



MAKE
SHIFT
HAPPEN

Oscar's Place Survey

August 2020

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Intent & Methodology

- **Intent**

- To inform the Crime Prevention: Community Capacity and Mobilization Initiative known as 'Make Shift Happen.'
- This is one piece of the larger community assessment that will be used together with numerous resources, consultations, interviews and research to develop an overall community crime prevention strategy.

- **Survey Design**

- Public opinion survey.
- Designed by community members and Karen Driedger of fourward thinking, the 'Make Shift Happen' Coordinator.
- Shared with Oscar's Place prior to public access.

- **Method & Access**

- A convenience sample was used, a non-probability sampling method. The results cannot be generalized to reflect the entire population.
- Access online; posted on various Facebook pages, emailed and shared using a Survey Monkey weblink, and paper copies.

- **Coding & Analysis**

- Open-ended questions were coded and quantified.
- Themes were identified.
- Analysis was based on the data.

- **Summary Report**

- Reviewed for bias and limitations by national experts.
- Every attempt was made to minimize limitations.

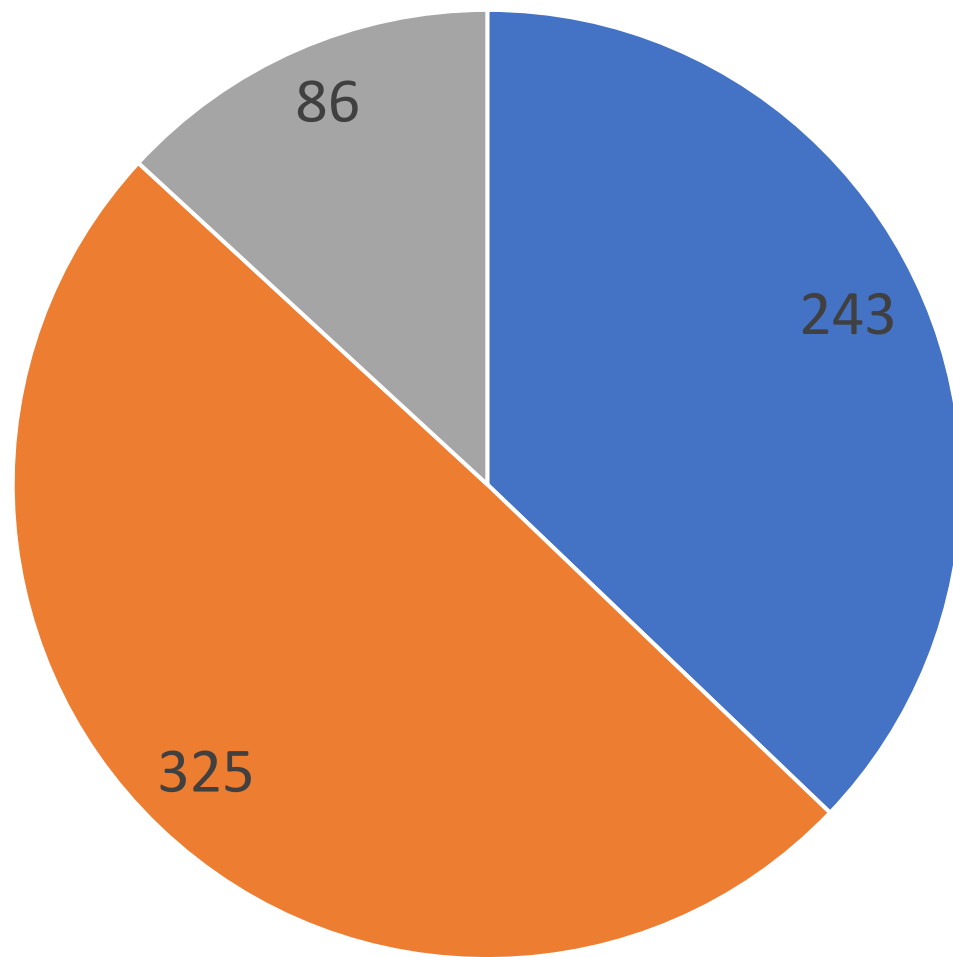
- **657** surveys were collected, 5.5% of the area's population, 8.3% of the Town of The Pas' population (population numbers based on Manitoba Health Population Report: June 1, 2016).

