



# Welcome to Strathcona Playback

Hosted by:



THE CITY OF  
**Edmonton**

# The Research in Numbers

## Gender



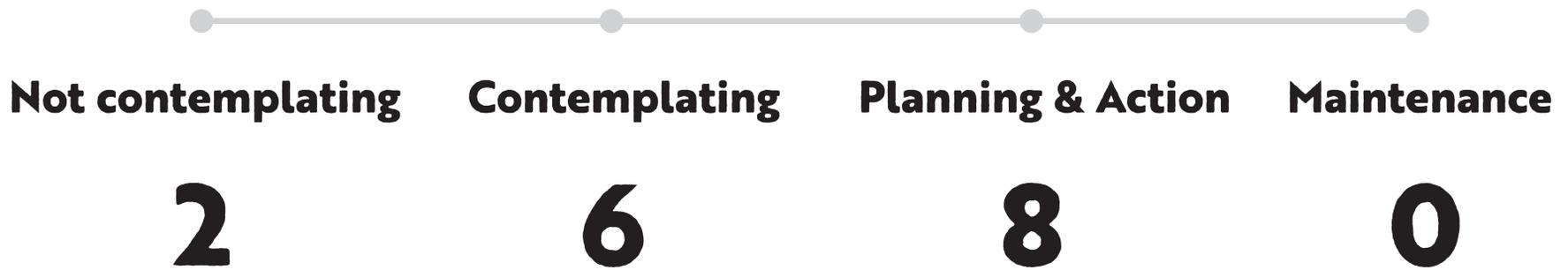
## Ethnicity

White/Euro-Canadian 5

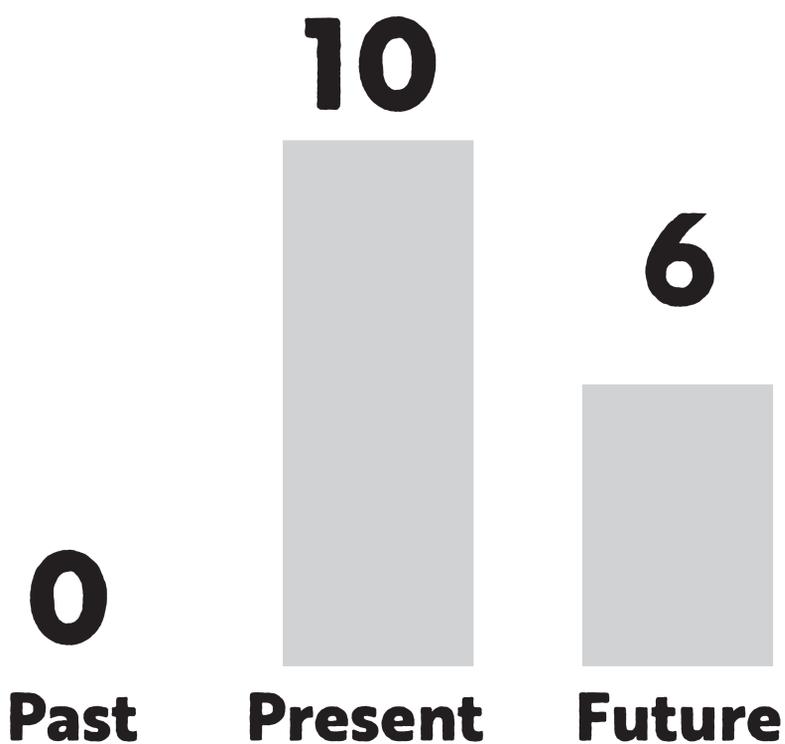
Métis 3

First Nations 8

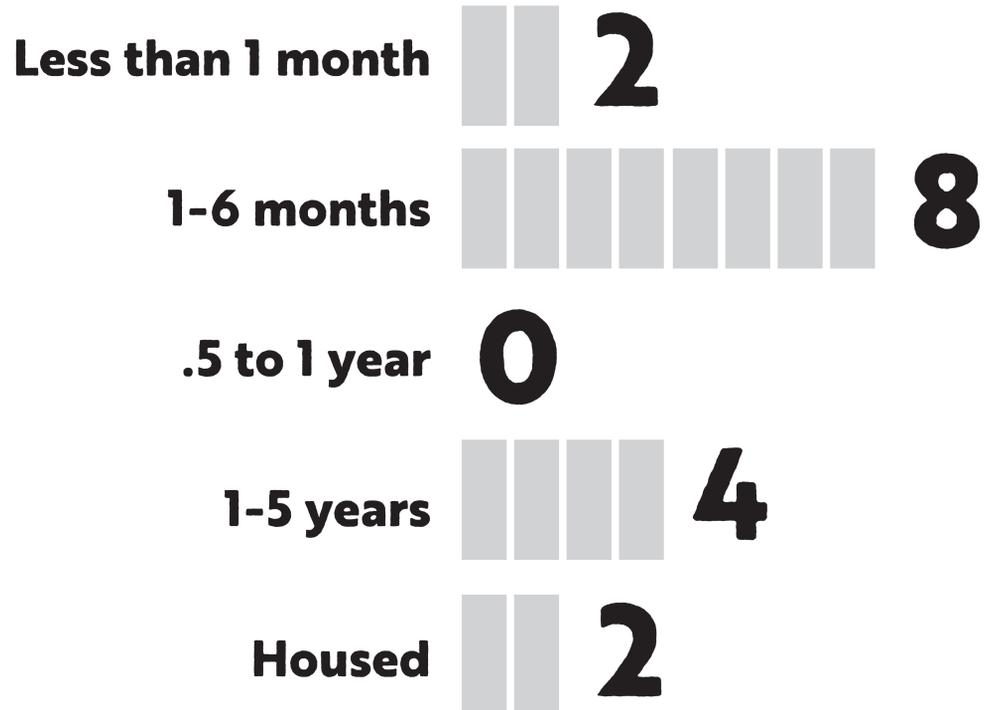
## Desire for change



## Time orientation



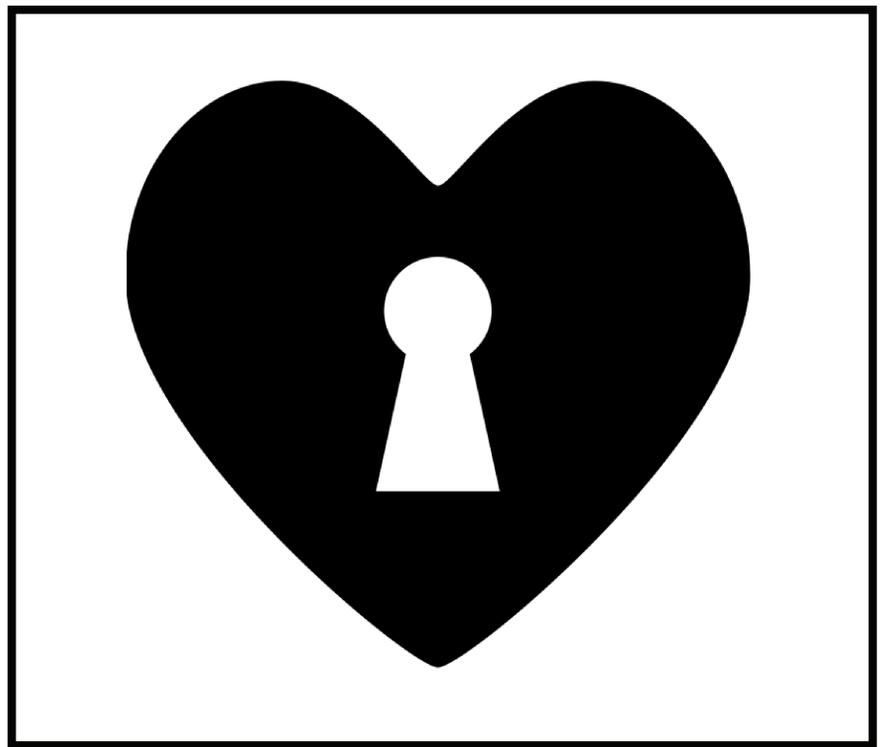
## Time on street



## Segment 1:

# The Crafted Characters

Guarded and cool, seek high control over how others perceive them.



### DESCRIPTION

The Crafted Characters present a carefully cultivated identity. They are blasé about being on the street, or very clear that it's just a passing thing, and that they have the situation well in hand. They are too cool to be outwardly bothered by internal emotions. In order to maintain a high level of control over how they are interpreted by others, they may embellish, omit, and obfuscate. They put up barriers to being helped, because they are reluctant to present themselves as 'in need.'

### PEOPLE LIKE

Bob (no profile)

Cruz

Bill

### WHAT WE HEARD

*"I know half the City."*

*(On talking to us:) "Just something I thought would be beneficial...for the people around me."*

*"I'm comfortable, for now."*

*"I have a job, so, I'm not like most of the other guys around here."*

### POINTS OF PAIN

#### **Pity**

Relationships and interactions in which they are cast as needy, and without personal resources.

#### **One-sidedness**

Services that get in the way of them helping themselves.

#### **Lack of Control**

To have one's experience exposed at a rate or in circumstances not entirely of one's choosing

### POINTS OF DELIGHT

The feeling of helping others in a recognized role or putting in an honest day's work (eg. Bissell, or volunteer cooking at Neighbour Centre, informal entrepreneurialism)

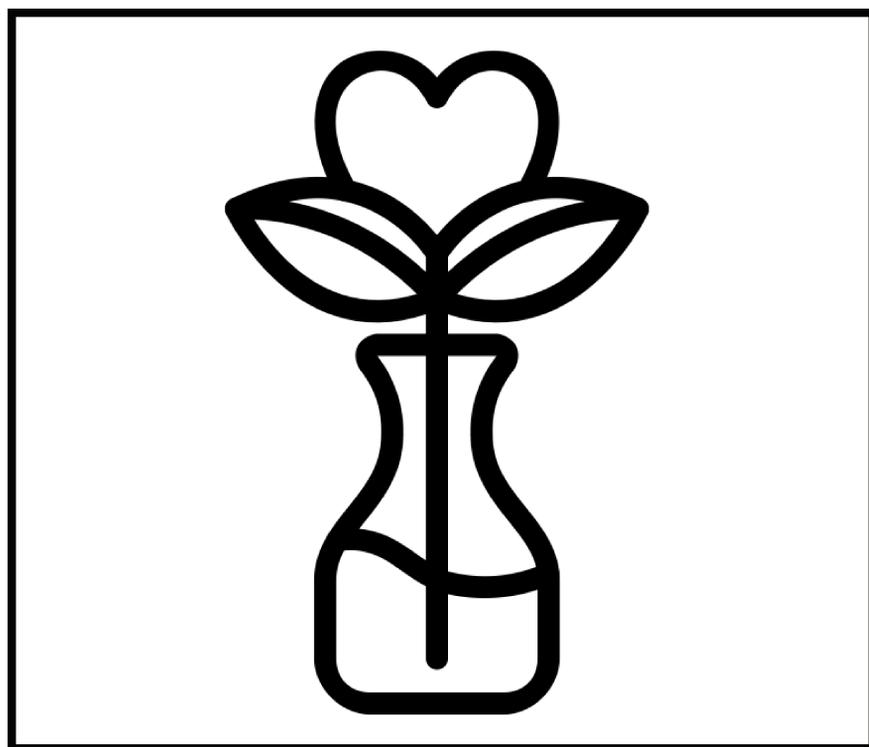
