Others offered the following comments:

*"I'm poor at budgeting because \$500 [from welfare] should last me 2 weeks. I give a lot of my money to my kids, though."*



*“I always had seasonal work, but it was subcontracted [under-the-table] and I didn’t file my taxes properly, so I’m not eligible for EI. In the winter when there is no work, I can’t make ends meet.”*

*“I sold drugs for 7 years, but didn’t want to anymore. I had a job for a month and a half doing home renos and enjoyed it. When the landlord found out I had a dog, I got evicted. Then I had to quit the job because I had nowhere to leave my dog while I was at work. I don’t want to go back to selling drugs, so I panhandle instead.”*

A youth who used to panhandle more regularly, says he only does it now when he needs to feel humbled, stating that it reminds him of where he came from. He refers to it as “trading my dignity” and feels he is offering the opportunity for people to do good deeds.

### **How panhandlers spend their earnings**

When asked the question “What makes you panhandle or not panhandle on any given day?” the majority of respondents’ replies indicated they panhandle in order to get just enough money to meet their basic needs for that particular day. *“I panhandle for the fact that I’d like a place to stay, something to eat...you know ... normal stuff.”* Those with children said they place a priority on meeting their kids’ basic needs. The same was true for those with pets.

Most interviewees consider food, shelter, clothing, and bus tickets to be basic needs. This priority was reflected in what they reported spending their money on.

- Ninety-three percent of the interviewees said they spend money they earn from panhandling on food: 88% ranked it as either first or second among their priorities for spending.
- Twenty-six percent spend their earnings on rent/shelter costs, which ranks among the top four spending priorities for 24% of the respondents.
- Although it didn’t rank as the most important expense for any of the respondents, over half of them said that some of their panhandling earnings go towards buying clothing and personal items. It might have ranked higher if there were not places to get free clothing, such as clothing banks and dumpsters.
- Forty-one percent of respondents indicated they spend some of their panhandling earnings on bus tickets, but only 32% rated this as a high priority for spending, and again, never as #1.
- Sixty-eight percent of the interviewees said they spend some of their panhandling money on cigarettes, but only 5.3% consider it to be their highest priority.

- Forty-three percent of respondents spend some of their earnings from panhandling on alcohol.
- Thirty-seven percent report that they spend some on illegal drugs or substances.
- For the two respondents who spend their earnings on sniff, it is their first priority.
- Fifteen percent of respondents consider substances, illegal drugs or alcohol to be their first priority for spending their panhandling earnings. For them, it qualifies as a basic necessity:

*“[I panhandle] everyday and all day for food, drugs and alcohol.”*

*“I wake up hung-over everyday and need a fix.”*

*“I need money for alcohol, to get sadness and anger out.”*

A couple of the interviewees who said they panhandle to buy drugs or alcohol added anecdotally, that they only have the courage to panhandle when they're drunk or high:

*“I won't panhandle if I'm feeling embarrassed. I need a fix, a drink, need to get high before I can ask for money.”*

*“I feel ashamed and need a few beer, just to get the courage to get started.”*

Other things that the interviewees mentioned spending their earnings on include: medical costs such as prescription and over-the-counter drugs (11%), entertainment (17.6%), helping out friends and family (8%), pet food (4.1%), furniture and household items (6.7%), telephone (8%), debt repayment (10.6%), utility bills (8%), gambling (1.3%), and prostitutes (1.3%).

### **When Do Panhandlers Panhandle?**

Many of the youth respondents stated that they panhandle *only* when they are in need (whatever way they may define 'need'). This seemed to be out of consideration for others who panhandle, and for those who give.

*“I don't pan when I have money because that's not fair to anyone”*

*“It's spontaneous – as I need it for food or smokes. But only when I need it.”*

Many of those on social assistance stated they only panhandle when their cheque has run out. Those who earn other income panhandle only when other opportunities are not available, for example, if there are no day-labour jobs, if they normally busk but their

instrument is stolen or broken, if they usually squeegee but it's raining or their squeegee was taken away, etc.

For those with serious health issues, the way they are feeling on a particular day can be a factor that determines whether they panhandle or not: *"I have Hep B and the doctor told me I should sleep as much as possible, so when I feel tired I don't panhandle."*

Others panhandle everyday, whether they feel they need to or not. For some of them, panhandling is their job: *"In my view you should be able to pan anywhere you want. It's a job and its hard work like other jobs, especially when you get things and rude comments thrown at you."* For a handful of others who panhandle everyday, it's a way to pass the time: *"Just a daily routine. Something to do besides sitting on my ass all day long."*

Weather is often a factor in deciding to panhandle or not on any given day, but respondents take it into consideration in different ways. Some indicated that inclement weather conditions work in their favour:

*"If the weather's bad, I'll go out because people don't want to see people in the rain begging."*

*"Winter's the best time to panhandle. Fewer people are willing to be out panning. Those who are out are serious and desperate for money and people know that."*

Others feel that extreme weather works against them, and that milder days bring better results:

*"If the weather's miserable, I won't go out. I flag [hold a sign for motorists at stoplights], and people don't want to roll down their windows and get cold or wet."*

*"Some days you just know you're not going to get any money because it's too hot or rainy, so I don't even bother to go out."*

*"If it's a really nice day, people are cheerful and willing to help out, but if it's gray and gloomy, people are too, and won't give."*

One respondent mentioned that he plans ahead according to the weather forecast in order to avoid having to go out in bad weather: *"If the weather forecast isn't good, I'll pan longer to make enough money to keep me going until the weather is better."* This type of foresight and planning ahead seemed rare among those interviewed. As one respondent said about panhandlers, *"They live one day at a time, one hour at a time."*

### What do you enjoy or not enjoy about panhandling?

Almost a third of the respondents indicated that they don't enjoy anything about panhandling, and another 15% said the only good thing about it is the money they make and the things that money buys.

Thirty-eight percent, however, indicated they enjoy the interaction with people, including meeting them, talking with them, and making them smile.

*"You don't really enjoy panhandling, but you do appreciate the people who care. No one really enjoys having to ask for help for basic things."*

*"I like some people, the ones who talk to you and treat you well. I like chatting with people that ask about me, talk to me, and it doesn't even matter if they give me money. They care."*

One woman who had been in the sex trade for seven years said, *"It's more sociable than going on the corner and selling yourself."*

Nineteen percent of the responses were related to the panhandling lifestyle. Six of the interviewees, four of whom are travellers, indicated they enjoy the freedom of being able to make money when they want to and not having to answer to anyone. Six responses indicated an appreciation for being able to relax and be outside, and two like that it is an "escape."

For almost half of the respondents, the worst part of panhandling is the negative effect it has on their self-esteem. Many expressed feelings of guilt, anxiety, shame and humiliation. This is reflected in comments such as *"You get sick of asking people for money because it's demeaning."* Another said he hates *"the whole concept of having to ask someone for money. It's embarrassing..shameful."*

*"I feel embarrassed about it. I worked most of my life. I never thought life would come to this. It's lowered my self-esteem."*

*"It's embarrassing. If I see someone I know, I make myself disappear."*

Panhandling can be particularly damaging for those already struggling with low self esteem or mental illness: *"Being depressed already, it makes you more depressed having to beg."* Knowing the negative stereotypes about panhandlers, one youth said he feels that when he's holding a sign people think that he's a bum or a drug addict. He added, *"I don't like to be judged for what I have to do to survive."*

In some cases negative self-esteem may come from being the regular target of physical and verbal abuse,

*"I feel awkward asking people... People looking down on me. I feel embarrassed. I may be homeless, but I don't want people to feel I'm hopeless."*

which was another negative aspect of panhandling mentioned by half the respondents. This connection was made by a young woman when she said *“I’ve had eggs thrown at me, or people flick dead cigarettes at me. It made me feel like I was dirt under their feet.”* She also pointed to the negative perception the media creates about panhandlers. Another youth, who reported having food thrown at him, expressed dismay at how people are so quick to judge *“that he’s out for drugs”*. Another said the thing he least enjoys about panhandling is when people don’t believe that he is homeless.

Being spit on and being the target of rude comments were reported as common occurrences.

*“The rude people who don’t understand say ‘Why don’t you get a job’ or ‘Go back home’ and I just think ‘Don’t you think that if I could do that I wouldn’t be here?’”*

The Aboriginal panhandlers interviewed gave examples of blatantly racist comments they regularly endured including *“Stupid Indian”*; *“You give Indians a bad name”*; *“Squaw, get an F’in job”*; *“Go back to the reserve where you Indians belong”*; or *“What are you panning for? You spent your last welfare cheque on Listerine?”*

For some, however, being ignored is, by far, the worst aspect of panhandling: *“I prefer people swearing at me to being ignored – at least it’s a response.”* To them, a complete lack of acknowledgement and being treated as though they don’t exist are the worst insults.

*“When people ignore you, that’s what really gets [the young panhandlers] mad or upset.”*

*“I hate it when people don’t answer. Even an ‘F-off’ is better than no acknowledgement.”*

Other elements that interviewees identified when asked what they enjoyed least about panhandling included the boredom of it, not making any money, confrontations with authorities, having to endure bad weather, and always having to ‘be on’- pretending you’re in a good mood. One respondent stated that he hated being in the position where he had to do it; that he had no other option. Another answered that he disliked *“everything about it. I’d rather work for my money, but I can’t work now.”* This was echoed by another respondent who replied, *“I don’t like anything about panhandling. It’s rude to take money that people work for.”*

## **7.0 DOES PANHANDLING PROVIDE A LIVING?**

Are all of the negative comments, the diminished self-esteem, and the verbal and physical abuse worth it? Can you make a living by panhandling? When asked how much they earn, 70% of those who responded reported getting less than two dollars from each donor, and 20% said they received between two and five dollars per ‘drop’.

Of those who estimated their daily panhandling earnings, 40% reported making between ten and thirty dollars per day, while 38% said they earned more than thirty dollars daily (only 22% reported making more than fifty dollars per day). Days in which panhandlers earn larger amounts seem to be rare, as those days stand out in their minds as uncommon occurrences that they are pleased to relate. Examples of the times someone gave a twenty dollar bill are memorable but uncommon. And one interviewee reported, *“The most I made in one day was \$200. People started competing over how much money they would give.”*

Only a third of the respondents took a guess at how much they earn per hour when panhandling. Nine estimated earning between three and five dollars per hour, and an equal number estimated their earnings as five to ten dollars per hour. Six believed that they earned over ten dollars per hour on average. Only three respondents estimated their monthly income from panhandling: their answers were \$150, \$200, and \$800.

According to some of the interviewees, their income as a panhandler is comparable to what they could make through employment. One interviewee said that he won’t work for minimum wage because he makes more money panhandling, and another supported this: *“I can make more money than most people who work. Panhandling is my job.”* Yet another agreed, but was not happy with this situation: *“Panhandling makes me bitter because its better money than getting paid work.”*

The service providers who partnered in this research and who work closely with panhandlers on a regular basis suggested that reports of earnings are likely exaggerated. Apparently some panhandlers may be inclined to say they earn more than they actually do because they feel better about themselves, and it makes them look good to others – they consider panhandling to be a skill and the more money you make, the more skilled you are seen to be. In fact, when asked what was needed in order to be able to stop panhandling, one youth said he needed to stop hearing so many stories from other panhandlers about how much money they make.

For many, what they make panhandling supplements their welfare cheque, income from day labour, or other resources they draw upon (dumpster diving, picking cans, squeegeeing, soup kitchens, clothing banks, picking butts, etc.). Almost two-thirds of those interviewed set a goal for each day, often for only \$10 or \$20, some as much as \$40, a few find they only need \$5 - just enough to cover their costs for the day. For those who set a goal, once they have earned their goal, they stop panhandling for the day.

Those whose only income is panhandling generally don’t have a home and all of the associated costs, so in that case, a meagre panhandling income may be enough to meet the much lower costs of their basic needs when living on the streets or in shelters.

For some, panhandling often doesn’t even cover the cost of food. One man mentioned that he has missed a lot of meals just so that his kids could eat. An older respondent chuckled as he mentioned the health benefits of being on welfare: *“Going on welfare is a*

*good way to lose weight. I can't afford food, so my weight has gone down, and my blood pressure has gone down, too."*

Although it doesn't fall under any particular question in the interview, many mentioned they rely on what other people throw away. Some get most of their clothing from the garbage - even brand new clothing thrown away by retailers. Quite a few mentioned that they frequent the garbage cans and dumpsters behind restaurants and grocery stores for most of their food. One young interviewee said, with awe and disgust, *"It's amazing how much good food people throw away."* Another gave the details of the places he regularly visits and when: he knows exactly when they put the garbage out, so he is able to get fresh food, most of which is still wrapped, and he says he hasn't been sick in three years of eating that way. *"People throw away everything I need. I get it all from garbages and dumpsters. I know where to sell everything."* One youth said that he still has to be careful, though, because *"you can get arrested for it because, even though it's garbage that's been thrown away, it's considered to be private property."*

Panhandlers receive all kinds of donations besides money. Ninety-one percent of the interviewees indicated that people give them things besides money, whether solicited or not. Those respondents who had received non-monetary donations reported that most common were food/drinks (93%), cigarettes (51.5%), clothing (27.3%), alcohol (22%), and illegal drugs (20%). Other things less frequently mentioned include bus tickets, food coupons, books, jewellery, Blue Key, and even less frequently perfume, bedding, stuff to sell, a job, and 'grief'.

Although not a question asked, some of the panhandlers indicated they really appreciated being given food, and their sincerity seemed evident in the details of the stories they told of times they had been given an entire meal, or taken out to a nice restaurant to order whatever they wanted off the menu.

### **Do you share your money with others?**

The majority of the interviewees (81.3%) said they share their panhandling proceeds with others.

- 23% of those who share, share with family members,
- 51% share with other panhandlers and people who are worse off than them,
- 54% share with friends (note: although they may have answered 'friends' but not answered 'panhandlers', often the friends they refer to are also panhandlers).

Among many of the panhandlers there is an unwritten "Code of Conduct" outlining acceptable and unacceptable behaviour towards each other. This was most often mentioned in interviews with youth. Experienced panhandlers often convey the Code of Conduct to those who are just starting out. Aspects of the "Code of Conduct" related to interactions with potential donors is discussed on page 40. In terms of interactions with other panhandlers, the "Code" covers the following:

**1) Don't rob other panhandlers**

**2) Share everything with other panhandlers:**

A young woman explained it this way: *"Even if they're your mortal enemy, you give to them, because you're all in the same situation."* Another explained that the sharing is like investing in security for your own future: *"What goes around, comes around."* A group of about 16 panhandlers that refer to themselves as POW (Panhandlers of Winnipeg) shares money, but only within their group.