Summary of Responses:

CLOSE or OPEN OSCAR'S PLACE?

- Survey respondents are divided in terms of why they do (50%) or don't (37%) want Oscar's Place to close. A majority suggest it should be closed, however 13% remain undecided.
- There are similarities in comments between those who want to keep it open and those who want it closed in terms of what they view as the (1) underlying causes and their (2) potential suggestions.
- When all categorized comments are combined there is greater clarity.
- When all comments are combined, the top four **underlying causes** of the many and differing issues with Oscar's place become clearer:
 - a. The increasing number of visitors that Oscar's Place attracts from communities outside the Pas are increasing demands.*
 - b. This is an issue of untreated, complex addictions.*
 - c. There is a lack of programs and services to address underlying issues e.g. day programs, counselling, affordable housing, jobs.*
 - d. Oscar's Place is not functioning as originally intended.*
- When all comments were combined for "suggested solutions", the significant finding was:
 - ***Respond to the complexity.***

Q.1 Does The Pas Need Oscar's Place?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Not Sure

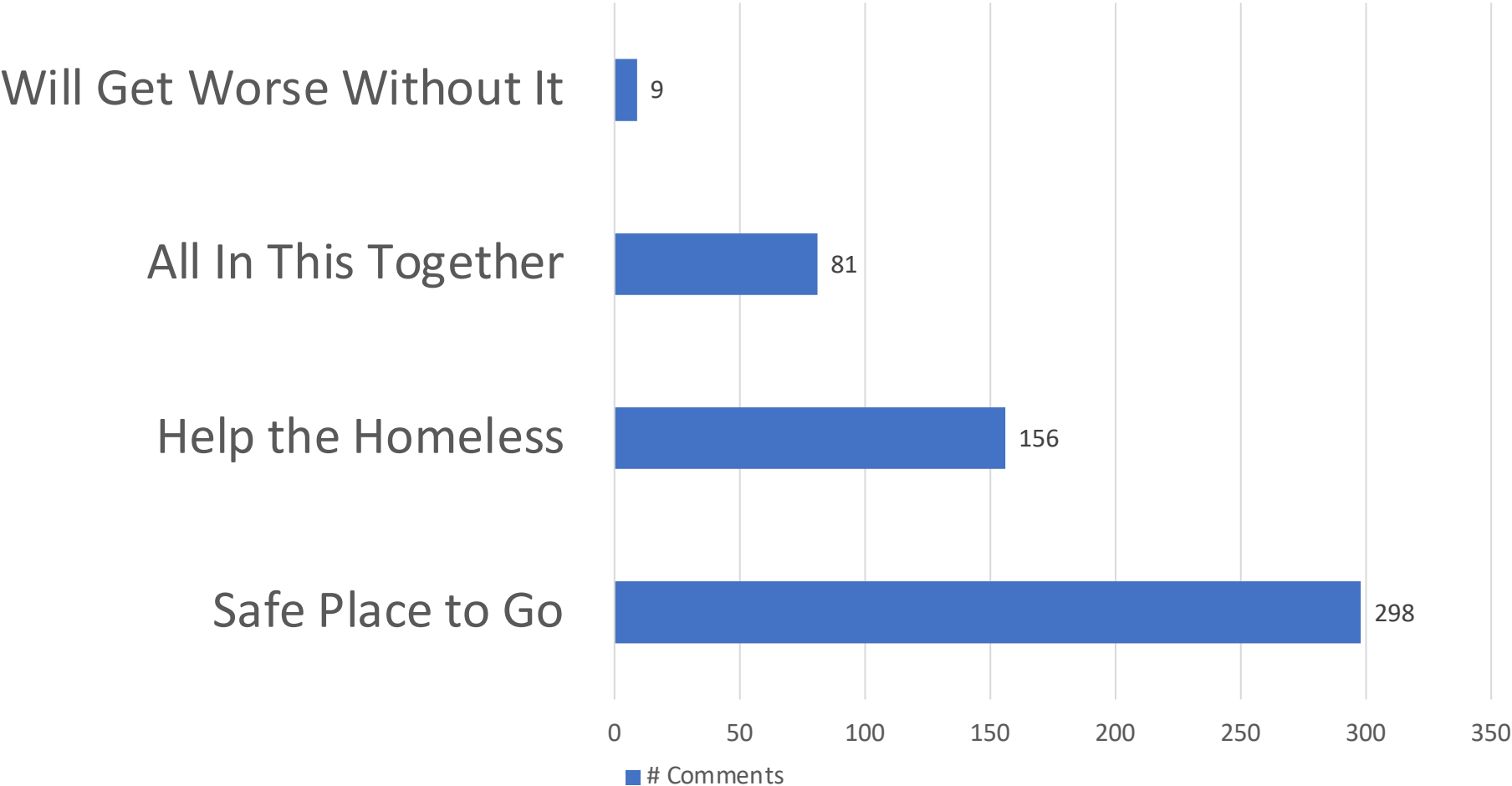
Q.2 If You Think Oscar's Place Should Be Kept Open Explain Why