#### **Blending In**

Using spaces and services that are not specifically for the homeless

## Segment 2:

# The Screenwriters

Vulnerable and self-aware, any bravado or guardedness quickly falls away.



### DESCRIPTION

People with an introspective turn, who've made a study of humanity, and could write the movie for the good life, but have trouble acting, or directing themselves, to good effect. Their suffering is often expressed in the form of self-recrimination: they are acutely aware of wrong turns made, bad trade-offs, and character weaknesses. As such, they tend to express greater amounts of emotional pain than some others, but interestingly, also physical pain. They know that many endings are possible but have trouble trusting themselves and others to move in the right direction.

### PEOPLE LIKE

Brian

Earl

Gil

Auntie A

### WHAT WE HEARD

*"I'm wise but I can't follow my own advice. I could tell you how to have a perfect life, but I can't help myself."*

*"I used to hate her. But after everything was said and done, I guess it was me. Yeah, I didn't realize what I had."*

*"When I lost my last place I flipped out, got mad at a lot of people, when I should have just got mad at myself for letting it happen."*

### POINTS OF PAIN

#### Helplessness

The sense that one can't follow one's own good advice.

#### Lack of consistent motivation

The experience of vacillating between hope/aspiration, and depression/helplessness.

#### Loneliness

Many screenwriters seek to avoid unwanted social influences, but have trouble coping with emotional pain so much on their own.

#### Regret

The sense of being responsible for one's own suffering, and that of people around you. While screenwriters can intellectually acknowledge other factors in their behaviour, emotionally they often blame themselves.

### POINTS OF DELIGHT

#### Connection & comfort

To find someone trustworthy, who can provide solace, if only in the moment.