A few panhandlers indicated they will not share their money, but will instead buy food with the money they earned, and share that. One who does this explained in this way: *"I think there's a way out for most people, but they're not taking those steps. Most people wouldn't have to pan if they didn't have the addictions."*

Another said that before he panhandled, he would get scared when approached, too. He used to give, too, *"in the days"* because he thought it was all real. Now he knows that *"half the time it's real, half the time it's fake"*. Now he only gives to those he knows. One older interviewee said that he gives and doesn't care how the other panhandlers spend their money: *"A boss gives you a paycheck and doesn't ask how you spend it. The same applies here."*

**3) Don't take more than your share.**

*"When you leave a spot, it gives someone else a chance to make what they need. I'm not there to be greedy."*

*"I take only what I need. I don't go overboard. It's an unwritten rule. Don't get greedy."*

*"I don't want to stay out panhandling after I have enough because there are others who are really stuck. I just take what I need, don't want to take their spot."*

The vast majority of respondents (61 of 75) said they stop panhandling once they've made enough money or if they become too tired or sick to continue. Quite a few mentioned that if they were not making any money, it became discouraging so they would just give up entirely for the day. Inclement weather can also force some to stop.

Only four respondents mentioned that the persistence of police or BIZ Ambassadors would make them stop panhandling.

**And if Panning Doesn't Pan Out?**

The question was asked "What do you do on those days when you can't get enough money?"

- Almost half of the respondents said that they do nothing and/or go hungry.
- 15% either borrow money or "bum off" family or friends.



- 14% said that they steal or sell drugs.
- 12% pick cans or squeegee.
- 11% use the soup kitchens/services.

### **What if it Wasn't an Option?**

When asked the question “What would you do if you could not panhandle?” most interviewees asked “*What do you mean?*” which was then rephrased as “What if panhandling just wasn't an option?” 27% answered that they had no idea whatsoever. They seemed to be at a complete loss. Another 17.5% said that they would have no option and wouldn't be able to do anything and/or they would go hungry. This suggests that for almost half of the interviewees, panhandling is their final option or last resort.

Twenty percent of the respondents answered that if they could not panhandle, they would have to find a job. Most of them had previously mentioned that they are unable to work or have been unable to find work. Would this situation change if they had no other option available? Or would they still be unable to work or find work?

If they couldn't panhandle, 14% of the interviewees said they would undertake other non-standard income earning activities, including the sex trade, busking, squeegeeing, and picking cans. Eight respondents (11%) said they would resort to stealing or break and enter.

Only two people (2.7%) replied that they would have to use the soup kitchens and shelters, and only one said he would go into a drug treatment program. This suggests that if panhandling was no longer an option, more panhandlers would turn to illegal activities, such as the sex trade and theft, than would turn to services.

## **8.0 PANHANDLERS AND THE NUMBER AND NATURE OF SERVICES USED**

The interviewees were asked about the services they use in Winnipeg, and to provide comments about them. Many panhandlers interviewed are not using services that are meant to serve their needs. It seems there may be a few reasons for this:

- 1) The services available are not appropriate for their needs (shelters not safe for youth, food bank can only be used if you have access to cooking and storage, job search workshops for those who lack marketable skills);
- 2) The services are stretched beyond their capacities already (shelters are full, food at soup kitchens is inadequate, food bank doesn't supply enough or is not accessible);
- 3) They may not be aware of the services available; or,

4) Panhandling is not viewed as a last resort...services are. One panhandler who has a place to live stated that he won't use the soup kitchens because *"they're meant for people who are actually on the streets, they should go to them."* Another said that he won't stay at shelters. He *"leaves the spots for people who really need it."*

For some individuals, panhandling may allow them to still feel they have some modicum of control over their lives; that they are working and earning their own way and not simply relying on support of others or the government. Throughout the interviews, many said they viewed panhandling as a job for which one needs and develops certain skills. And like other jobs, the more skilled, the higher the earnings. For many, panhandling also provides positive social interaction that may be otherwise lacking in their lives.

### **Blue Key**

An initiative of the Downtown BIZ to combat panhandling is a program commonly referred to on the streets as the Blue Key. This initiative encourages the public to donate to the "Change for the Better" campaign instead of giving to the panhandlers who might use the money to buy alcohol, drugs or cigarettes. All of the donations are given to six downtown social agencies that provide services to "people in need." Complementing the donations, is the Help Key (Blue Key) which the donor can then give to a panhandler. In turn, this key is said to be redeemable for a meal, change of clothes and counselling, as well as a shower and shelter at some agencies. This is meant to encourage panhandlers to use services instead of panhandling to meet their needs.

Although the interview did not ask about the Blue Key, many interviewees commented on it. The Blue Key was often described by panhandlers as "useless." They explained that five of the agencies that accept the Blue Key provide the services for free anyways – a Blue Key is not needed to access them. The only exception is Salvation Army, but as one panhandler pointed out: *"Those keys are so stupid. If you take one to Salvation Army, they write down your name and you can't use a key again. One time only."*

### **Foodbanks**

A full two-thirds of the respondents reported that they do not use a foodbank. Those who live on the streets don't have anywhere to keep perishables or to cook the food, plus the foodbank won't provide food without an address and I.D. Those living in residential hotels and rooming houses don't usually have fridges to store the food or cooking facilities, so the foodbank is not useful to them because they can't store perishables or use food that requires cooking. This makes panhandlers' food expenses much higher: "It costs a lot to eat out when you have no place to cook."

For others, the challenge in using a foodbank is the lengthy process and inconvenience involved in accessing the service. It is necessary to phone ahead to make an appointment. But such a phone call usually involves being put on hold for upwards of an hour. For

those who do not have phones and must use one provided by an agency, this is not possible because these phones have long line-ups to use them and are generally limited to 5 minutes of use per call. Once an appointment is made, it is often in a distant location requiring bus travel, and is often at an inconvenient time of day, especially for anyone who has a job. Even at the foodbank there is usually a long wait in line. The respondents indicated that after that lengthy process, not much food is provided, unless you have children. *“By the time my appointment comes around, I’ve already found a way to get food. I can’t be bothered to haul a friggen’ heavy ass bag of useless crap.”*

### **Soup Kitchens**

Soup kitchens provide free prepared meals in various locations, many in churches, in low-income neighbourhoods throughout Winnipeg. Eighty percent of the interviewees said they regularly use soup kitchens. Reports about the people running the soup kitchens were only positive. They were described as polite and non-judgemental. One interviewee who has tried all of the soup kitchens said *“They treat the clients with respect and don’t look down on you.”*

Quite a few mentioned that the hours of operation were inconvenient, though. Most soup kitchens are closed on weekends. Those open on weekdays often only serve one meal a day, so the people who rely on soup kitchens have to go from one to another to get three meals a day. Those interviewees who suffer social anxiety said they can’t use soup kitchens at all because there are too many people: the line-ups are long and the places are crowded.

Most respondents said they felt the food provided at soup kitchens is pretty good. As one person put it, *“It’s certainly not gourmet, but it tides you over.”* Others said they wouldn’t use soup kitchens because the food was mouldy, the soup was watered down, they serve *“mystery food - you don’t know what’s in it,”* or it made them feel sick. Others indicated they felt the food was not as nutritious as they would have liked: *“Sometimes they give just spaghetti, no meat.”*

*“I went to a soup kitchen once, but they didn’t have good food, they give coffee and donuts which aren’t good for you. Panhandling is a better option. I can eat better that way: I can buy milk, bread and peanut butter for a couple of dollars and eat that for several days.”*

Some of the respondents refuse to use those soup kitchens that require clients to sit through a religious service or pray before the meals are served. This is required of them even if they have a Blue Key.

### **Shelters**

In Winnipeg there are three main emergency shelters for homeless adults (this does not include women’s emergency shelters). All are in the Main Street area just south of

Higgins Avenue within a few blocks of each other. Each offers a sleeping mat and floor space in a common area for the night, plus shared shower and washroom facilities. Main Street Project and Neeginan are free. Salvation Army charges \$11, and for an additional charge one can upgrade to a bed. There are two shelters in Winnipeg for youth under the age of 18 years old. MacDonald Youth Services on Mayfair is south east of downtown, not far from Osborne Village, and Ndinawe is in the North End. Both are free.

Interviewees' reviews on the three adult emergency shelters were mixed. Neeginan (also known as Jack's) was reported to be the cleanest. The staff are considered by most to be friendly. The facilities at Neeginan were reported to be comfortable, with the opportunity for clients to make toast and watch T.V. Main Street Project was also reported to have very friendly and helpful staff, but offers fewer "perks."

The staff at Salvation Army, however, received only negative comments including "*staff are grouchy*" and "*the workers there are heartless.*" One homeless panhandler mentioned that when he took a Blue Key to the Salvation Army after he had already been there once, he was often refused meals, clothes, or a place to sleep, and reported that "*When I had a key and they did give me a meal, they would make me wait until everyone else was done eating, and then I would get the leftovers.*" Other comments about the Salvation Army included "*it's expensive for a meagre mat on the floor*" and "*It's a complete rip-off.*"

Many interviewees stated that the shelters were often full, and they were turned away unless they had lined up early to get in. One respondent spoke of the desperate urgency of people waiting to get in:

*"At Jack's at 6:00 p.m. there are people dying to get into there, people fighting to get in. I've seen things that I thought only in a nightmare would happen."*

For those who are 'lucky' enough to get in, the conditions inside shelters were reported to be very crowded and unpleasant. Main Street Project, in particular, was reported by several respondents to "smell really bad", and to provide only thin mats to sleep on, but no blankets or pillows. One youth described Main Street Project as a "*last resort, even for street people.*" Another youth, who stayed there only one night, seemed to support that conclusion with this comment: "*It's really for people living on the streets. It smelled like solvents. A guy almost peed on me, and the woman beside me wasn't a woman.*" Several people indicated they disliked sleeping right next to strangers. For anyone with anxieties related to crowds and groups of people, shelters are simply not an option.

Another negative point mentioned about shelters is that clients are expected to wake up early in the morning, and be out by about 6:00 or 7:00 a.m. The problem is that "*at 6 a.m. there's nothing to do and nowhere to go and it can be really cold in the winter at that time.*" The only warm place open at that time is the skywalk, so many will go there until services open their doors later. Only one interviewee considered this to be a positive point: "*I don't have to be homeless, but it's easier. They wake you at 6:30 at Jacks so I don't sleep the day away.*"

Half of the interviewees do not use shelters, either because they have other housing options or because they choose not to. When asked if there are any services they will not use, a third of the panhandlers interviewed stated that they refuse to use any shelters. Most indicated they feel the shelters are too dangerous and are notorious as places where belongings are stolen:

*“I’m too scared to go there. [There are] drugs, sniffers, violence, safety issues.”*

*“You can’t trust the people staying there anymore. They’ll steal your false teeth, your shoes, anything. They’ll stab you.”*

*“I won’t go to Salvation Army – my friend had his boots stolen off his feet while he slept.”*

*“Won’t use the shelters, you can’t trust the clients or workers at any of those places.”*

One youth even reported having a gun pulled on him at Salvation Army. Although they are allowed to use the shelters in the Main street area, most of the youth said they feel particularly vulnerable to abuse there: *“I’m a young white male, and will get pushed around by all the big native guys.”* Another youth described his primary need as housing: *“I need a secure place to live, a transition place from the street to finding a place to live. I’m a non-drug user, non-alcoholic and I don’t want to be in a shelter with smelly, weird acting people.”* Right now, other than sleeping on the streets, a shelter is his only option.

Several interviewees went so far as to say they would rather take their chances sleeping on the street than in a shelter. An older panhandler who lives in a rooming house described his one experience with a shelter:

*“Once, my key broke in the lock to my unit’s door, and the caretaker was away for the weekend, so I had to sleep at Main Street Project. I had to sleep on the floor with my jacket over me, and someone stole my jacket. I’d sleep on a park bench in the middle of winter rather than go there [again]..the place reeks of liquor. I don’t like the smell.”*

## **Drop-in Centres**

Many services can be accessed at, or through, drop-in centres. These centres are generally conveniently located for their target population and offer a place for people to rest and relax, and escape harsh weather. Some offer refreshments, meals, clothing banks, free computer access, counselling, job search support, referrals or a combination of these and other supports and services. Seventy percent of the interviewees reported using drop-in centres on a regular basis. Those centres mentioned most often in interviews were Siloam

Mission, Mainstreet Project, Resource Assistance for Youth (RaY), and West Broadway Community Ministries (Crossways in Common).

General comments about drop-in centres were favourable. A few respondents made specific reference to RaY that indicated appreciation for the range of services and supports provided under one roof: *“They have everything here. You don’t have to walk thirty blocks for other things.”* One thirty-seven year old who panhandles and lives close to RaY said he wished there were no age limits on who can access their services. (RaY serves clients under age 30).

### **Clothing Banks**

Many organizations and churches in Winnipeg’s inner city receive used clothing donations and provide it for free to anyone who needs it. Almost sixty percent of the interviewees use these clothing banks regularly, and said they were quite satisfied with the availability and quality of the clothing offered. One youth said though, that warm socks, footwear and underwear are often not available. Another youth commented that *“Clothing banks don’t have my style – when I get \$60, I go buy [brandname] clothes.”*

### **Training**

Fifty-three of the interviewees (71%) had not accessed any training services. Of those who had received training, most was related to general employment and job-search skills, life-skills, and secondary school upgrading. Some had received specialized skills training in the past, such as Fork Lift certificate, working with dangerous chemicals, or upholstery. A few comments were given by interviewees on barriers to accessing further training and education services. One mentioned that he had been taking his grade ten at Horizons Learning Centre, and wanted to continue but couldn’t afford the school supplies, plus because he’s homeless he doesn’t have anywhere to do homework. Another interviewee said that he wanted to get his grade twelve through Horizons, but that welfare wouldn’t cover the costs. Edge Training and Consulting provides free employment training for low-income youth facing barriers to the labour market. One respondent said, however, that his repeated phone calls to Edge were not being returned.

### **Employment Services**

More than half of the panhandlers interviewed do not use employment services of any kind. The majority of those who do, rely on temporary employment (temp) service agencies, or day-labour agencies. Respondents reported that these agencies do not provide meaningful or reliable work. One panhandler interviewed stated that he could always get a day-labour job, but they sign you up for *“something stupid that you have trouble doing.”* Another mentioned that *“Half the time they don’t have work at temp agencies, so it’s a waste of time to sit there for hours waiting.”* A 55 year old man with back problems reported that despite going daily to the temp agencies and day-labour

places, he hasn't been able to get any work because they want younger, more able-bodied people.

### **Counselling**

Given the hardships of the marginalized lifestyle, decreased self esteem, addictions, troubled histories, and incidence of emotional and mental health issues among panhandlers, counselling can be a crucial component in making positive life changes. Despite this, only a little over a third of the interviewees reported having used counselling services to discuss personal issues. Those who had been seeing counsellors at Mount Carmel, Resource Assistance for Youth, and Main Street Project all said their counsellors were very helpful. One interviewee considered the sweatlodges he was attending to be counselling because, as he described, they are a form of healing that involves looking inwards and at one's life path. One young woman wanted to see a counsellor, but said that counselling services are not advertised, so she didn't even know they were offered. This seems unfortunate, as there are services available: results of the interviews contain reference to 19 different counselling services. An older man with mobility issues said that counselling services are all too far away for him to access, but that if they were only 3 or 4 blocks from Portage Avenue, he would definitely like to see a counsellor.