- Total Comments 302
- Comments Fell Within 3 Categories
 1. Why Should It Stay Open
 2. Underlying Causes of the Issues
 3. Suggested Solutions



“I would want it there for my family and my friends. We came so close to being homeless a few years back. There are not many people that plan on having this happen in their lives. I would want to be able to help the homeless at all times with a place like Oscar's place.”

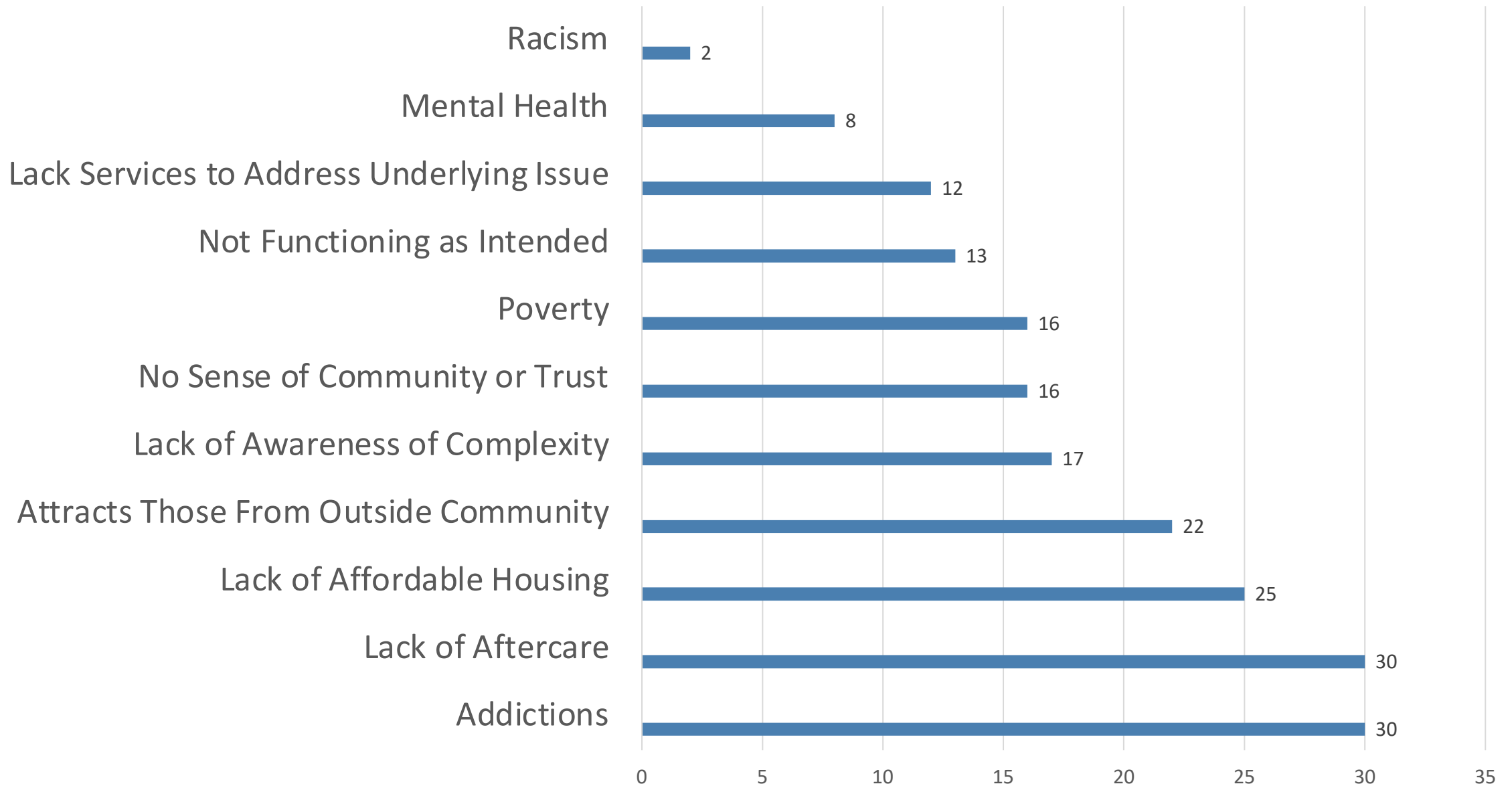
Q.2a WHY KEEP OSCAR'S PLACE OPEN?