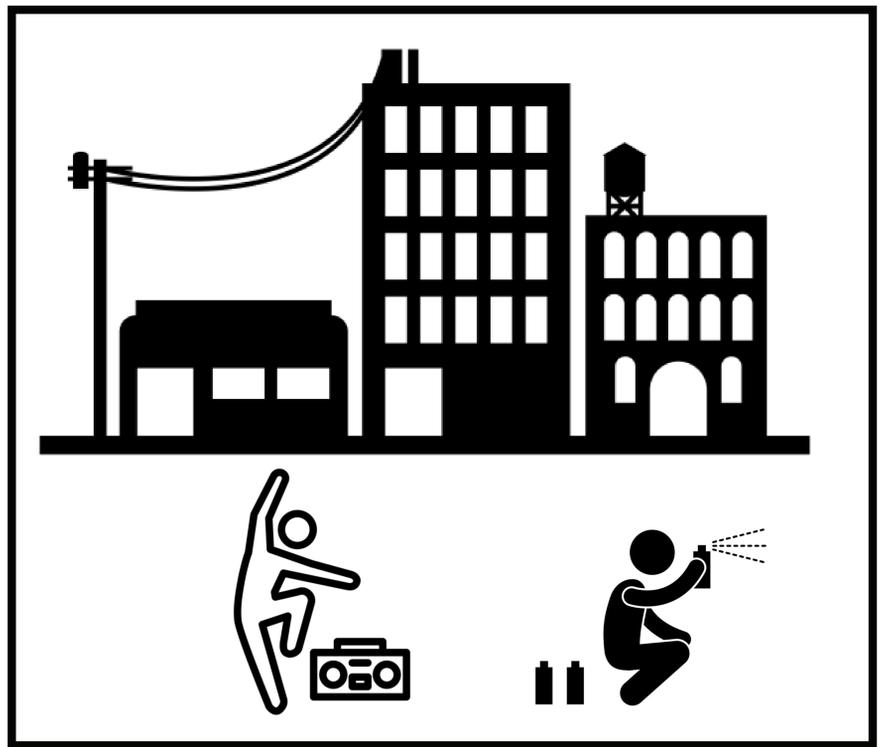
#### Sense of purpose and self-worth

Putting in a day's work, doing fewer drugs to reach a goal, helping others, and having a role that contributes to something greater than oneself.

## Segment 3:

# The Edgeworkers

Identity is produced through the development of street-based skills, a source of validation.



### DESCRIPTION

Copper-picking, bottle-picking, camping, stealing bikes, black market buying and selling, and sex work are all edgework practices and skills that can widen the gap between street life and the housed life. They come with risks of criminalization and bodily harm, but they also require one to use one's intuition and survival skills, demonstrating toughness and contributing to status and self-worth. Getting housed and no longer needing to engage in survival work can create conflict for edgeworkers, whose feelings about street-based work can be ambivalent ("I'm not proud, it's not right...but I'm good at it"). However, getting housed too often comes with no new sources of self-validation. In Strathcona, most Edgeworkers still aspire to, and/or proudly recall, a more legitimized work role, which suggests a narrower gap than in other contexts of more advanced marginality.

### PEOPLE LIKE

Cruz

Earl

Brian

Gil

Renée

Dakota

### WHAT WE HEARD

*"I heard on the radio today it's embarrassing to go to a fucking bottle depot when you could just leave it on your front porch for homeless people to pick!"*

*"I stole bikes at the \_\_\_\_\_ all summer and they didn't suspect me, because I'm white. People are racist and I don't agree with it, but I use it."*

*"I need someone to offer me work because they've seen me bottle-picking for 12 hours a day."*

*"I keep the areas where I pick clean and tidy."*

### POINTS OF PAIN

#### Undervalued

Feeling that others, slander, dehumanize, and dismiss your work.

#### Non-contributing

The deeply felt concern that work one devotes time & energy to doesn't ultimately contribute to community, but may even take away from it.

### POINTS OF DELIGHT

#### Virtuous

The development of expertise that goes beyond hard skills to an intuitiveness, and embodied knowledge required for higher risk work.

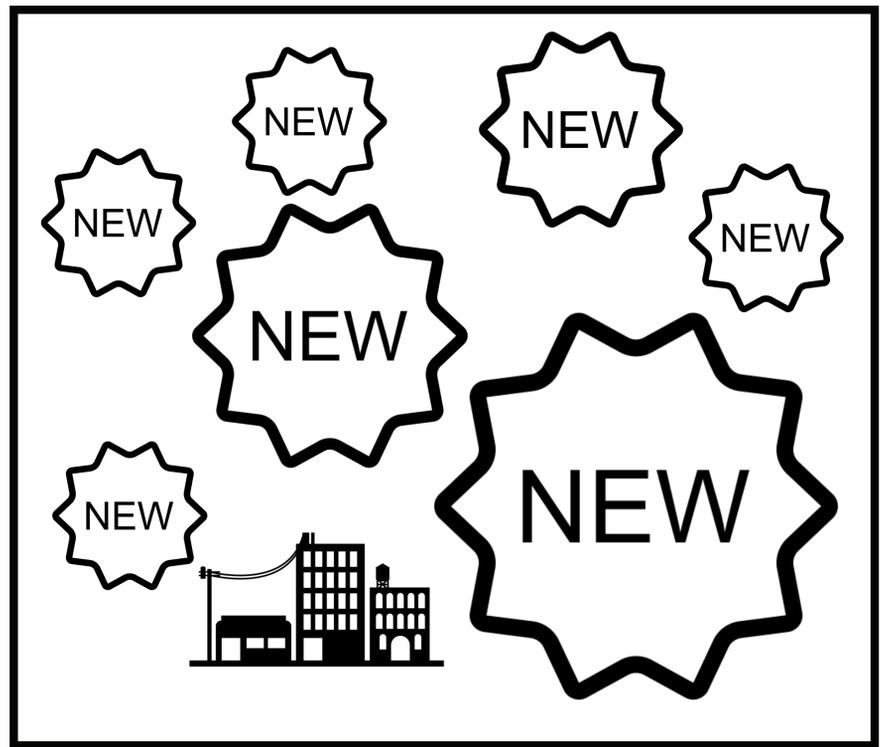
#### Respect

The sense, or feedback, that others see your work and are impressed.

## Segment 4:

# The Newbies

Fresh on the streets,  
and employing different  
strategies.



### DESCRIPTION

New to the streets, and super-motivated. These individuals don't stand out as homeless in the community, except for their time-passing behaviour. They keep on top of their intentions to make this a short stay on the street by making lists, showing up for all appointments, and doing research on opportunities. They are working with the system and appreciative of every bit of help they can get. They seem to engage in more self care, aware of the impact of this massive change in their lives.

### PEOPLE LIKE

Hunter & Jailene

Tessa & Clara

### WHAT WE HEARD

*"A lot of people aren't respectful to the staff...you can see they're frustrated at times." (Youth services)*

*"There's a lot of whining and complaining going on when I think there should be a little more appreciation for the things that are there, but I guess I can understand when it's hard...in life, right?...to deal with it."*

*"We've been at Nexus for a full week now. We've been trying more than half the kids."*

*"It's lucky you caught us today, because after tomorrow morning, we won't be here."*

### POINTS OF PAIN

#### Delayed

Feeling the clash between your emergency and business as usual.