### **Health Services**

Not including visits to regular walk-in medical clinics or their regular doctors, thirty of the interviewees reported having accessed other health services. The most frequently mentioned were Mount Carmel Clinic (community health centre that serves those living with the effects of poverty), Nine Circles Community Health Clinic (serves the GLBTT - see glossary - community, and those living with or affected by HIV/AIDS), the nurse at RaY, and Four Rivers (inner city community health centre).

### **Disabilities Services**

Although 54 of the panhandlers interviewed indicated they had disabilities, only 13 were accessing services related to those disabilities. Some of the respondents said they don't know of any such services. Others mentioned that they cannot access the services offered, generally because the services are too far away and they can't afford the bus fare, or they don't have the time or energy to make the trip.

### **Welfare/Social Assistance**

In response to the question "Are there any services that you will *not* use or refuse to use?" a handful of interviewees indicated they would not use welfare. Some had been

refused assistance in the past because of lack of ID, or because they had been deemed able to work and were, therefore, considered ineligible. The insufficient assistance received from welfare was another reason mentioned for not using the service. One individual stopped going to welfare because *“it wasn’t worth the time it took to go there, fill out forms, etc. when all they provided was a bus ticket and a voucher for food.”* Another interviewee reported that he had been on assistance and had a place to live, but did not receive a letter in time about a meeting he was supposed to attend as a condition of receiving welfare. As a result, he was cut off. He waited the required six months, during which time he lost his apartment. When he re-applied, he was only allowed \$236 for rent, but now can’t find a place for that amount, not even in a residential hotel.

*“Whoever runs welfare, they don’t give much money anymore. There are people without homes and the money is going to other things instead. [The government has] the money, but doesn’t give it to welfare”*

Some interviewees expressed concern about the fairness of the welfare system. One mentioned that *“they always want something in return, and are actually making money off the poor people.”* Another stated that *“The ones that really do need, don’t get. But there are so many people that rip welfare off. They wouldn’t help me, so I went to work on the streets (sex trade) and that’s when I got run over.”* This interviewee is now permanently disabled, and no longer able to work in any trade.

## **9.0 WHAT DO PANHANDLERS NEED TO STOP PANHANDLING?**

When asked “What do you need in order to be able to stop panhandling?” many interviewees’ initial answer was that they didn’t know. They were then asked “What needs to change in your life so that you don’t have to panhandle anymore?” Those who seemed to have the most difficulty in answering this had been panhandling for the longest periods of time. Perhaps they had given up thinking about and hoping for change that they found through past experience never happened. Perhaps it is because their focus is only on getting through the immediate future. This was the case with one respondent who, when asked what he needed, seemed overwhelmed when he replied *“I don’t know. It’s too far to think. I just live day to day...try to not get hurt. I don’t think about it too much. I don’t know where to start.”*

It’s interesting to note that most of the youth did not have difficulty identifying what they need. In fact one young woman had obviously put a great deal of thought into this, as she answered promptly with what she felt is needed overall:

*“Better opportunities for street kids, more resources, training programs, more people to give us a chance, and more government support.”*

Below are the responses of interviewees about what they need to have change in their lives. Many offered other ideas on how the many issues associated with panhandling could be addressed. These ideas have been included in Appendix D.



### **A Job...and a Place to Live**

Eighteen interviewees said that a job was all they needed in order to be able to stop panhandling. A couple of respondents mentioned, however, that they would need a fulltime job that pays more than panhandling does. A young woman who used to panhandle said, *“Even on minimum wage, working 2 jobs, I still had to panhandle.”*

Another eight interviewees included a job along with another factor, which was usually a place to live. This again highlighted the interdependence of employment and housing.

This interdependence is evident in the story of one youth who was, until recently, homeless, unemployed and panhandling. He was able to use the computers at Resource Assistance for Youth (RaY) to search the on-line Job Bank and apply for positions. Because RaY has a phone number that he could give to prospective employers, when he applied for jobs they were able to contact him for interviews. He was offered a job, and then was fortunate enough to find a landlord who was willing to take a chance on him and rent an apartment to him without requiring a damage deposit or first month’s rent. This gave the youth a place to sleep, shower, and keep the work-clothes he got from the RaY clothing bank. Having a kitchen allowed him to use the foodbank and cook to sustain himself until his first pay-cheque.

### **Training, Education**

Some respondents identified that first and foremost they need training or education in order to secure a fulltime job. Those with interests in particular skills identified business, accounting, and welding as training they would like to receive. Others spoke of the need for general education, and a sponsor to cover the associated costs. Education and re-training for sedentary work was identified as a primary need by a couple of interviewees facing restricted physical capacity. As mentioned in a previous section, one respondent expressed his frustration with social services workers who won’t provide him with re-training for less physical work because they say that if you’re able to take training, then you’re able to go to work.

### **Income Assistance**

Ten of the interviewees indicated they need to get on welfare/social assistance or disability assistance in order to not have to rely on panhandling for income. A couple of young men, each of whom had been denied social assistance because they are capable of working, indicated they just needed enough support to get back on their feet and get a place to live. One said that all it would take would be two months’ rent. He said,

*“The government doesn’t care that I’m helping myself. If you’re in a poverty situation, it should be mandatory that the government help you if you’re working, until you get on your feet.”*

Two of the youth interviewed had been homeless and panhandling in the past, unable to get or keep work, but no longer panhandle. The turning point in each of their lives had been getting a mental health diagnosis which qualified them for disability benefits. This provided for a place to live and enough to meet their basic needs. One described it as a great relief, not only because she didn’t have to panhandle anymore, but even more of a relief to know there was a legitimate reason for the issues and difficulties she had struggled with all her life.

Another panhandler indicated that all he requires is a place to live, food and basic needs. At the time of the interview, he had an appointment with welfare the next day, and said *“if I get on, you won’t see me around here anymore. All I need is for my basic needs to be taken care of.”*

For ten of those interviewed who are already receiving income assistance, however, panhandling was deemed necessary because they found the amount from welfare or disability assistance was inadequate. These respondents stated that they wouldn’t need a lot more to be able to cover their basic needs. One said *“I just need a few more dollars on my check. Just enough to scrape by.”* Another estimated his need to be only an extra \$100 a month so he wouldn’t have to use food money to supplement his rent.

### **Get Past Addictions**

Some interviewees said they need to get past their addictions before they would be able to make lasting changes in their lives that would allow them to not have to rely on panhandling. The decision to deal with addictions, however, has to be made by the individuals when they are ready, as indicated by one respondent: *“I just need to quit drinking, but I don’t want to quit yet.”* Another seemed ready to deal with his addictions, but feels there are not enough services out there for crack users.

Some stated that going into residential alcohol or drug detoxification program (detox) is not sufficient to guarantee recovery from addiction. An older panhandler who has tried to kick his habit in the past recognizes that he needs to be able to move to a different part of the city when he gets out of detox, or he will likely relapse. He said that, as it stands now,

*“if I go into detox, when I get out, I’ll be living in the same area and around the same people [as before], and I wouldn’t have the willpower because [drugs are] all around that area [Main street].”*

One of the interviewees who had recently been able to stop panhandling noted that a number of changes had to occur in his life simultaneously in order to be able to stay off

drugs. At the same time as he became drug-free he also learned to manage his money, got onto social assistance, and found a good place to live. He explained:

*“I used to be a very angry young man, and used to abuse solvents. I lost all my family support. I couldn’t find work: I’ve got a criminal record. I want to stay away from criminal activity, but it’s hard. There’s lots of peer pressure. I’ve turned around now and people have started respecting me. Counselors helped me a lot, and cops were also telling me to turn my life around. I worked at it slowly, and people have supported me. It doesn’t happen over night.”*

### **Don’t want to Stop**

Ten interviewees said they didn’t want to stop panhandling. Four of those were young ‘travellers’ who indicated they “felt a need” to travel and voiced an appreciation for the corresponding freedom. One said *“I like this lifestyle and can travel around. No responsibilities. I can travel Canada, and meet thousands of people.”* Another echoed this: *“I like being free. I don’t want to get hooked up in the system. Everything I get everyday is free. No worries about paying bills on time or anything.”*

Another traveller, a young man with a back injury and a grade eight education, explained his past experience with full-time work:

*“I hate that kind of life – you work to barely survive. It takes all your pay cheque to have the things you need to have a job (apartment, clothing, bills). The expenses are high and the income is low. It’s easier to eat and feed my dog if I’m panhandling and living on the streets because there are no expenses.”*

The older panhandlers who indicated no interest in stopping also seemed to appreciate the way of life. One said that he had never thought about stopping, and was *“just not interested in getting off the street. It becomes a lifestyle.”* Another said *“I don’t want to stop panhandling. I like it. Sometimes the money is really good. I get to hang around with my street buddies.”* Yet another spoke to how entrenched one becomes in that lifestyle, *“Once you know how to panhandle, you’ll always do it. You’ll always try it even if you’ve got bucks in your pocket.”*

|                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>“Panning is a job you can do 24 hours a day – no one will fire me.”</i></p> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

For one young man who is no longer panhandling, what he needed in order to make the change was a place to stay at no cost and to have someone around him who doesn’t like when he panhandles. Another young respondent said that before anything else could change, she needs counseling, and suggested that better advertising of counseling services is needed because she doesn’t know where to go or who offers it. Another interviewee said that he needed *“A different way of thinking – more positive way. It’s all a state of mind.”*

One unique case is that of a young man who had been working and earning \$40,000 a year, but became injured and lost his job. Now he earns only \$7,000 a year on disability and panhandles to pay his bills and maintain his old lifestyle until he can go back to work again. When asked what services were needed, he answered, “[It’s got] *nothing to do with services, it’s all about cash flow.*”

An Aboriginal interviewee said that he needed to be able to get back to the reserve where there is family to support him. Two interviewees indicated they need to get their health back: one said he needed “*a car, a driver’s license and better health*”, and the other needed a job and his eyesight restored. Another said he needed to win the lottery in order to be able to stop panhandling. Yet another interviewee revealed his sense of hopelessness when he said that what he needs so he could stop panhandling is death.

## **10.0 LOCATION, TIME OF DAY, METHODS AND REACTIONS**

Panhandlers were asked to comment on when they usually panhandle (time of day and day of week) and which time of day, days of the week, and time of year they felt were best for panhandling.

Half of all respondents said they panhandled between 11:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. This timeframe roughly corresponds to the time of day that most respondents identified as best for panhandling (11:30a.m.-7p.m.). The reason most often given for this was that the volume of people passing by is highest then. Approximately one third of the interviewees said they panhandled mornings (9:30-11:30 a.m.) or evenings (7 to 10 p.m.). One quarter of respondents thought that between 7 and 10 p.m. was the best time – “*evening is best because people go out to drink and people are nice then*”. A quarter of the respondents said they panhandled during early mornings (before 9:30), but only 13 percent said this was the best time. One quarter of respondents said they panhandle after 10 p.m. They mentioned that people leaving bars and restaurants at this time of the day are generous and there is a good chance to get some change and “*leftover food, to.*” At the same time only four percent of all respondents identified late nights as a good time to panhandle. Many said it was not a good time because they feared for their personal safety: “*It gets too freaky on the streets ... People start arguing and fighting.*” Fourteen percent said they panhandled pretty much all of their waking hours, while a few said they panhandle only occasionally, as needed.

It should be mentioned that the presence of panhandlers on the streets depends first of all on their need for money and the time they go out might not be the time they would identify as the best time for the activity. According to the survey, one quarter of respondents panhandled at night. At the same time only 4% said it was a good time for the activity. This leads to the conclusion that an acute need for money forces panhandlers on to the streets at night despite the fact that many of them identify night hours as being dangerous.

Approximately 70 percent of those interviewed said they had been panhandling for more than 2 years. The majority of interviewees said that they panhandled once a day, from two to six times a week. Most often they reported spending between two and five hours on average each time they panhandled. Interviewees generally identified Friday as the best day of the week for panhandling, followed closely by Thursday and Saturday. Sunday was the lowest rated.

Many respondents said that the best month of the year for panhandling is December because of people's generosity during the holiday season. They also said that people are also sympathetic to the few panhandlers who brave the chill during cold winter months. The summer months were reported as a good time to panhandle because people are in a good mood and the weather is comfortable so panhandlers can stay out longer. Summer long weekends are considered to be quite good, too, because of the high volume of people at events, who are in good spirits. *"Canada Day is good for panhandling and for picking cans – I make up to \$200 on empties, and then don't have to panhandle for a couple of months."*

When the panhandlers were asked what makes a specific location good for panhandling, they said that a high volume of people passing by is the main factor in choosing a particular spot. Quite a few also mentioned that places where generous people pass by, and where the panhandler is known as a regular, are also good places to make money. One mentioned *"where there is a mix of people, so the working people see a lot of poor around and come to understand their situation with compassion"*. One respondent felt that if a spot is regularly used, people learn to avoid it. The safety of the area of the city is also considered an important factor. Thirty-percent of respondents didn't know what made one area better than others, most often because they had never tried panhandling in other areas of the city.

The interviews identified Osborne Village and the downtown portion of Portage Avenue as two areas in the city where panhandling activity is prevalent. When asked where they usually panhandle, one third of respondents indicated Portage Avenue, and a quarter said Osborne Village. The next most often mentioned general areas were Broadway (11% of respondents), Downtown (8%), The Forks (5.4%), St. Boniface (4%), Graham Avenue (4%), and Ellice Ave (2.7%). Among more specific panhandling locations respondents identified: the corners of Donald Street & River Avenue, Broadway Avenue & Main Street, Stradbrook Ave & Osborne street, and Donald Street & Portage Avenue, City Place, Portage Place, MTS Center, Place Louis Riel, The Bell Tower, APTN Building, Harry's Food, Ramada Hotel on Smith, and the St. Regis hotel. The Bell Tower is located on the corner of Stradbrook Avenue at Osborne Street and all the other specific locations mentioned are on or near Portage Avenue.

When asked "Where else have you panhandled?" the respondents identified essentially the same areas mentioned above. Thirteen percent of the respondents said they panhandle outside malls, with Polo Park mall specifically mentioned by 7.3%.

When asked “Where would you *not* panhandle and why?” many respondents said they do not panhandle people who are enjoying themselves at restaurants, patios, near bars, etc. Many avoid entire areas of the city that are considered to be too dangerous (eg. North End, North Main). Other areas where they indicated they would not panhandle included:

- Areas of high poverty: people there simply do not have money to give.
- Areas where there are many police officers.
- Areas where people know the panhandler and he/she is embarrassed to be seen panhandling.
- Areas of gang activity: *“It’s getting hard to pan because of all the gang members “You’re on our turf, you owe us taxes for standing on this corner.”*
- Rich areas: *“Rich areas aren’t good for panning in. People are snobby. They didn’t make their money by giving it away.”*

### **Panhandling as a Skill**

Panhandling is a skill that is learned and perfected for most panhandlers. All 75 interviewees had a preferred method they had developed based on experience. Some youth had actually ‘apprenticed’ under the guidance of seasoned panhandlers, learning not only what methods work well, but also a “Code of Conduct” to abide by.