“Everybody needs a home; A place to belong, to be safe, and be treated with dignity and respect. Ignoring a problem does not make it go away.”

“To provide basic needs to the more vulnerable individuals in the community. To support the federal Housing First model as well as the Everyone Deserves a Home strategy.”

Q.2b UNDERLYING CAUSES OF THE ISSUES



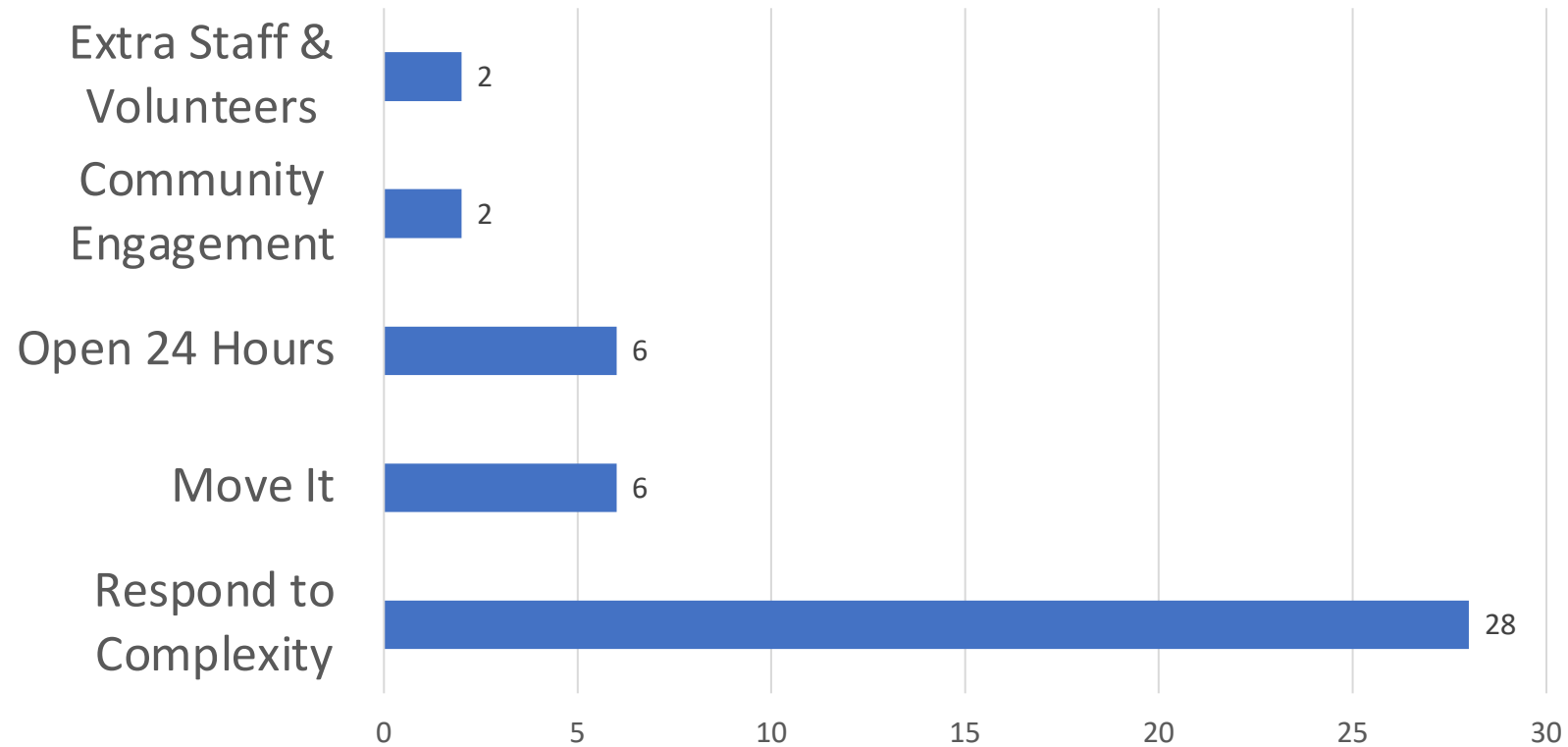


“Oscars place is not the problem, addiction and social issues are the problem. Work on addiction issues, deal with the availability of alcohol, move the liquor store, have an effective street patrol and you will lessen the problem. A place to sleep is not the issue just the scapegoat.”



“It provides a much needed service for the community. It needs to be properly funded to be able to increase service options for the people who go there, including stable housing and ongoing support.”

Q.2c Suggested Solutions



Suggestions

“If it stays open, it should be funded by the communities that have banished them...If they are exiled by the community they came from against their will, that community should provide the funding for their lodgings...Banishment is cruel and inhumane.”

“Should be used for short stays to aid an individual that requires temporary housing in order to enable them to get back on their feet.”

“Our transient homeless population isn't going anywhere, the public needs to embrace that reality and work with Oscar's place to provide the services that are needed to move the citizens that utilize Oscar's place from being homeless to a different stage in their lives. This includes mental health supports, addictions, counseling and skills training as required to give them the hand up that they need.”

Regional Funding

“Every incorporated town/city should have a low cost housing option for individuals and families who become homeless or who travel to the area for medical purposes or who seek affordable places to stay when travelling. Oscar's Place has gone beyond this and provided housing to addicted adults without proper funding for caring for adults and youth with addictions. Oscar's Place deserves regional health funding for taking on this challenge when the NRHA has refused to step up to full-time treatment options for citizens. Culturally appropriate treatment and housing options would be a good funding match for Oscar's Place, if there is