#### Not Knowing

Uncertainty about the near future, how many more nights in a shelter.

#### Exhaustion

Not being able to get enough sleep because of shelter hours, noise, temperature, etc.

### POINTS OF DELIGHT

**Signs of progress (checking off items on list)**

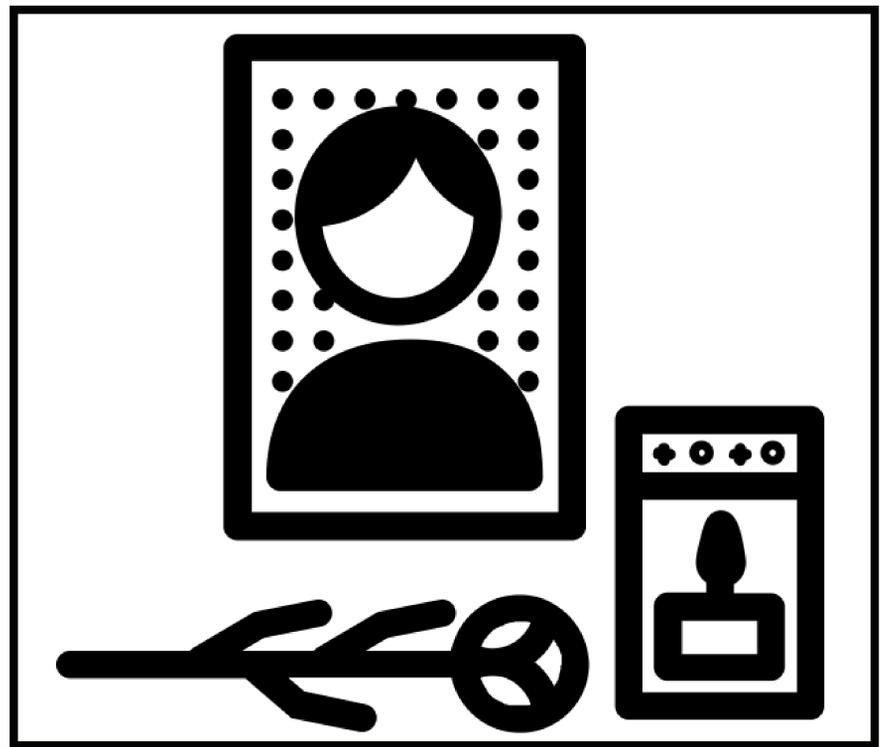
**Being able to control one's exposure to the street and unknown characters.**

**Being able to stick together as couples.**

## Segment 5:

# The Unattached Unravellers

Losing a significant other, to death, or separation, launched a downward spiral.



### DESCRIPTION

When a relationship ends or is cut short by death, there are few automatic interventions, especially when there are no young children involved. Grief, loneliness, guilt, inability to address feelings of being undervalued or inadequate, and a desire not to play 'the bad guy' can lead people to make choices with devastating consequences.

### PEOPLE LIKE

Brooklynn Earl Brian Renée Dakota Bob Bruno Hunter

### WHAT WE HEARD

*"Our wedding was one of the best days of my life, but then he got a little bit jealous."*

*"When I was with my family I was really proud of what I was doing but she treated me badly. Looking back, I wish I would have been more assertive."*

*"My finacé didn't know about the pint. When she found out, she left me. And, I kinda fell apart."*

### POINTS OF PAIN

**Being alone and not being able to comfort oneself.**

**Overwhelmed, negotiating difficult emotional terrain.**

**Feeling unloved/unlovable.**

**Longing for past comforts.**

### POINTS OF DELIGHT

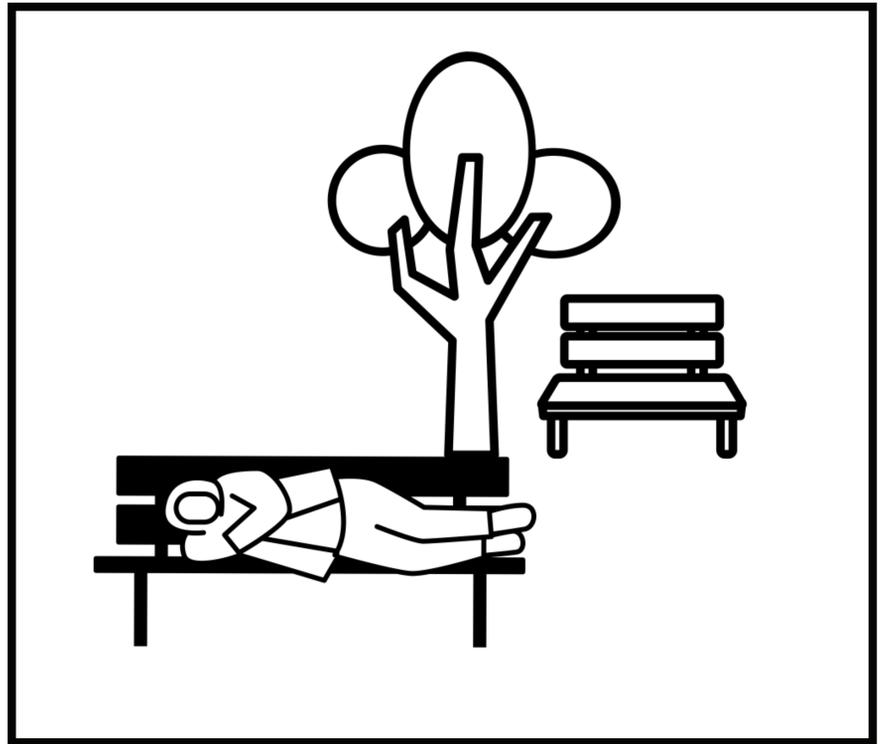
**Establishing trust with someone.**

**Feeling valued.**

## Segment 6:

# The Never-Enoughs

Follow the rhythms of services and the working world but feel less productive, and normal, for lack of a solid night's sleep.



### DESCRIPTION

If you get into the adult shelter at ten, people might be settled enough for sleep at eleven, and then, after all the disturbances you could expect from sleeping beside 40 perfect strangers, the alarm sounds at 5AM. Another day begins...and everywhere you go, people and signs tell you you musn't nap. The Never-Enoughs feel they have few options to get out of this cycle of sleep deprivation - one is binge sleeping at a hotel when they can scrape together the money. It's hard to strategize one's way out of this situation on so little sleep, they are often heard to comment.