### **Verbal vs. Silent, and Stationary/Still vs. On the Move**

A common description by interviewees of their panhandling method (40%) was as follows: stand or sit in one place, indicate a request either with a sign or by holding out a hat, cup, or hand, and speak only to thank the person after they have given. Some panhandlers have found this method to be the most lucrative:

*“People say ‘I always give to you because you don’t ask’.”*

*“The hat works really well. Put a couple pennies in the hat, then people start adding. What doesn’t work? Chatting. People say ‘You don’t need money, you can walk, you can work. You’re a nice guy’.”*

Whether or not it is the most lucrative method, those who sit or stand without a verbal request believe this to be the most respectful way to panhandle:

*“I use a sign “Homeless and hungry” because it saves you the trouble of asking or bothering people.”*

*“Don’t ask. If a guy’s got his hat out, you know he’s panhandling.”*

*“I don’t ask so people don’t feel obligated.”*

The majority of the panhandlers interviewed indicated they use a verbal request. Some believe it to be a more effective technique for earning money than staying silent: *“Those who don’t say anything probably don’t get much money.”* Among the panhandlers who usually won’t ask, some indicated they will sometimes ask because they find they get more money that way, but will ask only when in desperate need. One youth also said he asks only when people are alone, so as to not interrupt any conversations between people *“because that’s rude.”*

A few interviewees use a verbal request, but only while stationary because they believe people feel intimidated if approached, and so are less likely to give. Approximately one fifth of the interviewees, however, reported that being “on the move” in their method of panhandling is most effective. This method involves constantly walking and asking people as they pass by. As one said *“Just move around, the change ain’t gonna come to you.”* Within this subset, four of the respondents said they walk directly up to people to ask.

### **Together vs. Alone**

Only slightly more respondents indicated that they panhandle alone (55%) than those who said they panhandle with others (45%). Those who don’t panhandle with others mentioned a number of reasons for this choice. A few discussed the interpersonal problems that can occur when trying to decide how to fairly divide the panhandling proceeds, saying they prefer to avoid such hassles by panhandling alone. Some mentioned they don’t trust other panhandlers or haven’t found anyone compatible to panhandle with. Others said they simply prefer being alone. One respondent who panhandles alone said he does so because his pride is hurt if he’s *“verbally assaulted by the public in front of my friends.”*

The reason most frequently mentioned by interviewees for panhandling alone was that they don’t earn as much when they work with others. One interviewee emphasized this by quoting Merle Haggard: *“He who travels fastest goes alone.”* Some speculated about the reasons for these lower earnings. Most felt that people feel intimidated and scared if there’s a group, and then they won’t give: *“People think you’re hoodlums.”* A few interviewees said they feel people don’t give to groups because they think they’re *“just out to party,”* that they are just hanging out, having a good time with friends and panhandling *“for kicks,”* but don’t really need the money.

A few of those who choose to panhandle with others said they do so to have the company, even though they find that it’s less lucrative. Some limit the number of their group to two or three for reasons including: *“more than 3 and you won’t get any money”* and *“technically it’s illegal to be in a group.”*

The most frequently mentioned reason for panhandling with others is for protection. Most of those interviewees who mentioned that being in a group lessens the likelihood of being attacked or robbed panhandle in groups of three or more. *“There’s strength in numbers in*

*case anything happens.*” A couple of respondents said they panhandle as a group of up to 16 people together, but that they only ask other large groups, such as at line-ups, and then only one person from their group will approach to ask.

## **Appearance**

When asked to talk about their method of panhandling, many of the interviewees spoke about how their appearance impacts the amount of money they make. There were two distinctly different approaches to this issue. One approach is to *“look as bad as possible”* and dress in old, dirty clothes. The logic behind this is to look ‘needy’. If you look clean and well-presented *“people think you’re trying to hustle, so they won’t give.”* Even though he believes that it works against him, one youth said he still tries to be clean and clean-shaven when he panhandles. He stays presentable so people aren’t intimidated and for his own self-respect. Another interviewee seemed to echo this when he said *“I don’t want to look grubby just to get more money.”*

The other line of logic regarding appearance, the opposite of the first, is that if you are clean, clean-shaven and dressed nicely, then people are more willing to help because they feel there is hope for you and their donation will have an impact. One young woman said she always dressed like she was trying to get a job in the hopes that someone would offer her one. And one youth even conducted an experiment on the role of appearance in panhandling: *“One time I panhandled in a silk shirt and got tons of money. The next day, I was in regular work clothes and didn’t get anything.”*

## **Interactions**

Humour was often mentioned as a great way to get people’s attention and put them at ease. *“Say something that puts a smile on their face. If you get a smile, even if they don’t give, maybe they’ll come back.”* Some of the young panhandlers gave examples of humorous signs they have used and found to be effective:

*“Spare change for a penis extension. I’m a little short.”*

*“SEX! ...now that I have your attention, can you spare some change.”*

An example of a humorous line used by a panhandler on one of the researchers is *“Spare change for alcoholic research?”*

Some of the panhandlers interviewed spoke of the level of verbal ability it takes to be successful in getting donations:

*“You need a gimmick. Panhandling is a sales job. The better the talker you are, the more money you’ll make.”*



*“It doesn’t work to not be getting your lines right.”*

*“You gotta know how to schmooze people.”*

Another skill that some of the respondents mentioned as useful for panhandling is the ability to “read people” and adjust the method accordingly:

*“I can tell by their face, ‘oh, this one needs a story.’ I’m cold, passive and nice to older people. Blunt with young people.”*

One youth traveller used a unique method of panhandling (it could be argued that he was not panhandling but was offering a service) when he would stand outside of bars and say “Kick a punk for a dollar - \$20 for a kick to the crotch.” He reported great success with this method, but added that one needs to be willing to have pain inflicted in exchange for money.

Most comments about “what works” when panhandling relate to positive interactions with the public. Many mentioned that it’s important to be friendly, personable and in good spirits to put people at ease and earn more money. A young woman said she tries to start conversations with people, to keep them comfortable after she asks, so they don’t get scared and put their guard up while looking for money to give. Another said “Be polite. The more polite you are, the more money you’ll make.”

*“You’ve got to be nice to people. Saying a joke helps. Or just being honest. As long as you can get something out of them, even a smile, it doesn’t matter. You gotta make them remember you and like you.”*

Being nice, polite and personable was not only viewed as a lucrative method, but also as being the ‘right’ way to panhandle:

*“Be polite. Regardless, you are asking people for help, act in such a manner.”*

*“You’ve got to earn it by the way you’re talking by being nice, kind, respectful, show them that you’re worth sparing the change for.”*

### **Code of Conduct**

When speaking about “the right way to panhandle,” ten of the 75 interviewees (mostly youth) mentioned what they call a “Code of Conduct”. The Code, as it relates to interactions with other panhandlers is mentioned above on page 22-23. It also refers to acceptable and unacceptable behaviour towards those being panhandled. This Code of Conduct advocates being polite and respectful, and asking only once. Being respectful includes refraining from asking certain segments of the population: the elderly, people with children, anyone who has a disability, and anyone who looks like they need help themselves or may be in the same situation as panhandlers.

Although they may not even have heard of the Code of Conduct, ethics seem to underpin other panhandlers' methods. One panhandler has a different, but equally ethics-based approach, and actually targets the elderly and the young because to him "*the middle-aged are working and worried about their own lives*" and shouldn't be bothered. A couple of male panhandlers mentioned they only ask men, because women may feel uncomfortable being approached. Another said, "*It makes me feel bad taking from elderly. There's been a few times I've turned it down from elderly.*"

Some of the panhandlers stressed that the right way of panhandling includes being honest. "*I don't believe you should lie. It's wrong. In a way lying is stealing.*"

*"There's a [panhandler] out there who [uses] crutches...he doesn't need them. Another guy smokes crack and flies a sign that says 'Have kids, need food' (but he doesn't have kids). That ruins it for others that [really do] need food."*

### **What doesn't work when panhandling?**

Some respondents said that smelling like alcohol or being drunk doesn't earn them much money, and when asked to describe the 'wrong' way to panhandle, being drunk was also mentioned frequently. One interviewee, however, reported that he earned more money when he said he was panhandling to buy booze (even though he wasn't). Another reported that he earned more if he said he needed money so he could leave town.

Other methods interviewees reported that don't work well for panhandling included being in a large group, following people, or allowing too much money to accumulate in the collection hat or cup because then "*people think you are rich*" and won't give anything. A few mentioned it was best to not ask for too much money, or to not ask for money at all, but rather ask people if they can spare 'anything' because then people might give food, cigarettes, or other things besides money.

### **Aggressiveness**

When describing the 'wrong' way to panhandle, interviewees often began with "*Don't be aggressive*" and then added comments that fell under one or some of the following points:

- ***Don't pressure:*** "*respect their answer, it's their choice, not yours.*"  
"*You shouldn't heckle people – people shouldn't be forced into feeling compassionate.*"
- ***Don't ask again once they have declined:*** "*The people you're asking work for their money. They don't have to give. Asking twice is asking for trouble.*"
- ***Don't pursue:*** "*Don't chase them down and keep harassing them.*"
- ***Don't work in a group:*** "*You should be alone, not with others. Think 'how would I feel?' Put yourself in their shoes.*"
- ***Don't be rude or verbally abusive:*** don't be loud, yell at people or use vulgar language. Don't call them 'cheap'. "*Don't say things like 'Hey, give me some money' or 'I*

*saw you come out of the bank, I know you've got money.'"*  
 - **Don't "get in their faces"**: don't hassle or bother people.

Although many of the interviewees' comments about the 'wrong' way to panhandle included aspects of behaviour prohibited by the amendment to the obstructive solicitation by-law, no single respondent covered all angles. Only one respondent made specific mention of the by-law when speaking of 'right or wrong' ways to panhandle, saying that the right way is to follow the by-law.

When asked the question "What are you not supposed to do when panhandling?" three quarters of the respondents mentioned that one shouldn't use threats or insults. Twenty-nine of the respondents (about 40%) said that you're not supposed to ask again or follow the person after being declined. A few said that you should be polite and non-aggressive, others that you are not supposed to approach as part of a group of three or more, and others said to not impede pedestrian or vehicular traffic. Three said that you are not even supposed to ask people at all. Four mentioned that you are not supposed to be sitting down while panhandling. A significant proportion of respondents (13.5%) said they didn't know what they are not supposed to do. This is an indication that these panhandlers don't know any of the details of the by-law or its amendment.

About a quarter of the interviewees said they don't feel there is a right or wrong way of panhandling. Generally the reasoning given was simply that each person has to find what works best for him/herself within limits. However, the following comments seem to support an "anything goes" approach:

*"Whatever works for the person. There are no morals to it."*

*"Anything that works, works. There's nothing that doesn't work."*

*"I have no moral compunction about being aggressive. You've gotta do what you've gotta do to survive."*

Towards the end of each interview, the question was asked "What do you think about 'aggressive' panhandling/panhandlers?" Overwhelmingly interviewees said they are against aggressive panhandling. The closest the comments came to expressing support came from a couple of people who said it was an individual's choice, but then went on to say that they don't feel aggressive panhandling is right.

The main reasons the interviewees gave for being against aggressive panhandling were:

1) It demonstrates a lack of respect, it's impolite, and rude:

*"It's not right. You shouldn't be aggressive when asking for something that isn't even yours."*

*"If you're going to panhandle, you'd better respect the people who will give to*

*you. It's disrespectful to be aggressive. If you don't treat people well, they'll remember and won't give next time."*

*"It's not a way to panhandle. You're taking people's time and you should be appreciative. Aggressive panhandlers are assholes."*

*"It's wrong. They are intimidating. People give to them just to make them go away."*

*"If people aren't going to give they shouldn't be forced. Everyone should have a choice and people shouldn't be scared into giving."*

2) It reflects badly on the other panhandlers, gives them a bad reputation, and people are then less likely to give to any panhandlers.

3) It's counterproductive to making money:

*"Being aggressive shouldn't be needed. You're not going to get anywhere."*

*"You'll get more money if you're nice, not aggressive. Be nice and next time they might give."*

*"Anyone who's aggressive are idiots because you won't get anything for fighting people."*

*"The aggressive ones don't make as much as they could. You're making a nuisance of yourself."*

Many of the interviewees said that aggressive panhandling should be stopped, either by ticketing, fines, or arresting the aggressive ones:

*"They should be stopped. The police, though, can't seem to tell the difference between an aggressive and non-aggressive panhandler. Aggressive panhandling is almost like trying to rob someone."*

*"Aggressive panhandlers (those who ask more than once) should be ticketed and fined. They should accept the fact that people don't want to give money."*

*"I'd like to see them clamp down on it because it does make it bad for everyone else. To me that's a form of assault."*

*"Aggressive ones should be taken off the street."*

Sometimes, the panhandlers who dislike aggressive panhandling take matters into their own hands:

*“I give my friends lectures or a slap if they are aggressive”*

*“I won’t let people panhandling with me be aggressive.”*

*“If aggressive panhandlers are anywhere near, I’d kick them away. If you’re asking people for something, why would you try to hassle them?”*

No definition of “aggressive panhandling” was provided for the interviewees, nor were they directly asked in the course of the interview to give their own definition of the term. Some insights into this, however, were provided through comments to other questions. It is clear that among the respondents, “aggressive panhandling” holds many different meanings, not all of which coincide. Here is a sampling of what interviewees said aggressiveness is:

- making any verbal request: *“I don’t ask – that’s a sign of aggressiveness.”*
- being obstructive: Note: one interviewee said, *“I don’t obstruct people, but will get a little in the way”* to get their attention.
- *“Following people”*
- *“Following is not aggressive – it’s being persistent.”*
- *“Asking more than once”*
- *“Surrounding the person”*
- *“Yelling at people”*
- *“fighting people”*
- *“being mean”*
- being demanding: *“They want it right now!”*
- being “impolite, rude”: *“[they]don’t say please or thank you. No respect for others or themselves.”*
- *“To harass in any way”, “verbally harass you to give them change.”*
- *“violent”, “ready to strangle you”*
- *“making a nuisance of yourself”*
- *“its almost like trying to rob someone”*
- *“To me that’s a form of assault.”*

## **The Public’s Reaction to Panhandlers**

### ***Who Gives?***

When asked what percentage of the people passing by give something, of those who ventured a guess, almost half felt that less than 20% give, with most of those estimates around 10-20%. Almost a third of the respondents, however, felt that 50% or more of those who pass by donate. Based on the observational component of this research, 50% or more is an overestimation. Community partners in this study have noted that many panhandlers will overstate the frequency of donations. Among various speculations about

this is the possibility they exaggerate because they need to believe that their efforts are fruitful, and that their time is not wasted, in order to remain hopeful and justify their activity.

According to the respondents, women tend to give most often, and tend to be the most generous when they give. Young people and the elderly were generally reported as being more generous than the middle-aged, but only marginally. One young interviewee's comments (although opposite to most regarding the elderly) identified specific age-related giving patterns from his experience: *"Young people give beer, smokes, drugs. Middle aged give change and leftovers. The elderly don't even acknowledge your existence."*

An observation that emerged in numerous interviews is that those who give most often and most generously are blue-collar workers or people who appear to have lower incomes. The people who do not give to panhandlers are those who are obviously "well-off".

*"Those who don't have much, they'll give. The people in suits are the ones who usually totally ignore you."*

*"You can almost guarantee that the people in the 'Beamer' with the gold jewellery won't give. A lot of times the ones that don't look like they can afford it are the ones that give."*

*"A certain kind of people give – not the rich. The one's who have a hard time give because they know what it's like to have a hard life."*

One young man had analyzed this irony:

*"The big rich people – they're the ones that hate us so much and they're the ones that go to the cops. The only reason we're here is because we're so capitalistic in our system and this system works for the rich."*

Another young man shared his theory as follows:

*"Waste is generated by wealth. Where there is waste, there are those who can and will live off it. Don't be mad at me for this, because I am proof there is wealth in society."*

### ***Positive Responses***

About half of the interviewees indicated that when they panhandle, most people respond in a positive manner ("nice," "polite," "receptive," "friendly"). Those who reported a generally positive interaction with the public also added, however, that there are always some people who are mean, and those who don't respond at all. In fact, ten interviewees said the primary response by the vast majority of people was to ignore them altogether: *"They ignore me like I'm less than everybody else. The majority have no respect."*

Almost all respondents said there are always some people who ignore them completely. Most interviewees indicated they don't do anything to get attention when ignored. But a quarter of the respondents said that if ignored, they will start talking to the passerby to get his or her attention, or repeat the request, sometimes raising the volume to ensure they've been heard. One respondent said he will follow people who ignore him and repeat his request until he gets a response. Once the person being panhandled indicates they don't want to give, the vast majority of the respondents (93%) said they do not repeat their request.

### ***This and That...***

About a quarter of the panhandlers interviewed felt that those who responded positively to their request and those who responded negatively were equally balanced in number.

*“Some say ‘F-off’. Others ask why I need the money. When I tell them, most will give, or take me out for a meal.”*

### ***Negative Responses***

Only a handful of interviewees said they received negative responses the majority of the time. Although the number was low, the type of negativity they encounter seems extreme, as illustrated here:

*“Most people react like they just stepped in dog shit and pretend not to see or hear you. Their noses go up.”*

*“People say ‘Get a job’ or ‘Get off the street, bum’ they curse at you, punch you or ignore you.”*

*“Mostly [they treat you] like a leper. People take two steps to the side, walk around. Do everything possible to avoid you...even go around buildings.”*

When asked if they ever feel that people passing by are scared of them, a third of the respondents answered “no”, and said it was probably because they looked non-threatening, or because they made a point of not asking people who might feel scared of them (such as women or the elderly). Certainly not everyone feels scared of all panhandlers, as one interviewee even reported that a couple of times young women have asked him to walk them home to their building at night “..as their body guard.”

Sixty-five percent of the respondents, however, said that, yes, they felt that people passing by were sometimes scared of them. Three panhandlers had actually been told so. Respondents said they could tell people were scared when they would walk on the far side of the sidewalk or even cross the street to avoid them. People also exhibited fear by increasing their walking speed, avoiding all eye contact, clutching their purses or wallets closer, and by locking their doors or rolling up the windows when in vehicles.

Some of the panhandlers perceive themselves as completely non-threatening in appearance or approach, but still people would appear to be afraid of them. A few of the youth felt people's fears were due to the prevalence of negative stereotypes of panhandlers:

*"A lot of people think panhandlers are all drunks and would rob you if they had the chance. And I used to think that, too, but the majority of them wouldn't."*

*"Everyone assumes that we're drug users or addicts and that we're not trying to better ourselves."*

*"My sign says 'Spare change for baby food' and lots of people say 'Ya, right, we know it's for crack' It's NOT!"*

### ***Targets of Violence***

Respondents mentioned numerous incidents of violence directed at them when panhandling, the extent of which can be extreme at times. As one interviewee stressed, *"Panhandling is a DANGEROUS business."*

In addition to having various items such as fruit, eggs or cups thrown at them from passing cars, panhandlers also reported being robbed and beaten up. One older respondent reported that he now wears a dental plate after having had his teeth kicked out while panhandling. Another received permanent brain damage as a result of being knocked out when he was panhandling late at night. A female panhandler had a beer bottle smashed across her face, which has left her with impaired vision. Another interviewee can no longer see out of one eye at all after he was beaten up while panhandling to make ends meet between seasonal jobs. Now he's unable to work at all.

During the course of the interviews for this report, a panhandler was beaten up by two unknown assailants. He had two black eyes from the encounter but no long-lasting injuries. On the same weekend, just a little further down the street, another panhandler was kicked from behind and fell face-first on a cement wall (an injury which needed stitches). Fortunately, some Squeegee kids nearby chased the assailant away.

Several panhandlers reported groups of people who roam the streets downtown looking for street people to beat up. One said that a panhandler who was unable to avoid one of these groups was violated with a steel pipe and injured so badly he had to have a colostomy, and now permanently wears a bag. Because of reports such as this, one group of about sixteen panhandlers who sleep outside keeps someone on 'lookout' throughout the night.

Interviewees also gave reports of increased pressure on panhandlers by gangs to pay them for the use of corners deemed to be in gang territory. *"You've gotta watch out for gangs – gotta know their colours and find a safe place where no one will jump you."*



One interviewee spoke of how this treatment of panhandlers is never brought forward to the public:

*“I’m angry about seeing aggressive panhandlers on T.V. but nothing is shown on T.V. about the aggression towards panhandlers. They get spit on, kicked. I had my hat with money stolen. There are some cruel people out there.”*

## **11.0 PANHANDLERS KNOWLEDGE OF THE BY-LAW**

When asked whether they knew about the panhandling by-law (Obstructive Solicitation By-law 7700/2000, amendment 128/2005) passed in Winnipeg in the summer of 2005, half of the interviewees answered ‘no’. Among the other half who were aware of it, the majority did not know any of the details: *“I don’t know a single person who knows the details of the by-law.”*

*“The law keeps changing and it keeps getting more convoluted. I still have no idea on the specifics about it.”*

Those who felt they had knowledge of the by-law were often misinformed about its content. For example, three of the interviewees, when asked to explain the by-law said that they are no longer allowed to sit when panhandling. There is actually no prohibition on sitting while panhandling anywhere in the document.

Many of the interviewees are under the impression that the by-law has made any and all panhandling activity illegal, and that they can be arrested or fined if caught. One interviewee stated *“I don’t know the details, but apparently panhandling is illegal, the police told me that.”*

The interviewees were asked whether the by-law that was put into effect the previous summer has affected when, how and where they panhandle. The response rate to these questions was low, since half of the respondents weren’t even aware that changes had occurred.

Two respondents said they changed the time that they panhandle. One now panhandles in the evening after the businesses are closed *‘because of all the new restrictions.’* The other no longer panhandles after sunset, as he is under the impression that it is illegal to do so. There is no such restriction in the by-law.

Eleven respondents indicated they had changed the way they panhandle as a result of the recent by-law amendment. One said that according to the by-law, panhandling is now allowed nowhere, and so now he walks around instead of staying in one place. That way, he says, he is *“nowhere”*. The rest of the responses, however, indicated the only change they have made is to be more careful and cautious in watching for the police and street

patrols so that they won't get caught. Most of these panhandlers are under the impression that panhandling is illegal.

Ten of the interviewees said they do not know where they are allowed or not allowed to panhandle. Thirty six percent said they are not allowed to panhandle indoors or on private property. Not a single interviewee identified all of the prohibited places for panhandling spelled out in the by-law. About half (33 respondents) said they were not supposed to panhandle near a bank entrance or ATM. Twenty-one said they are not allowed to panhandle at a transit stop or taxi stand. Very few of the respondents, however, included the following locations (prohibited in the by-law) in their answers:

|                                              |               |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------|
| - on public transit                          | 6 respondents |
| - in a pedestrian walkway                    | 5             |
| - public pay phone                           | 1             |
| - in a parking lot/getting in/out of vehicle | 1             |
| - at a restaurant/bar patio                  | 6             |
| - on an elevator                             | 0             |

Some panhandlers report being given inaccurate information about where they are not allowed to panhandle under the by-law. A couple of respondents mentioned that since the by-law was passed, they are no longer allowed to panhandle outside Portage Place Mall. Other respondents said they were told the by-law doesn't allow them to panhandle anywhere anymore. Another interviewee said "*You have to be ten yards from bus shelters, banks or businesses...the police and BIZ say so.*" Although not prohibited in the by-law, half of the respondents indicated they are not allowed to panhandle near business entrances including liquor stores, hotels, movie theatres and mall entrances. Other locations not covered in the by-law where respondents said they are not allowed to panhandle included: in front of police stations(5); religious buildings(2); schools/universities(3); at the Forks(1); on meridians/ at traffic lights(3); and in fire exits/stairwells(2).

When asked whether the new by-law had affected where they are allowed to panhandle, eleven respondents indicated it had. One panhandler explained that with the new by-law, the owner of the store where he used to panhandle had to tell him he wasn't allowed to panhandle by the back door anymore because there is an ATM in that entrance. Now he's had to move to the front entrance and down the street a bit, which is not as protected from the weather, and has less foot traffic.

### **Changed Relationship with Public**

For some panhandlers, the changes to the by-law have significantly decreased the amount of money they earn. "*There's less money given now because people think it's illegal to give money.*" Below are interviewees' specific examples of decreased earnings:

*"Last year, I was making \$30-40 in 2 hours. This year, even on the coldest days*

*sometimes I make nothing. This is supposed to be Friendly Manitoba but it's harsh!"*

*"I make less now. I used to be able to make \$25 in the same time it takes to make \$15-\$18 now."*

*"Last summer I'd make about \$50, and now with the same effort I struggle to make \$15."*

Some panhandlers report that the changes to the by-law have also affected how they are treated by the public. Some mentioned they are getting more dirty looks than before, while others find that fewer people are friendly now, whereas before they would at least say 'hi'. Others report that unlike before, the public "pick on" them at night now.

*"I feel that people look at me differently, like I'm a bum and lazy."*

*"People are getting more fears of panhandlers. The 'Feed My Addiction' campaign, the new by-law..Everyone thinks that every panhandler is a dirty rotten scumbag now."*

Two interviewees mentioned that the public has become more educated about where food and shelter are available, and now they tell panhandlers where they can go. One interviewee mentioned that some people give Blue Keys, which often makes the panhandlers angry because they find the Keys are useless. The youth, in particular, reported getting annoyed by this because the Keys direct them to services that 1) are too far from "their turf"; 2) are in an area of the city where youth don't feel safe; 3) serve clientele who have been known to victimize them; and, 4) do not provide services to meet the needs specific to the youth.

### **Relationships - Then and Now**

Approximately a quarter of the panhandlers interviewed indicated that since the by-law was changed, they were being treated differently by the business owners, the police, or the BIZ ambassadors. These ambassadors are staff and/or volunteers of the Business Improvement Zone (BIZ) associations who walk the area and create an increased physical presence throughout the zone and at special events. About half of the panhandlers interviewed said they don't feel they are treated any differently now. In the course of the research, it was learned that the regular panhandlers in Osborne Village have developed good relationships with the local beat cop, the BIZ ambassadors, and the business owners. It was observed that they greet each other by name and seem to be quite friendly with each other.

### ***Business Owners***

In general, relationships between panhandlers and business owners vary greatly. Some of these relationships have never been positive, and according to interviewees, have become worse since the by-law was passed:

*“Now they’ll call the police, or they don’t like you bothering their customers, they’ll ask you to leave.”*

*“They used to be nicer, now they don’t treat me as well. They’re even hassling me about dumpster diving.”*

Other panhandlers reported having developed congenial and even mutually beneficial relationships with businesses over the years. One panhandler said that the staff at the business he stands in front of are appreciative of his presence because they have found it reduces the amount of shoplifting that happens in the store. One grocery storeowner has worked out an agreement with panhandlers who stand in front of his store: each is given about half an hour to panhandle and then is asked to move along to give the next panhandler an opportunity to make some money.

Another business owner mentioned in casual conversation with the researcher that the businesses in Osborne Village get along fine with the regular panhandlers *“because they’re a nice bunch.”* He added that their relationships are beneficial. If any panhandler comes into the area and is aggressive, the regular panhandlers won’t tolerate it because aggressive panhandling would damage their own relationships and reputations. These positive relationships have reportedly remained unchanged since the by-law was passed.

### ***BIZ Ambassadors***

Relationships between panhandlers and the BIZ ambassadors (known downtown as the “Red Coats”) have been varied as well. The nature of the relationship seems to depend upon the individuals involved. As one respondent described the ambassadors, *“Some are nice and some use bad language and are mean.”*

Some interviewees reported that they have always had good rapport with the BIZ ambassadors and have never been bothered by them. An older respondent said,

*“They’re nice to me because they know I don’t drink. [They say] ‘We know you don’t go up and demand money. You’re quiet. You just sit there’.”*

Another panhandler said *“They’re just doing their job and keeping the peace.”* A youth who used to panhandle said that they gave him useful advice to *“be nice and not be a jerk back to those who aren’t nice.”* Another interviewee said that on a particularly cold winter day, the BIZ ambassadors even gave him hot chocolate while on their rounds.

In other cases, relationships between panhandlers and the BIZ ambassadors have always been strained. Many respondents reported that the ambassadors tell them to “*move along*”, or “*We don’t want to see your face down here.*”

*“They try to tell you that you can’t do stuff. I was polite with them for so long. They should be informed about the laws. Now I just tell them to piss off. They’re misinformed. One...grabbed my arm and I told him he was out of line. I think they do know, but they get away with it because others don’t know the law.”*

*“When I see them coming, I’m gone. I try and avoid those people. What I’m doing is none of their business. I’m going about getting money the only way I know how without doing something criminal.”*

Some interviewees said that since the amendment to the Obstructive Solicitation By-law was passed last summer, they have been treated differently by the BIZ ambassadors. A couple mentioned they feel they are treated even better now, and that the ambassadors are nicer and more generous than before. Most respondents who felt there had been a change, however, said the BIZ ambassadors had become more “*harassing now*” and tell them to move along regardless of where they are panhandling, or actually tell them to quit panhandling altogether.

*“They’re more aggressive now. They give warnings. And not just at [sensitive services]...everywhere!”*

*“They’re trying harder to get you off the street, trying to stop all panhandlers.”*

One interviewee said that in the past some of the BIZ ambassadors would let him go inside to warm up in the winter, but not anymore, “*Now they don’t want me around.*”

### ***Police***

As with the business owners and the BIZ ambassadors, panhandlers reported a range of relationships with police as well. Some interviewees said they have never been bothered by the police, and some even reported that they have always had excellent relationships with the police. One young woman said that the police even thanked her once for not being rude. The young travellers, who spend most of their time in Osborne Village, reported that the police in Winnipeg are always really good with them.