### PEOPLE LIKE



### WHAT WE HEARD

*"You're tired and no energy and can't accomplish anything. If I get one thing done in a day, that's something, when I used to get a million things done."*

*"Are you going to follow me around while I sleep all day? (Laughs) Well, at least I'd have company."*

*"Um, I don't like the shelters. When I stayed in the shelters downtown I got sick all the time... and you have to get up at like 6-6:30, be out by ten to seven, and uh, then you got to wait, for breakfast..."*

### POINTS OF PAIN

#### **Underperforming**

The sense you could be getting so much more done if you were well slept and at your best.

#### **Irritability and emotional sensitivity**

It's hard to deal with the stresses of being without a home, or privacy, at the best of times, but with little sleep, emotions run wild.

#### **Physical Pain**

While not always connected directly to lack of sleep, people reported a lot of physical pains and injuries.

#### **Hassled**

Falling asleep in public provokes a range of reactions. At best, a gentle waking (library), at worst a confrontation with police, who have an outstanding warrant, often due to missed Promises to Appear (McDonald's).

### POINTS OF DELIGHT

#### **A binge sleep**

At a friend's, or in a hotel (cheap, but not too loud: know a good one?)

#### **Collective agreement on importance of sleep**

At Mat Program "people speak up if other people behave badly: "Go back downtown!"

## Segment 7:

# The Nyctophiles and Insomniacs

Nightmares, pain, uppers, and plenty of work to do: who would bother trying to sleep at night?



### DESCRIPTION

Impossible with shelter life, but an option for campers, couch surfers, and renters: a nocturnal life. Some sleep during the day and some sleep very little or on an erratic schedule. Many have nighttime work, such as bottle-picking, copper-picking, and binning; others have people who visit or stay with them creating an atmosphere more congenial to partying and wakefulness. Most have an ulterior motive for staying up: avoiding nightmares that come with PTSD, fear of being alone, and desire to work without interruption. Use of uppers and downers, is both a cause and effect of the life.

### WHAT WE HEARD

*"I have spent a lot of time imagining the shared space for socially awkward people: 24 hours, part volunteer...computer, wifi, good for people with insomnia. I walk around all night: it would be great to have a warm place with coffee."*

*"The situation (where I'm staying) has its ups and downs with people or police and he stays up all night and now he got six thousand dollars from AISH. Just one curveball after another."*

*"I don't like to sleep at night because I have nightmares, and I don't like to sleep during the day because I miss out."*

### PEOPLE LIKE

Stewart

Renée

Dakota

Earl

Gil

### POINTS OF PAIN

#### Shelter Life

Getting sick all the time, getting robbed, getting beat-up based on (past) gang affiliations, being in a Church when you're pagan (assorted gripes)

#### Feeling less-than

Working in the dead of night, illegal or legal, emphasizes one's sense of marginality, and there's little in the way of (social) positive feedback on a job well done.

#### Unpredictability

most have unstable situations to come home to - a camp that may have to move, someone else's apartment, or people in one's own. For many, it's hard to be both still and alone, so how to maintain a home?

### POINTS OF DELIGHT

**To have warm, quiet but passively social space available at night.**

**Good health, to keep up the work that sustains one.**

**Trustworthy company, so one can relax and let one's guard down, without having to be alone all the time.**

## Theme 1:

# Sleeplessness



Almost nobody's getting a good night's sleep on the streets. The shelter offers 6 hours at best, and during the day everywhere else wakes you to scold or check for vital signs. Camping or staying with friends may offer a better rest, but then there's

nightmares, anxiety, party-ers, and systems out of whack with stimulants...which culminates in moodiness, memory loss, the feeling one can't get anything done or think straight, and quite likely, an increased experience of pain.

### SEGMENT

#### The Nyctofiles & Insomniacs

People who work at night, often picking copper or binning, or who are more lively at night. This group may use drugs purposefully, to insulate them from cold, help them stay awake, avoid nightmares, and/or get work done. Staying awake can also be the unintentional side effect of drug use, or chronic pain.

// People like: Dakota, Gil, Earl

### PAIN POINTS

**Left out:** No warm, dry, welcoming place to sleep after a hard night's work.

**Bad sleep:** often plagued by nightmares, PTSD, physical pain.

**Unsafe:** if without a partner, feel more vulnerable to attack.

**Abandoned:** often camping is a last ditch option for day-time sleepers, where a preferred option has been denied

**Physical pain:** Incidence of injury and chronic pain are high

#### The Never-Enoughs

Those who find they can never achieve the quality and quantity of sleep needed to function at their best. For some, the need is modest but it's hard to catch more than 6 hours of broken sleep at the south-side shelter. For others, especially those coming down of drugs like meth, or dealing with depression, round-the-clock sleep is an uncontrollable urge.

// People like: Bill, Jailene & Hunter, Marilyn, Christopher (shelter)

**Loss of dignity:** sleeping in public is taboo, treated as 'unsafe' at best, and depraved, at its worst. Those who drift off are accustomed to being awoken, kicked out of establishments, verbally abused, and often banned from returning.

**Hopelessness:** it's hard to strategize, stay calm, on the ball, and make smart choices through the fog of sleep deprivation.

**Physical Pain:** Incidence of injury and chronic pain are high.

#### The Un-Routined

Those who are housed or have a place to stay for awhile, but have no acquaintance with good sleep hygiene. Drugs, coffee, noise, unbroken alone-ness, and lack of rhythm and routine lead to erratic sleep schedules, and declining mental health.

// People like: Christopher (home), Earl's roommate, Stewart

**Alone-ness:** no social structure to time, or to reinforce rituals of home.

**Fear of sociality/broken trust:** the conventional wisdom is not to invite people over, but how is a house home without friends and family? Damned if you do and damned if you don't.

**Exhaustion, caused by disrupted sleep cycles:** drug use, coffee, poor mental health, and pain all upset sleep routines and cycles.

## Opportunity Area 1

# The Sleep Hygiene Regime

What if the City of Edmonton followed the science and made a good night's sleep an urgent area of inquiry, testing, and learning? Starting with the principle that good sleep matters, and serves as

the foundation from which we act and experience, what if we worked to facilitate great sleep hygiene, and reduce barriers to sleep as the first source of healing?

### WHAT'S DIFFERENT? THE SHIFT?

From a minimum entitlement to warm, dry, environment at night, to a culture that values and invests in cultivating good sleep practices and opportunities, to promote the conditions for flourishing.

### INTERVENTIONS

Policy

Micro shelters

Minimum sleep hygiene standards

Sleep vouchers

Campaign

Inemuri, Edmonton Style

Platform

Rancho Relaxo (R&R)

Invention

Sleep Monitors

Practice

Rituals for Rest

## Theme 2:

# Identity maintenance



Most people we met on the south side haven't been homeless long-term, though they may have had brushes with it in the past, from one week to a couple of years. Many have a sense of social mobility and work hard to present themselves in

a way that would allow them to blend in, rather than be identified as homeless. Others put effort into differentiating themselves from homeless stereotypes, emphasizing their code of conduct, workman-like values, and roles helping others.