Other panhandlers reported having bad experiences and confrontations with the police in the past. They clarified that it was not every police officer, but only particular ones that had caused them problems. One interviewee said that most police follow the law, but some police threaten him and call him a “*useless piece of shit.*” Or they say “*I’m having a steak for dinner tonight, what are you having?*” or “*I don’t like your kind.*” One respondent said that the police are really rough, they “*almost shot me once,*” and have taken him to Pembina Highway and made him walk back to downtown. Another said:

*“The police have threatened to throw me in jail for flying a sign on the median, and for sleeping on private property. They actually said ‘Rich people don’t want to see poor people sleeping in the streets.’”*

An Aboriginal respondent said there is unequal treatment by the police: *“The cops don’t bug the white guys. They leave them alone all day. They see us [Aboriginals] once, and they tell us to keep moving.”*

Fifteen of the interviewees indicated they have found that since the by-law was passed, the police are *“hassling”* more panhandlers now, threatening them with arrest, handing out more tickets, and are more *“power-trippy”*. One interviewee said that the police have become really aggressive and will put him in handcuffs and rough him up a bit now. Another said that now *“they tell you to beat it, they swear and are rude”* and they’ve also taken away his squeegee a few times. One interviewee, however, felt he was left alone by the police more recently. He said they don’t say anything to him because *“They’re worried that you won’t move if they tell you to, and then they’d have to give you a ticket and do paperwork.”*

## **12.0 BY-LAW ENFORCEMENT FROM THE PANHANDLERS’ PERSPECTIVE**

Only twenty one, or less than a third of the panhandlers interviewed, reported having ever been ticketed for panhandling. More than half of the twenty-one were ticketed somewhere on Portage Avenue downtown, and three others had been ticketed at the corner of Broadway and Osborne Street. Only seven of those ticketed had the money to pay the fine, and of those, only two actually paid it, but did so in hours of community service. Although it wasn’t asked in the interview questions, some of the interviewees who didn’t pay said they had thrown away their tickets, but a few also mentioned they had been to their court appearance only to have the charges were dismissed.

Of the fifty-three who had never been ticketed, thirty four said that if they ever were fined, they would not be able to pay it. Some respondents added that the only way they could pay a fine would be by panhandling to earn the money. One youth who said he wouldn’t pay if he was ever fined for panhandling explained his reasons this way:

*“What are they going to do, throw me in jail? Great! I’d get fed, and have a roof over my head. It’s stupid to fine someone who has no money, throw them in jail, and have the taxpayer pay. What would they rather have me doing: asking for change or jacking a 7-11?”*

Five of the interviewees said they had been arrested for panhandling at some point. Three of the five reported that they had spent a short time in jail. Only one reported that the experience had affected how or where he panhandled, and in that case he simply avoided panhandling in his regular spot for a few days. The others continued panhandling as before.

The majority of the interviewees found the very concept of fining or arresting someone for panhandling to be absurd:

*“Police are giving tickets to those who don’t have any money – the panhandlers, but they don’t give tickets to all the drug dealers. You give a poor guy a \$140 ticket... how’s he gonna pay it? That’s why he’s there!”*

*“It seems weird that if you ask for stuff, you get charged. Do they charge the missions for asking for free clothes and food? No.”*

*“It’s the stupidest concept in the world – to fine someone who has to be out begging.”*

### **Comments About the By-law**

Although they weren’t directly asked what they thought about the by-law, during the course of the interview many of the respondents shared their comments about the effect it has had, or could have, on them.

*“The by-law is prejudiced against poor people. It’s a threat to the ones that need [the money]. They wonder why people steal? It’s because they can’t panhandle.”*

This was alluded to by another respondent whose comment about the by-law was, *“It’s putting me in a situation where I would have to find another way to get money.”*

One of the panhandlers who is well-on-the-way to being fully recovered from a few years of multiple setbacks had this comment about the recent crackdown on panhandling:

*“If they made it illegal, I’d be getting arrested. I’m not going to sit at home and count pennies and eat at soup kitchens. That would put me right back into depression again.”*

A couple of interviewees mentioned that passersby have stopped to say that they don’t support the by-law.

A few respondents’ comments were supportive of the by-law. A young panhandler said that she was fine with the by-law because it paralleled the Code of Conduct that many of them follow already. A youth who no longer panhandles had these words of support *“I have no problem with the by-law because it actually got me off my butt. Without the by-law I wouldn’t have got my own place, or been trying to help out my girlfriend.”* Another interviewee had this to say about the by-law and its enforcers: *“Don’t blame them for trying to help people to not destroy their lives.”*

### 13.0 ADDICTION AND SUBSTANCE USE PROBLEMS AMONGST PANHANDLERS

Interviewees seemed to feel comfortable during the interview discussing substance use problem or addictions they have, or had in the past. All seventy-five interviewees chose to answer the questions about addictions and substance abuse, and the majority volunteered additional related information. When the topic of addictions was raised in the course of the interview, one youth had this poignant comment to share:

*“Addictions? Well, yes, I seem to have a strange compulsion to eat everyday and sleep, to...and apparently sleeping, that’s illegal in a public place – even though it’s under a bridge where no one can see you.”*

Eight of the interviewees said they do not have an addiction or substance use problem of any kind. Of the sixty-six respondents who said they do, thirty said that smoking is their only vice. Although most recognized that it can be an expensive addiction, many “bum” cigarettes or “pick butts” and so don’t have any costs other than rolling papers. Most believed smoking should not be considered significant as an addiction because for them it doesn’t have the high monetary costs, nor does it alter behaviour the way that abuse of alcohol and illegal drugs or substances can.

Thirty-seven, or almost half of the respondents, reported alcohol, illegal drug, prescription, gambling, or substance use problems or addictions: among these, twelve reported multiple addictions (not including tobacco use). Some of the respondents said they had become addicted as children or young teens. Twenty-two respondents, almost one third of all interviewees, reported an addiction to alcohol. Illegal drug addictions were self-reported by fifteen interviewees: marijuana or hash (9); crack (3); Cocaine (2); Methamphetamine (1). One interviewee reported having developed an addiction to methadone treatment. Four respondents reported addictions to prescription medication: three rely on Tylenol 3 or Codeine, one uses Valium. Six respondents reported problems with various other substances including inhalants: solvents, gas, glue; or drinking hairspray, mouthwash, or aftershave. Gambling was reported as an addiction by two respondents.

The cause and effect relationship between panhandling and addictions was not directly explored through the interviews, but some of the respondents offered insights on this from their own experiences. Some clearly identified addictions as a factor that contributed to their dependence on panhandling. For others, addictions have arisen as a result of the panhandling lifestyle. Some have become addicted to alcohol or drugs used to lose inhibitions and gain the courage to beg. Others reported using drugs, alcohol or other substances to help them sleep outside in the cold. Others said they rely on drugs for the opposite reason - to help keep them awake at night so they don’t get “rolled” or attacked. For many others, the alcohol, drugs or other substances help them feel a sense of well-being, take away physical or emotional pain, and escape the reality of their lives, if only for a short while.



## **Kicking the Habit**

The issue of overcoming addictions and substance use problems is not straightforward, and seems to be cyclical in its progression. Some interviewees reported no efforts towards dealing with their addictions, others reported continued success in overcoming their addictions, others have overcome them and then relapsed, and others have overcome one, or some, among multiple addictions.

Some of the interviewees may be just starting to recognize they need help dealing with their addictions. During the course of one interview, through describing his activities and spending behaviours, the respondent seemed to come to the realization he might have an addiction: *“As soon as I’ve got money in my pocket I go buy crack lately. I guess that means I have a problem. I guess I should go talk to my doctor about that.”*

Some interviewees did not seem concerned about their addictions, nor did they express any interest in taking steps to overcome them. This seemed clear in the very matter-of-fact comments they made about their experiences. One respondent related how he now has debts to pay because a couple of times people saw him passed out outdoors and they called an ambulance even though, according to him, he didn’t need it. Now he owes \$770 for those ambulance rides. Another interviewee, when talking about where he slept at night, commented with a puzzled expression on his face that *“Sometimes I end up in the drunk tank...I don’t know how I get there.”*

One respondent seemed well aware of the impact his addiction has on other aspects of his life, but didn’t seem to have thought about dealing with it: *“Sometimes I want to get a job and get my own place. But I’m afraid I’ll mess up, get drunk, invite people over and they’ll bring people with hairspray and Listerine. They’d get rowdy and blast music ...and get me evicted.”* So, instead he remains jobless and living in a shelter.

Some who see their addiction as a problem also seem to recognize they are not at a place or time in their life where they can commit to dealing with it. One interviewee diagnosed with ADHD said, *“I don’t want to quit smoking right now, while stress is high. It keeps me from biting my nails. Maybe I’ll quit when I feel more settled.”* Another said that he wakes up feeling sick every morning, and if he doesn’t drink he feels worse, but once he takes a drink, he feels better. At the time of the interview, he said he had an appointment to get medication through a clinic to help him with withdrawal. About a month later, however, through casual conversation he mentioned that he hadn’t kept his appointment at the clinic, and had decided instead to just detox on his own. He said he was trying to save enough money so that he could do it at his friend’s place without being a financial burden.

A number of the interviewees mentioned they had tried to conquer their addictions but had relapsed. Some said they didn’t stay long enough in residential treatment programs, generally because the rules are strict and they felt they couldn’t abide, or because they were kicked out for not following them. One young woman, however, who had high

hopes for the Behavioural Health Foundation's program in St. Norbert said she left after having a knife pulled on her three times in three days.

For some, as soon as they were out of treatment they started using again. Others said they managed to "stay clean" for several months at a time, even years, before relapsing. One who reported using addictions services three times had given up altogether, saying,

*"The services for addictions around here are no good. They're just places for you to go to fatten up after you haven't eaten for awhile. People come out and go and do the same thing."*

Having heard the complaints of ineffectiveness, one interviewee expressed his views, *"The detox centres are doing the best they can, but it's up to the individual to decide to stop."*

Some of the interviewees talked about the challenges they faced in trying to "stay clean." When they return to the same environment as before treatment (including all of the same stressors and influences) without follow-up and support, they find it very difficult to stay clean. The following comments illustrate this:

*"I used to be a hard core sniffer: started when I was 15 years old. My buddies keep trying to get me to sniff gas, but I won't do it."*

*"I used to have a crack addiction. I've been clean now for 3 years. It's hard still: everyone's getting into it now."*

*"My mom's in the city, but she's messed up – she drinks hairspray..I've got relatives here, but they're all messed up, doing 'Rock'. I've gotta stay away from that. My girlfriend and her family do 'Rock' around the kids. I always take off."*

Stories of success in conquering addictions were not uncommon from the panhandlers interviewed, with many reporting having been drug, alcohol and substance free for many years. One respondent was also proud of his success, when he pronounced *"I quit weed a long time ago. Last time I had it was a week ago."*

Services in Winnipeg that respondents reported worked well for them include Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Addictions Foundation of Manitoba (AFM), Mainstay, Pritchard House (Native Addictions Council of Manitoba), and Narcotics Anonymous. Respondents reported that it often takes more than one round of detox treatment to stay completely off drugs, alcohol or addictions. One interviewee said *"It took forty years to get there"* and gives full credit to AA and AFM in helping him become and stay sober. Another seemed pleased with his progress when he said he used to abuse solvents, alcohol and drugs together. He has used four different addictions services, and now just drinks and uses pot occasionally.

For others, conquering their addiction seemed to be easier, and something they were able to do on their own or with the support of friends. Some simply made up their mind one day to quit and have never looked back. Motivating factors they mentioned include the high expense of the addiction, or that it was causing health problems, or they were losing friends. One young woman described her experience:

*“I used to be addicted to drugs. Over the years I became addicted. I started using so I could stay warm and stay awake – if you fall asleep your stuff goes missing. Now I’m cleaned up because I have a place to live. I called AFM and they said there was a 10 month waiting list. That’s too long to wait when you’re trying to clean up right now. I got off drugs with the support of friends and RaY.”*

Now she does Prevention work with Resource Assistance for Youth(RaY) to raise awareness about drug addictions and the negative impact on people’s lives.

#### **14.0 CONCLUSION**

Although Winnipeg’s panhandling population is demographically diverse, panhandlers certainly share the characteristic of living in deep poverty and finding multiple ways to simply “make ends meet.”

The majority of panhandlers in this study were unemployed – most unable to find work because they lack the appropriate education or skills for the type of work their mental or physical health will allow. If they are deemed physically able to work or “employable”, but are unable to find work they are denied government support. That some panhandlers are employed seems to indicate that a job alone is not a guarantee of freedom from poverty.

Some interviewees on social assistance or with employment income have been fortunate enough to have a place to live, although they may have to panhandle to cover the rent. More than half of the panhandlers in this study, however, are homeless - either sleeping outdoors, staying in shelters, and/or “couch-surfing.”

Panhandling is not an option that many would choose over employment. Any positive aspects of panhandling are far outweighed by the negatives, which include low earnings, long hours of work in poor conditions, social stigma, and depleted self-esteem. Physical and verbal abuse is another hazard of panhandling. Since the amendments to By-Law 7700/2000 were put in place in 2005, panhandlers report they are not treated as well by the general public, business owners, police and BIZ Ambassadors. As a result, some find they have to spend even more time panhandling in order to meet their basic needs.

Those whose only income is panhandling often rely on other ways of meeting their basic needs, such as collecting and selling cans, and “dumpster diving.” Many rely on services

such as temporary shelters, soup kitchens, and clothing banks, but for others, the services currently available do not meet their needs or are only used as a last resort.

What is needed to stop panhandling is not simple by-laws that restrict panhandling activity - restrictions that may turn panhandlers to criminal activity, or at the very least force them to spend even more time panhandling to meet their basic needs. Most interviewees had turned to panhandling when unfortunate events, choices, behaviours or situations that, on their own might easily have been dealt with, combined to become insurmountable. Unfortunately, the opposite is also true: the multiple compounding issues and barriers need to be dealt with simultaneously in order to have any substantive, positive and lasting change in their lives. A wide range of effective targeted services are required to address the multiple and often co-existing health, housing, education, employment and social problems that panhandlers face. Systemic barriers to poverty reduction, including lack of flexibility in policy, bureaucracy and eligibility requirements, also need to be tackled. This solution to the “panhandling problem” would be resource intensive and complex - far more complex than a by-law that restricts panhandlers’ ability to simply “make ends meet”.

## **APPENDIX A: Project Methodology**

The general methodology of the study in many respects is breaking new ground using a combination of several quantitative and qualitative approaches. The interviews with panhandlers yield specific quantitative information about the characteristics of panhandlers, the frequency of panhandling, the amount of money collected, and their use of supportive services. The mapping of locations of panhandlers also provides quantitative material on the location and nature of the activity. Additionally, the literature review presents facts and figures from other surveys and Statistics Canada data. The interviews also incorporate many qualitative, open-ended questions that elicit opinion panhandlers' opinions. The development of a typology of panhandling methods is another qualitative tool and a subjective exercise based on the researchers' observations. There has been little work undertaken elsewhere in developing a typology of panhandling approaches.

There are five basic components to the research methodology that were used to undertake and complete this project. Each component is described in more detail below.

### **1.0 The Review of Literature**

The first component is a review of academic, legal, government, advocacy and professional literature. This informs the project by providing information on the characteristics of panhandlers, how they panhandle, why they panhandle and what services or initiatives might help this group of people reduce their dependence on panhandling. It also provides background on recent legislation that has been introduced in Canadian cities, the nature and effectiveness of this legislation and the reason(s) it was introduced. In addition, the review presents an overview of other non-legislative initiatives (Canada, the United States and abroad) to reduce the number of panhandlers through provision of services and support programs that reduce the need for panhandling. The literature sheds some light on programs and support services that have been introduced to address the systemic causes that drive people onto the streets to panhandle. The three components of the literature review are described in more detail below.

The focus of the literature review is Canadian material, but relevant works from the United States and other countries are included. The review of the literature attempts to highlight recent change in panhandling, including the changing nature, number and characteristics of panhandlers, reactions by the public, business and government sectors as well as changing attitudes toward the use of public space and the debate surrounding private versus public space in the urban environment.

The review of legislation focuses on Canadian cities where there have been recent changes in the legislation affecting panhandling. The review also highlights any appropriate legislation in American cities. It presents a detailed account of recent changes in panhandling by-laws in Winnipeg and compares the nature of legislation in Winnipeg

with legislation in other key cities. A matrix, accompanied by a detailed written explanation, has been developed to compare the regulations.

The review of initiatives providing resources to reduce the need for panhandling takes an approach similar to the review of legislation. It focuses on key cities in Canada, the U.S. and other countries to determine what programs and support services have been introduced. Initiatives in selected cities and those available in Winnipeg illustrate that criminalizing panhandling is not the only solution.

## **2.0 Mapping of Panhandling Locations**

A second component of the research is the mapping of panhandling locations. It identifies where people panhandle in the city, and whether they panhandle in close proximity to “sensitive services”. There were three approaches to this component of the methodology: 1) recording the locations of panhandlers based on observation of panhandling activity throughout the study area; 2) mapping of these locations using Geographic Information Systems and mapping software; and, 3) using information gathered through observation to indicate if panhandlers are active near “sensitive services.” Several maps were produced indicating the distribution of panhandlers throughout the study area, priority or high traffic locations for panhandling, and proximity to “sensitive services.”

The necessary steps in preparing the maps included:

- a) Preparation of base maps for the downtown area and Osborne Village. For the purposes of this research, the downtown study area extends as far west as Arlington and north to include Ellice and Sargent Streets, as panhandling has been observed in these areas. Downtown also includes Main Street north to Higgins and south to include Broadway. The commercial portion of Osborne Village to Wardlaw Avenue was also included in the study area. It was limited to Osborne Street itself and the adjoining Safeway Shopping Complex, as this is where most panhandling activity in Osborne Village was observed occurring.
- b) The locations of sensitive services were plotted on the base maps as was the walkway system;
- c) The nature of the sensitive services was determined in consultation with the client based on by-law No. 7700/2000 and a review of the literature, and included ATMs, bus stops, banks, liquor stores, money marts, etc.;
- d) Fieldwork observation identified panhandling locations; and,
- e) Locations were plotted to illustrate proximity of panhandlers to sensitive services. Proximity was based on a 10-metre distance restriction.

## **3.0 Interviews with Panhandlers**

A third and major component of the methodology was the interviewing of panhandlers. Representatives of three social service agency partners - Resource Assistance for Youth, The Main Street Project, and Siloam Mission - assisted the researchers in developing a structured questionnaire to be administered through confidential personal interviews.

Their input ensured the research tool was comprehensive, appropriately worded, and sensitive in addressing topics of concern. It was agreed upon with the client that the “squeegee kids” and buskers would not be included because they do not clearly fall within the definition of “panhandlers” (as they offer a service in exchange for donations) and the current legislation has not targeted these activities.

The questionnaire contains both defined and open-ended questions, focusing on a number of themes: demographic and socio-economic characteristics of panhandlers, their housing circumstances, where and why they panhandle, how much money they make and what they spend it on, the services they use and need, and how the legislation has affected their methods and locations of panhandling. The panhandlers were asked if they were aware of the current By-Law and whether they had changed their method of panhandling since it came into effect. Interview questions also asked about panhandlers’ experiences with authorities and how street patrols and police have changed their approach since the passage of legislation: Are they asking panhandlers to “move along” from certain locations? Do they warn panhandlers not to work in certain areas?, etc.

Because the actual number of panhandlers in Winnipeg is unknown, it was difficult to determine a representative sample size of this population. Consultation with the client and social service agency partners resulted in a decision of seventy five as the total number of panhandlers to be interviewed. Some of the interviews were conducted during the winter months of February and March when there were fewer panhandlers on the street, but interviews were extended into April, May and June to ensure that those who might not panhandle in colder weather were also included as research subjects.

Two approaches were taken in finding panhandlers to interview. The agency partners are established organizations that have developed trusting relationships with clientele, among which are individuals who panhandle. Agency employees discreetly approached potential interviewees to ask them to participate. It was believed this strategy would be most effective because potential interviewees would be more trusting and, therefore, be more likely to participate and more open with their responses if the research was endorsed and supported by an organization they trusted. Thirty six interviews were undertaken at the social service agencies: 15 at Siloam Mission, 9 at Mainstreet Project, and 12 at Resource Assistance for Youth (RaY). These interviews took place in a quiet, private room at the respective agencies.

Because not all panhandlers use services, it was necessary to find and ask panhandlers on the street for interviews as well. This second approach to finding interviewees was undertaken at various times of the day (ranging from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.), in areas frequented by panhandlers and resulted in thirty-nine interviews. Of those asked for an interview in this way, only 6 declined. Seven interviews were conducted on the street at the request of the interviewees. When the researcher approached, a brief explanation was given about the research, and the panhandler was asked if s/he would like to participate. The interview was most often conducted in a quiet location such as a coffee shop.

One interviewer was present for each interview. Two interviewers conducted interviews, and the primary interviewer met each interview subject to ensure that no panhandler was interviewed more than once. Before beginning the actual interview, the process and purpose of the research was explained, with emphasis given to the confidentiality and voluntary participation. Then the interviewee was given an opportunity to ask questions about the research, and was asked to sign a consent form (Appendix B). On average, the duration of the interview was one hour. Each interviewee was given an honorarium of ten dollars for their participation, whether they completed the interview or not. There were no interviews started that were not completed.

Findings were analyzed using appropriate database software. The write up of the interviews highlights the key socio-economic and demographic characteristics of panhandlers, provides insights into the reasons they are on the street, what services they use or need, how much money they collect and how they spend the money. The report also highlights the geographic distribution of those surveyed and the effect of current legislation.

#### **4.0 Characterizing Panhandling Methods**

A fourth component of the methodology was the observation of panhandling techniques to characterize panhandling methods. To collect and analyze data in the observation component of this research study, a typology of panhandling methods was developed based on the categories of panhandling offences identified in By-Law 7700/2000 and the 2005 amendment to this By-Law. The typology also incorporates other categories in order to collect information upon which to develop a broader understanding of panhandling. This includes factors such as technique used (eg. sign, cap in hand), how the request is indicated (eg. verbal, gesture), and level of activity (sitting, standing, walking). It was recorded as to whether or not upon refusal any further communication followed, and if so, whether it was polite (“thank-you”, “have a nice day”, etc.) or impolite (nasty reply, perhaps including obscenities, gesturing or raised voice). The intention was to capture a more comprehensive range of panhandling methods than is achieved by the By-Law and to better reflect the truly broad spectrum of panhandling methods that exist. Community agency partners, a review of the literature and legislation in other cities, and panhandlers themselves provided insights into the development of the typology.

Fieldwork was required to document the nature of the methods through simple “observation.” The researcher simply observed from a discreet distance and recorded how panhandlers indicate their need to people.

The Observation Matrix (Table 3.1), based on the typology above, was used to record the panhandling methods observed during sweeps of the survey area. Whether the panhandler was male or female, alone, with a pet, or with others was recorded. If with others, the number of people together was also noted. The panhandling location, address and



description, the date and time of the panhandling event, and weather conditions were also noted.

Key panhandling methods were distinguished for the purpose of mapping and to allow for more accurate analysis:

- *OTM* (On-The-Move) refers to a panhandler who, for the most part, is walking and panhandling people along the way. Other than short stops made to rest or to gather money, movement is constant.
- *Stationary* is when the panhandler is either seated or standing in one place.
- *Approach* is when the panhandler is standing and moves towards a passerby when making a request. The solicitation space is very small; only a couple of steps are taken.
- *Still* is a category which includes both Stationary and Approach, but not OTM.
- *OCT* – refers to obstruct, continue and threaten as descriptors of the following specific parts of the amended By-Law 7700/2000 (2005):
  - a) In the course of solicitation, to obstruct or impede the convenient passage of any pedestrian or vehicular traffic in a street;
  - b) To continue to solicit from or follow a pedestrian after that person has made a negative response to solicitation; or
  - c) To verbally threaten or insult a pedestrian in the course of, or following a solicitation.

For a panhandling event to be considered OCT, it must be recorded on the observation matrix as at least one of the following categories: Obstructive Approach, OTM Obstructive, Verbal Repeat, Verbal Loud/Threatening, Follows, Gestures, Touches, or Nasty Reply. Passive methods of panhandling involve no violation of the above three rules (they could be considered non-OCT).

The Panhandling Observation Matrix was used to gather all data on panhandling event observation, which was then used to map panhandling methods. These maps illustrate the distribution and frequency of occurrence of different methods of panhandling according to the By-Law.

## **5.0 Consultation with Service Agencies**

A fifth key component of the methodology is consultation and work with service agencies. Through contact and meetings representatives of the three agencies expressed a strong interest in the research, the issue of panhandling, the legislation currently in place, and alternative solutions or initiatives to reduce people's reliance on panhandling. Staff at these agencies have regular interaction with many of the people who panhandle and have thus developed a strong understanding of their situations. Consultation with these service agencies on aspects of the research and obtaining their insights on the issues has substantially enhanced the report.

## **APPENDIX B: Interview Questionnaire**

(Note: spacing removed in questionnaire for purposes of inclusion here)

**Panhandling in Winnipeg: Legislation vs. Support Services**

This research is being conducted by Tom Carter, Canada Research Chair in Urban Change and Adaptation and associates for the Public Interest Law Centre and the National Anti-Poverty Organization. This research will examine the nature of panhandling in Winnipeg and seek to determine the potential effectiveness of restrictions on panhandling-activity in addressing associated problems. It will also determine services used by and needed by panhandlers

**Survey questions:**

1. How old are you?

- Under 15
- 15 - 24
- 25 - 44
- 45 - 64
- 65 or over

2. Are you...

- Male
- Female
- Transgendered

3 What is your marital status?

- Single (never married)
- Widowed/widower
- Married
- Common-law
- Separated / Divorced

4. Do you have any dependents? (non-income earning family members, including children, dependent spouse, elderly parents)  Yes;  No

If yes: Relationship to you Age

| Dependent #  | Relationship to you | Age |
|--------------|---------------------|-----|
| Dependent #1 |                     |     |
| Dependent #2 |                     |     |
| Dependent #3 |                     |     |
| Dependent #4 |                     |     |
| Dependent #5 |                     |     |

5. Are you currently employed or working regularly?  Yes;  No (If no, go to #8)

6. If **yes**, is it: (Note: here you may list the categories for the respondent)

- fulltime
- part time \_\_\_ average # of hours per week
- don't know

Is your work

- permanent
- temporary, term or contract (not seasonal)
- seasonal
- casual \_\_\_ average # of hours per week.
- day labour
- don't know

7. What kind of work do you do? \_\_\_\_\_

8. If **no**, What are the reasons you not working? (Eg. Your choice? Disability? Attending school? Can't find work?)

9. Do you have other sources of income?(besides panhandling)  Yes;  No If yes, indicate:

| Source                       | \$ Amount per month (or per year) |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Wages/Salaries               | \$                                |
| Employment Insurance         | \$                                |
| Worker's compensation        | \$                                |
| Social Assistance            | \$                                |
| Disability                   | \$                                |
| Seniors' benefits            | \$                                |
| Child benefits               | \$                                |
| Money from family or friends | \$                                |
| GST Refund                   | \$                                |
| Illegal activities           | \$                                |
| Other                        | \$                                |

10. What is the highest level of education you completed? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Has your level of reading and writing ever been a problem for you? (If uncertain ask "Can you read the newspaper?")  Yes;  No Comments? \_\_\_\_\_
12. Are you a resident of Winnipeg?  Yes;  No
13. Do you live somewhere else at other times of the year?  Yes;  No  
If so, where and when?
14. Do you rent a place to live?  Yes;  No
15. Do you own your own home?  Yes;  No
16. What kind of unit do you rent / own?  
 Single room in a rooming house (shared washroom and/or cooking facilities).  
 Room in a residential hotel  
 Room in someone's home  
 Self-contained suite in a private home (eg. Basement suite) # of bedrooms \_\_\_  
 Entire house, # of bedrooms \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bachelor apartment (fully self-contained but with no separate bedroom)  
 One bedroom apartment  
 Two or more bedroom apartment - # of bedrooms \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other
17. How much do you pay for rent each month? \$ \_\_\_\_\_
18. How much do you pay for utilities each month (heating, electricity, water, telephone) \_\_\_\_\_
19. Do you live in your parent's home?  Yes;  No
20. Are there other income earners who you share household expenses with?  Yes;  No  
- If yes, how many? \_\_\_\_\_  
- Can you estimate their average combined monthly income? \$ \_\_\_\_\_
21. If you do not have a home or live with parents, where do you usually spend the night?  
 In the home of a friend/family member (couch surfing)  
 In a shelter (if so, which one?) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Outdoors "on the streets"  
 Other?
22. How many years/months have you been panhandling? \_\_\_\_\_  don't know
23. How many regular panhandlers do you think there are in Winnipeg? \_\_\_\_\_  don't know
24. Can you describe characteristics of the panhandlers you know?

(Prompts: What are panhandlers like? How do panhandlers act?)

**don't know**

### WHEN?

25. How often do you panhandle?  **don't know**

(# of times or frequency: May answer one, some or all)

- \_\_\_ per day;
- \_\_\_ per week;
- \_\_\_ per month;
- \_\_\_ per year

26. What makes you panhandle or not panhandle on any given day?  **don't know**

27. What time of day do you usually panhandle?

- early morning, before 9:30 a.m.
- morning, ~9:30 to 11:30 a.m.
- midday, ~11:30 – 1:30 p.m.
- afternoon ~ 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.
- late afternoon/early evening ~ 4:30 – 7:00 p.m.
- evening ~ 7:00 – 10:00 p.m.
- after 10:00 p.m.