### The Crafted Characters

#### SEGMENT

The Crafted Characters present a carefully cultivated identity. They are blasé about being on the street, and either have few urgent aspirations or see no real barriers to the aspirations they have. They are too cool to be outwardly bothered by internal emotions. In order to maintain a high level of control over how they are interpreted by others, they may embellish, omit, and obfuscate. They put up barriers to being helped, because they are reluctant to present themselves as 'in need.'

// People like: Bill, Bob, Jules, Cruz

**Indignity:** services that require one to present as unable to cope alone, or wait outside in an exposing line up, feel like an assault on one's sense of self.

**Lack of control:** for example, reviewing or reflecting on the series of actions and events leading up to the present moment is emotionally uncomfortable and feels risky.

**Invisibility:** the feeling of being totally marginalized, below others' consideration, forgotten.

### The Edgeworkers

Copper-picking, bottle-picking, camping, stealing bikes, black market buying and selling, and sex work are all practices and skills that widen the gap between street life and the 'respectable life.' They come with risks of criminalization and bodily harm, but they also require one to use their intuition and survival skills, demonstrating toughness and contributing to status and self-worth. Getting housed and no longer needing to engage in survival work can create conflict for edgeworkers, who often have few other active sources of self-identification.

// People like: Earl, Dakota, Renée

**Disparaged:** the feeling that others look down on you for the work you do, and can't recognize the value and skill of your work.

**Shame:** feeling that you aren't helping community in any way, and might be detracting (because earnings are spent on drugs, or goods are stolen from people)

**Unacknowledged:** the failure to be recognized as a contributing part of community and social group, or relationships that are based on receiving handouts rather than exchange

## Opportunity Area 2

# Subtle supports

Currently, the sparser service landscape on the South Side seems to allow for better outcomes: people can maintain their sense of identity while accessing modest supports in more discreet settings. There are no exposing line-ups

in Strathcona and community meals are more intimate and cafe-like. What if new supports were designed to be small scale, and built to broker and bridge people to existing community resources, outside formal social services?

#### WHAT'S DIFFERENT? THE SHIFT?

From social service delivery organizations as the main source of help, to being a broker and steward of new relationships, connecting people to community resources (people and places).

#### INTERVENTIONS

Policy

Stepping Up Grants

Campaign

Bidders' Day

Platform

BIA TaskRabbit

Invention

Practice

Good Talkers

# Theme 3: Grief & Loss



Grief & loss strikes again, and again, and again. Relational pain and trauma are driving so many people on the street, for whom upstream supports were unknown, ineffective, insufficient, or non-

existent. Downstream, we bring people together in spaces, but rarely to take part in intentionally healing conversations and interactions with each other.

## SEGMENT

**No segments free of grief and loss.**  
In our data set:

**8**

people have lost or are separated from a child

**12**

people have dealt with the traumatic end to a spousal relationship (death or separation)

**8**

people have lost or been separated from a parent or sibling

## PAIN POINTS

**Guilt:** for not being present, providing, and living up to the (imagined) expectations of a child, spouse, or parent; or, for not having prevented the loss.

**Regret:** for mistakes made.

**Anger:** about having been abandoned or unsupported.

**Sadness:** for the loss.

## Opportunity Area 3

# Matters of the Heart

What if, in addition to the upstream supports suggested in the first round of downtown research, services generated more opportunities to identify, sit with, share, and enact different responses to, feelings, through everyday activities such as wading

through bureaucracy, doing laundry, and having dinner? To help people begin to work through some of the weight on their chests, and develop daily practices that incorporate coping skills to move into the future with?

### WHAT'S DIFFERENT? THE SHIFT?

From treating emotions and trauma discreetly, through mental health services, to making them the stuff of everyday practices and interactions that help people cope.

### INTERVENTIONS

*Policy*

**Trigger Events**

*Campaign*

**Humans Talk**

*Role*

**Heart Scribe**

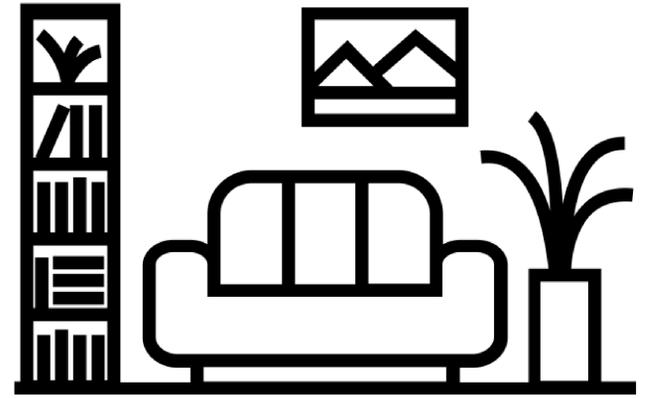
*Invention*

*Practice*

**Travelling Soft Skill Dealer**

## Theme 4:

# House Relations



A considerable number of people frame 'giving up on housing' (whether in the short or the long term) as primarily a relational failure - a breach of trust - either with themselves, the people around

them, they would like to be able to have as part of their home, or a homemaker who they felt wasn't prepared to go the distance.

### SEGMENT

#### The Un-Routined

Those who are housed or have a place to stay for awhile, but have no acquaintance with good sleep hygiene. Drugs, coffee, noise, unbroken alone-ness, and lack of rhythm and routine lead to erratic sleep schedules, and declining mental health.

// People like: Christopher (home), Earl's roommate, Stewart

### PAIN POINTS

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// People like: Renée, Bob, Earl, Bruno, Marilyn

**Being alone**

**Negotiating difficult emotional terrain**

**Feeling unloved/unlovable**

**Longing**

## Opportunity Area 4

# In-Home Re-Starts

After repeated housing-eviction-homelessness cycles, it's only natural to give up. While Housing First advocates have long recognized the need for supports for the newly housed, other than case management, there are few models. Similarly the detox-rehab-release cycle can engender resignation and hopelessness. And despite

research showing treatment centres don't really work, there are few other models. What if we developed a suite of in-situ supports, coaching, and community networks for new renters? To help people work through emotions, relationships, and behaviours that have threatened their housing and wellbeing in the past and present?

### WHAT'S DIFFERENT? THE SHIFT?

From addiction treatment as a one-size fit all approach to addiction treatment customized in place  
From housing supports as pragmatic to emotional support and learning.