**don't know**

28. Why do you panhandle at this/these times?  **don't know**

29. How long is an average shift? (~ # of hours) \_\_\_\_\_  **don't know**

30. What might make you decide to stop panhandling for the day?  **don't know**

31. What are the best times of the day for panhandling?  **don't know**

32. What are the best days of the week to panhandle?

Sun; Mon; Tues; Wed; Thurs; Fri; Sat;  **don't know**

33. What are the best months of the year to panhandle?

Jan; Feb; Mar; Apr; May; June; July; Aug; Sept;  
Oct; Nov; Dec;  **don't know**

### WHERE?

(Address and description of location at time of meeting, if approached on street)

34. Where do you usually panhandle?  **don't know** (specific location and/or area of city)

35. Where else have you panhandled? \_\_\_\_\_

36. What makes a specific location good for panhandling?  **don't know**

37. What makes one area of the city better for panhandling than others?  **don't know**

38. Are there some areas of the city where you would **NOT** panhandle?

Yes; No;  **don't know** If yes, why?

39. Do you ever panhandle in any of these places... (*note: ask these categories*)

- on street corners
- on boulevards at busy intersections
- Near an ATM or bank entrance
- At entrance to business
- in pedestrian walkways (skywalk, underground)
- patios at restaurant/café/bar
- outside theatres
- at bus stops
- on the bus
- in parking lots
- at the University of Winnipeg

- in shopping malls
- in parks
- at payphones
- lineups

**WHY?**

40. What are the main reasons that brought you to panhandling? (Why do you panhandle?)

**don't know**

42. On average how much money do you receive?

\$\_\_\_\_\_per person

\$\_\_\_\_\_per hour

\$\_\_\_\_\_per day

\$\_\_\_\_\_per month

**don't know**

43. Do you set a goal for each day?  **Yes**;  **No**

If yes, what determines how much you try to earn each day?

44. What do you use the money you get from panhandling for? (How do you spend your money?)

What is your priority for spending? *Note: you may ask them these categories*

✓ or × **priority: 1 = most important**

- Rent
- Utility bills (heating, electricity, water)
- Telephone
- Cable T.V.
- Food
- Over the counter, prescription medication or other medical costs
- Insurance
- Education costs
- Transportation (public transit, car payments, gas, maintenance, etc.)
- Clothing and personal items
- Furniture and household items
- Entertainment
- Debt repayment
- Tobacco
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

45. Do you share your money with others?  **Yes**;  **No**

If yes, with whom? (relationship to interviewee, not names)

46. Do people give you anything besides money?  **Yes**;  **No** If yes, what kinds of things?

47. What do you enjoy most about panhandling? What do you not enjoy about panhandling?

48. What would you do if you could not panhandle?  **don't know**

49. On those days you can't get enough money by panhandling, what do you do?  **don't know**

50. Do you regularly use any services?  Yes;  No If yes;

a. **Foodbanks,**

No

Yes, Don't know name

Yes, specify \_\_\_\_\_

Comments?

b. **Shelters**  Neeginan (Jack's Place)

MacDonald Youth Services

Salvation Army

- Ndinawe
- Main Street Project
- Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Yes, but don't know name
- No, Don't use

Comments?

**c. Prepared meals / "Soup kitchens"**

- Agape Table
- Siloam Mission
- Salvation Army
- Union Gospel Mission
- All Saints
- Crossways
- St. Augustine
- Lighthouse mission
- Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Yes, but don't know name
  - No, Don't use

Comments?

**d. Drop in centers**

- West Broadway Community Ministries/Crossways in Common
- Resource Assistance for Youth
- Siloam Mission
- Main Street Project
- Flora House
- Sage House
- Our Place
- Ndinawe
- Graffiti Gallery
- White Buffalo
- Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Yes, but don't know name
- No, don't use

Comments?

**e. Clothing banks**

- Knox United Church
- Resource Assistance for Youth
- Salvation Army
- Union Gospel Mission
- Flora House
- Siloam Mission
- Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Yes, but don't know name
- No, don't use

Comments?

**f. Employment services**

- No, don't use
- Yes, but don't know name
- Yes, Specify... \_\_\_\_\_

Comments?

**g. Training or education**

- Edge Training
- Horizons
- Youth Employment Services
- Teen Challenge
- Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Yes, but don't know name
- No, don't use

Comments?

***h. Health***

- Klinik
- Ray
- Women's Health Clinic
- Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre
- Clearview Addictions Rehabilitation Institute
- Mount Carmel Clinic
- Salvation Army
- Four Rivers
- Nine Circles
- Sage House
- Street Connection
- Siloam Mission (Chiropractic services)
- Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Yes, but don't know name
- No, don't use

Comments?

***i. Counselling***

- Klinik
- Ray
- Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre
- Aboriginal Traditional Wellness clinic at Health Sciences Centre
- Mainstreet Project
- Nine Circles
- Siloam Mission
- Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Yes, but don't know name
- No, don't use

Comments?

***j. Other***     Methadone Intervention and Needle Exchange program

- Street Connections
- Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

Comments?

51. Do you have a disability of any kind?     Yes;     No

**If yes,**

- Physical
- Learning / Intellectual
- Illiteracy
- Mental health
- Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

**If yes,** are there services that you use related to your disability?     Yes;     No

**If yes,** specify \_\_\_\_\_ Comments about your disability needs and/or services?

52. Are there any services that you will **not** use/refuse to use?  Yes;  No    If yes, why not?

53. What do you need in order to (be able to) stop panhandling? What services are missing?

### HOW?

54. Explain your method of panhandling? What works, what doesn't?

55. How do most people react when you ask for money? How are you treated?

56. Do some people ignore you?  Yes;  No;  Don't know

If yes, do you do anything to get their attention?  Yes;  No If yes, what do you do?

57. Do you ever ask again after they've indicated they don't want to give?  Yes;  No

58. Of the people who pass by/you solicit, about what percentage of them give something?  
 \_\_\_\_\_%  Don't know

59. Do you believe that there is a wrong way or a right way to panhandle?

Don't know  No  Yes, Explain

60. Who gives most often?  Don't know

Men

Women

Couples

Young people

Middle aged

Elderly

61. When they give, who gives most generously?  Don't know

Men

Women

Couples

Young people

Middle aged

Elderly

62. Do you ever feel that people passing by are scared of you?

Yes;  No;  Don't know Comments?

63. Do you ever panhandle with others?  Yes;  No

If no, why not? If yes, why and how many?

64. What are you not supposed to do when you panhandle?  Don't know

(Note: Check off those they indicate, ask if there are any others they haven't mentioned, but don't prompt with the following)

impede pedestrian or vehicular traffic

Continue to solicit or follow after being declined

Threaten or insult during or after soliciting

Approach as part of a group of 3 or more

Other?

65. Where are you not allowed to panhandle?  Don't know

(Note: Ask for specifics, and check off those locations that they mention. Don't prompt)

ATM/bank/credit union

Public pay phone

Transit stop or taxi stand

On public transit

On an elevator

Pedestrian walkway

Parking lot/getting in/out of vehicle

Restaurant/bar patio

Business entrance

66. Do you know about the panhandling by-law passed last summer?  Yes;  No



67. If **yes**, has the by-law affected how you panhandle?  **Yes**;  **No**;  **Don't know**  
If **yes**, explain?
68. Has the by-law affected **where** you panhandle?  **Yes**;  **No**;  **Don't know**  
If **yes**, explain?
69. Has the by-law affected **when** you panhandle?  **Yes**;  **No**;  **Don't know**  
If **yes**, explain?
70. Has the by-law affected the amount of money you receive?  **Yes**;  **No**;  **Don't know**  
If **yes**, explain.
71. Since the by-law was passed, do you feel that you are treated differently
- by the general public  **Don't know**;  **No**;  **Yes, explain**
  - by local business people  **Don't know**;  **No**;  **Yes, explain**
  - by BIZ street ambassadors/patrol?  **Don't know**;  **No**;  **Yes, explain**
  - by the police?  **Don't know**;  **No**;  **Yes, explain**
72. Have you ever been fined for panhandling?  **Yes**;  **No**;  **Don't know**  
If **no**, would you be able to pay a fine?  **Yes**;  **No**;  **Don't know**  
If **yes**, when? \_\_\_  **Don't know** Where? \_\_\_  **Don't know**  
If **yes**, did you have the money to pay the fine?  **Yes**;  **No**  
If **yes**, did you pay the fine?  **Yes**;  **No** Comments?
73. Have you ever been arrested because you were asking people for money?  **Yes**;  **No**  
If **yes**, when? \_\_\_  **Don't know** Where? \_\_\_  **Don't know**  
If **yes**, did you spend any time in jail?  **Yes**;  **No**  
If **yes**, did that affect how or where you panhandle?  **Yes**;  **No**;  **Don't know**  
Please comment
74. What do you think about "aggressive" panhandling/panhandlers?  **Don't know**
75. Do you have a substance use problem or addiction?  **Yes**;  **No** If **yes**,
- Tobacco
  - Alcohol
  - Illegal drugs, specify \_\_\_\_\_
  - Prescription drugs, specify \_\_\_\_\_
  - Gambling
  - "Sniff"/inhalants
  - Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_
76. Have you ever used services for the substance problem or addiction?  **Yes**;  **No** If **yes**, which?  Addictions Foundation of Manitoba (AFM)
- Tamarack Rehab
  - Addictions Recovery Inc.
  - Behavioural Health Foundation
  - Indian and Metis Friendship Centre
  - Native Addictions Council of Manitoba
  - Salvation Army- Anchorage Addictions Rehabilitation program
  - Union Gospel Mission
  - Nine Circles
  - Street Connection
  - Clearview Addictions Rehabilitation Institute
  - Mainstreet Project's Detoxification Centre
  - Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_
  - Yes, but don't know name
- Comments re: rehab program?
77. What is your ethnic/cultural background?  **Don't know**
78. Do you have any additional comments that you would like to make?

**APPENDIX C: Consent Form****Permission to ask questions**

No. \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am being asked to participate in a research project entitled *Panhandling in Winnipeg: Legislation or Support Services*. This research is being conducted by Tom Carter - Canada Research Chair in Urban Change and Adaptation, University of Winnipeg - and associates for the Public Interest Law Centre and the National Anti-Poverty Organization. This research will examine the nature of panhandling in Winnipeg and seek to learn the effects of the panhandling by-laws in Winnipeg. It will also determine what services are used by panhandlers, and what supports are needed. The research findings will be provided to social service agencies and government departments to bring about related improvements.

As a participant in this study, I will be asked to take part in a survey about my circumstances and my panhandling experiences in Winnipeg. This interview will take between 45 minutes and an hour, and I understand that I have the right to change my mind at any time and can withdraw at any point in the process. I also understand that I can choose not to answer any questions in the interview that I am not comfortable answering. Neither consenting nor declining to participate, or deciding to withdraw will adversely affect my ability to obtain services or access resources of any kind. I understand that my participation in this study is strictly voluntary in nature.

I understand that I will receive a \$10.00 honorarium for participating in the study. This honorarium can be in the form of cash or a gift certificate to purchase groceries at a local grocery store. I also understand that if I withdraw part way through the interview I will still receive the honorarium.

I understand that the researchers will take all necessary measures to safeguard the confidentiality of the information that I provide. No names, personal information, or anything else that might identify me, my family members, or anyone else, will be included in the research documents or in any presentations or publications, and all participants will remain anonymous. All audio-tapes, consent forms and interview notes will be stored in locked cabinets in the researchers office, which is also locked when not occupied, and will be destroyed by August 31, 2006.

If at any time I would like additional information about this project, I can contact Dr. Tom Carter at 982-1148. If I have questions or concerns about the way I have been treated or the ethics of this research study, I may contact Kerry Murkin, Ethics Administration Officer at 786-9058, at the University of Winnipeg.

My signature below indicates that I have given my informed consent to participate in the above described project. My signature also indicates that:

- I have been given the opportunity to ask any and all questions about the described project and my participation, and that all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
- I have been permitted to read this document and I have been given a signed copy of it.
- I am at least 18 years old or have a parent/guardian's signature, or have been advised by an advocate at a social service agency
- I am legally able to provide consent.

Participant's

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Participant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

[If under age of consent:

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Or: Agency Rep. Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_]

Researcher's Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

*(PLEASE PRINT)*

Researcher's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX D: Panhandlers' Ideas**

The ideas below were offered by the panhandlers interviewed throughout the course of the interviews.

- Squeegeers should be able to have a business license.
- There should be a designated area where panhandling is allowed. Anywhere else - not allowed, so people who wanted to avoid it could.
- Panhandling shouldn't be illegal. Some people have to do it, particularly Caucasian people because there aren't the services there are for Aboriginal people.
- For the city to help panhandlers, listen to their story.
- Don't just give, but give an answer. No is fine.
- If you're homeless and you have a problem going to a shelter, and you want to sleep outside, the police shouldn't give you a fine. You should be able to rest/sleep outside.
- What we need is instead of tearing down old warehouses, do like Calgary: fix them up a bit and use as shelters. A bus picks you up and takes you there. They're open 10 p.m. – 5:30 a.m. It takes people off the streets and reduces crime.
- Police/biz should treat all panhandlers the same rather than picking on the native guys.
- The government needs to open its eyes, stop judging a book by its cover, start reading before you decide.
- "Get the Red Coats off the street"
- When people call in to report aggressive panhandlers, the cops should be given a description. Instead, the cops target everyone.
- Could use a locker to keep stuff in during the day
- Should have lockers for stuff at Main Street Project.
- I wish there was a better place that would help and get you back on your feet. Where they won't kick you out after a month (these places now give up on you). Need some longer term support service.
- Services needed: someplace to work out, hang out with activities for older people. Something like Rossbrook House. If you're over 30 you're not allowed into Rossbrook until after 9:30 p.m.
- They should have more services for those on crack and for the mentally ill – lots of them just wandering around.
- Need more training for panhandlers. More drop in centres. The ones now have to turn some people away. Need more resources.
- There need to be more places for people to get off the street to sleep, shower and wash.
- Need more clothing in winter, especially socks and underwear.
- Should have a meeting with all panhandlers for part of the research.
- Should do Hard Night Out for longer than just one night.
- We should have a right to panhandle because we're homeless and don't get enough from welfare. Give more money for rent on welfare, too hard to find a place for that amount.
- Social Assistance should at least raise the amount for rent. No one's getting a decent place for \$249. At least raise it to \$300
- They've got to raise minimum wage to give people incentive to go for work. Make welfare tougher...it's too easy. People are trying to get free money.
- They need to have youth shelters for 18 – 27 year olds. Older people at shelters tend to steal more. They need lockers at shelters.
- Panhandling is growing. There are more and more homeless people because there are more shelters and services. More people feel they can "blow their cheque" and have somewhere to stay. More shelters leads to more homeless