### INTERVENTIONS

Policy

Platform

Adopt-for-recovery

Invention

Gezellig Boxes

Practice

Help a Friend Vouchers

Role

Home-maker Doulas

# Thematic Comparisons



## Downtown Themes

## How it did/didn't show up in Strathcona

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>Ambition.</b> Many were drawn to Alberta by ambition and have had a taste of success. Most aren't dwelling on the past; they're future-oriented, but without a clear way to channel or act on their ambitions.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Matt</i></p>                                   |  <p><b>Continuity</b></p>                          | <p>Ambition is an area of relative continuity. Certainly, if you're white and male in Strathcona, you've probably been exposed to a middle class life and paycheck at some point. Many wanted to attain that life again.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Earl, Bob, Hunter, Gil</i></p>   |
| <p><b>In Search of Meaning.</b> There are lots of high quality subsistence services, but existential services - that is, services explicitly focused on purpose &amp; self actualization - aren't as diverse or pervasive.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Al, Eileen, Leroy &amp; Monique</i></p>  |  <p><b>Continuity</b></p>                          | <p>Between youth services and the Neighbour Centre with its visiting life coach and chaplain, there seemed to be more emphasis on meaning, and those on the south side expressed as much or more desire for purpose as did people downtown.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Earl, Gil, Renée, Tessa, Christopher, Jules</i></p>   |
| <p><b>Reciprocity.</b> It feels like you're always on the taking end in services. People wanting change are just as concerned with finding ways to give back.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Monique &amp; Leroy</i></p>   |  <p><b>Continuity &amp; Intensification</b></p>    | <p>The expressed demand for reciprocity in Strathcona is greater. Many people differentiate themselves from other homeless people by their income-earning activities, and lack of interest in getting things for free. Fewer people have been intense service users for many years.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Renée, Dakota, Earl, Gil, Cruz, Bruno</i></p>   |
| <p><b>Just-in-time supports.</b> Timely upstream interventions for common sources of trauma (i.e the loss of a spouse or child) could prevent street engagement.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Patrick</i></p>  |  <p><b>Continuity</b></p>                          | <p>Over half the people we spent time with traced their stories back to the impact of the loss of a spouse, whether through death or separation, and about half talked about losing a child.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Brooklynn, Renée, Earl, Bruno, Bob, Marilyn, Julia</i></p>   |
| <p><b>Shame.</b> Latent support networks abound but how to reach out and tap in when you're ashamed by the ups and downs in your progress?</p> <p>&gt; <i>Patrick, Brett</i></p>   |  <p><b>Some discontinuity</b></p>                | <p>While shame certainly appeared in people's narratives, we were struck by how many people maintained relationships to family and friends. Perhaps the desire/ability to protect oneself against a more complete form of marginalization informs the choice to go south of the river?</p> <p>&gt; <i>Brooklynn, Gil, Earl, Jailene &amp; Hunter, Tessa, Christopher</i></p>   |
| <p><b>Adventure.</b> There is a sizeable street crew attracted to novelty &amp; adventure, but policies and services are oriented towards being settled in one place.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Jen</i></p>   |  <p><b>Some discontinuity</b></p>                | <p>In Strathcona, the aspiration for adventure was characterized more in terms of extreme sports (eg. winter biking) and legitimate, but adrenalin-filled work. People who were camping said they wanted to be housed. Some people using the shelter were 'travellers', but more likely to describe their stay as part of a quest, or retreat, all in search of something to help them feel more rooted rather than more mobile.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Brooklynn, Christopher, Bill, Gerry, Gil</i></p>   |
| <p><b>The freshman.</b> With less of an entrenched street culture than Toronto or Vancouver, Edmonton boasts a larger 'new to the streets' population - and yet, for these newbies, it's a bit of a crapshoot, who they meet, and where they end up.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Brett</i></p>  |  <p><b>Continuity but differs by context</b></p> | <p>Strathcona certainly felt like a less entrenched street culture, but unlike downtown, newbies are more likely to be directed to specific services. For youth in the area, you are almost certain to be taken to YESS and Old Strathcona Youth Society where arrival on the streets is treated like an emergency, to make your stay as short as possible. Adult services are slower, but as there's only one, the Neighbour Centre (or perhaps the library), chances are, you'll end up there.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Clara &amp; Tessa, Jailene &amp; Hunter, Bill, Christopher</i></p>   |
| <p><b>Good taste.</b> Everyone is eating, but few folks get a chance to cook, share recipes, choose their own ingredients, embrace their cultural or familial identities, or use food to show care for others.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Krazy</i></p>  |  <p><b>Continuity but differs by context</b></p> | <p>Two volunteer cooks at the Neighbour Centre can be overheard intently discussing whether tonight's meal was up to snuff, and how to keep up the standards they've come to be known for. Around here, if you want to cook, there's an opportunity. Many might enjoy more chances to play, create, and serve people from the kitchen in a more personal way, building on what already exists.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Bill, Julia</i></p>  |
| <p><b>Dignified spaces.</b> There are surprisingly welcoming &amp; humanizing third spaces in the inner city, where anyone can feel legitimate, and without stigmatizing line-ups or eligibility criteria.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Mint Pharmacy - Church Street, Stadium Mini Mart</i></p> |  <p><b>Continuity but differs by context</b></p> | <p>Downtown there are no shortage of warm places to be in the day, but in Strathcona, there is a long stretch for adults between the shelter closing at 6am and the library opening at 10am, or the Neighbour Centre at 3 or 5pm. The demand for dignified and welcoming spaces is high, and the supply falls short. There are plenty of business owners who distinguish themselves for the way they interact with people, but they are not generally hangouts.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Top's Liquor Store, Knight's Inn, IDA Pharmacy</i></p>  |
|  |  <p><b>New</b></p>                               | <p><b>Identity Maintenance.</b> Most people we met on the south side haven't been homeless long-term, though they may have had brushes with it in the past, from one week to a couple of years. Many had a sense of social mobility and worked hard to present themselves in a way that would allow them to blend in, rather than be identified as homeless. Others put effort into differentiating themselves from homeless stereotypes, emphasizing their code of conduct, workman-like values, and roles helping others.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Bill, Bob, Earl, Jailene &amp; Hunter, Clara &amp; Tessa, Renée, Dakota, Bruno, Stewart</i></p> |
|  |  <p><b>New</b></p>                               | <p><b>House Relations.</b> A considerable number of people frame 'giving up on housing' (whether in the short or the long term) as primarily a relational failure - a breach of trust - either with themselves, the people around them they would like to be able to have as part of their home, or a homemaker who they felt wasn't prepared to go the distance.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Renée, Earl, Christopher, Gil</i></p>   |



# Pain Points Comparisons

## Downtown Themes

## How it did/didn't show up in Strathcona

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <p><b>Lost Souls.</b> Too many people find themselves in downtown, following a stint in prison or hospital, without ID, belongings or a shortcut out of the social and service landscape.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Krazy, Ko, Matt</i></p>  |  <p><b>Discontinuity</b></p>                        | <p>Few people end up in Strathcona completely by accident or default. For some, it's a longstanding neighbourhood affiliation, for others, an intentional alternative to downtown, and others still followed someone else to Strathcona and stayed. As a result, the population has a self-selected quality to it, with <b>more people struggling to maintain their pre-homeless identity, or live a life of less drama.</b></p> <p>&gt; <i>Bill, Bob, Bruno, Gil, Earl, Jailene &amp; Hunter</i></p>                       |
| <p><b>Idle nights &amp; stultifying weekends.</b> With little to do after dark or on weekends, too many people fall back in with the people and substances they're trying to avoid, or lose momentum towards their chosen goals.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Albert, Eileen, Clare</i></p>   |  <p><b>Discontinuity</b></p>                        | <p>In Strathcona, it's the days that stretch out forever and ever, and there is less dependence on services for leisure and entertainment. The Neighbour Centre runs from 3PM weekdays and 5PM weekends until the shelter opens, making evening the most supported time of day for sociality.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Christopher, Jailene &amp; Hunter, Marilyn</i></p>   |
| <p><b>Menial Work.</b> Too many people with high motivation and desire to work find themselves waiting for inconsistent temp jobs that can exacerbate physical pain and which don't typically offer a greater sense of camaraderie or purpose.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Al, Matt</i></p>  |  <p><b>Discontinuity</b></p>                        | <p>We didn't hear this narrative in Strathcona.</p>   |
| <p><b>No legit place to camp.</b> For too many people there's no legit alternative to bed bugs, intoxication, mandatory meetings or being around a lot of people and a lot of noise. But camping sometimes means coming home to find all your belongings gone or being moved along.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Jen, Albert</i></p>  |  <p><b>Discontinuity</b></p>                        | <p>The people we met camping on the south side were clear that they did not want to be camping, and weren't planning on making it a permanent shelter, though some had managed to stay put months at a time. Instead, they wanted access to housing and/or prolonged access to the youth shelter.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Renée, Bruno, Dakota</i></p>   |
| <p><b>Gangs and introverts.</b> There are too few shelter or service options for people who are uncomfortable in crowded loud places, and those put in danger by past or present gang affiliations</p> <p>&gt; <i>Ko, Krazy</i></p>   |  <p><b>Little Continuity</b></p>                  | <p>While there are still people avoiding the shelter because of past experiences, and fear of being robbed or surrounded by a lot of people, the south side attracts people looking to "escape the drama", or at least not live in it. The adult shelter has only 40 spaces and its users police rowdy behaviour, aware that the program is a pilot. <b>For others, 40 is about 36 people too many to share space with, causing anxiety and offering one virus after another.</b></p> <p>&gt; <i>Renée, Gil, Dakota</i></p> |
| <p><b>Not Using &amp; Losing.</b> Too many people are running on adrenaline, caught exercising the primitive rather than rational parts of their brain, with few means to feed their intellectual appetites.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Monique &amp; Leroy</i></p>   |  <p><b>Some Continuity</b></p>                    | <p>We met people who talked about (and demonstrated) researching astronomy, writing poetry, drawing, and painting, as well as teaching themselves to play an instrument or learn mechanics. On the southside, people seemed to have connection to other parts of themselves, and yet, outside of youth services, most remained solitary pursuits, with limited opportunities to grow and express these skills and abilities in community.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Earl, Tessa, Dakota</i></p>  |
| <p><b>Housing for companions.</b> For too many people in recovery, being alone is a trigger. And yet, inviting friends over is an unsupported risk, while having a roommate can be out of procedural bounds.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Patrick, Brett</i></p>  |  <p><b>Some Continuity</b></p>                    | <p>In Strathcona, housing for couples didn't seem to be an obstacle, though <b>people's struggles with being alone or maintaining a sense of agency with guests over, persisted.</b></p> <p>&gt; <i>Gil, Earl, Renée, Dakota</i></p>  |
| <p><b>Lines &amp; Waiting.</b> Folks like Al estimate they wait 4 hours a day for food, medical attention, and social services. Waiting not only fills a significant portion of people's days, but stands in the way of them pursuing other opportunities.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Al, Krazy, Yvonne, Clare</i></p>  |  <p><b>Continuity, but differs by context</b></p> | <p>In Strathcona, there are no lines. But there is still a lot of waiting. It's a different kind of waiting: finding somewhere to be until the next place opens up, until business hours start, until one can go to bed at the mat program, until this or that service process culminates in something. Waiting heightens people's anxiety and sense that their emergency or narrowing opportunity is business as usual.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Gil, Jailene &amp; Hunter, Bruno, Earl</i></p>                                      |
| <p><b>Limited Pathways.</b> Too few people have a vision for their life after recovery from addiction and securing housing - it can seem like a big black hole. Without a future they can believe in, it can be hard to keep motivation up.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Brett, Ko</i></p>  |  <p><b>Continuity</b></p>                         | <p>While some segments showed greater sense of purpose, others <b>had lost hope that they could ever return to a former life, especially in the face of health problems, or felt there was nothing to return. Many Crafted Characters are also likely suffering from an inability to imagine themselves moving forward with a life that's different from what they had.</b></p> <p>&gt; <i>Bob, Jules, Christopher, Marilyn, Stewart</i></p>  |
| <p><b>Storage.</b> For too many people a barrier to leaving the inner city, or exploring non-social service environments within it, is not having places to store personal and valuable items each day. Keeping clean and neat is important for people sleeping rough, yet collecting possessions and carrying around heavy bags is a burden and a risk for theft.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Jen, Al, Krazy</i></p>  |  <p><b>Continuity</b></p>                         | <p>This theme emerged among people living rough and couchsurfing alike: the challenge of getting around if you have a cart, carrying a heavy backpack with no relief, having one's backpack with laptop stolen...while in a church service! But also, the trouble of protecting one's things while staying with a friend who has a lot of visitors. Many people talked about downsizing again and again.</p> <p>&gt; <i>Earl, Gil, Marilyn, Bill</i></p>  |
| <p><b>Flunking out of housing.</b> After a few attempts at housing, people seem to give up, in frustration, anger, and self-loathing. They want housing, but what will be different? Most people hope housing will reduce their drug use, and bring them closer to family, but it never lasts, just like rehab never lasts.</p> <p><b>New</b></p>   | <p><b>New</b></p>   | <p>&gt; <i>Renée, Bruno, Dakota</i></p>   |
| <p><b>Sleeplessness.</b> Almost nobody's getting a good night's sleep on the streets. The shelter offers 6 hours at best, and during the day, everywhere else wakes you to scold or check for vital signs. Camping or staying with friends may offer a better rest, but then there's nightmares, anxiety, party-ers, and systems out of whack with stimulants...which culminates in moodiness, memory loss, the feeling one can't get anything done or think straight, and quite likely, an increased experience of pain.</p> <p><b>New</b></p> | <p><b>New</b></p>   | <p>&gt; <i>See Nyctophiles &amp; Insomniacs, and Never-Enoughs</i></p>  |