no financial assistance directly paid to Oscar's Place from the federal and provincial health and addictions funds. If Oscar's Place closes, its residents will be denied humane housing options, and face relocation each time they visit The Pas. This interaction flies in the face of Truth and Reconciliation (thus the reason for federal funding contributions directly to Oscar's Place). The ideal would be to have a detox and drug/alcohol treatment center in The Pas, so that Oscar's Place does not have to serve double duty as hospitality and sobriety treatment settings.”

Work Together

"I feel we need a place for people who are experiencing homelessness. The situation around why people are homeless is different for all and typically comes from underlying issues that they need help with. It seems to be a cycle that can be hard to break... I do believe Oscars place is a very important resource here and we need to start having community agencies work together to try to provide the proper care these folks need to get back on their feet. They are human and are hurting and need to feel connection to other people, the community and culture/religion/ spirituality etc."



Family & Partnerships

“Needs to be open during daytime and lean heavily to giving supports to heal and get members back to their family and/or professional help. Location would be better if away from downtown core.”



“It should remain open to allow somewhere for people to be. When the local Friendship Centre changed its policies to stop letting people in during the day, this left a gap in services. When people were going to the FC there was assistance and programs and resources for them. There is no reason that Oscar's Place couldn't deliver such programs in partnership with other community organizations. In my opinion, under the proper management, Oscar's Place could flourish and provide assistance/resources to the transient population.”

Q.3 If You Think Oscar's Place Should Be Closed Explain Why

- Total Comments 501
- Comments Fell Within 3 Categories
 1. Why Should it Be Closed
 2. Underlying Causes of the Issues
 3. Suggested Solutions

People from Outlying Communities



“Occupants aren't homeless, come from outlying communities and contribute to the ongoing crime , vandalism, substance abuse issues, threatening behavior, loitering that this community already has enough of.”



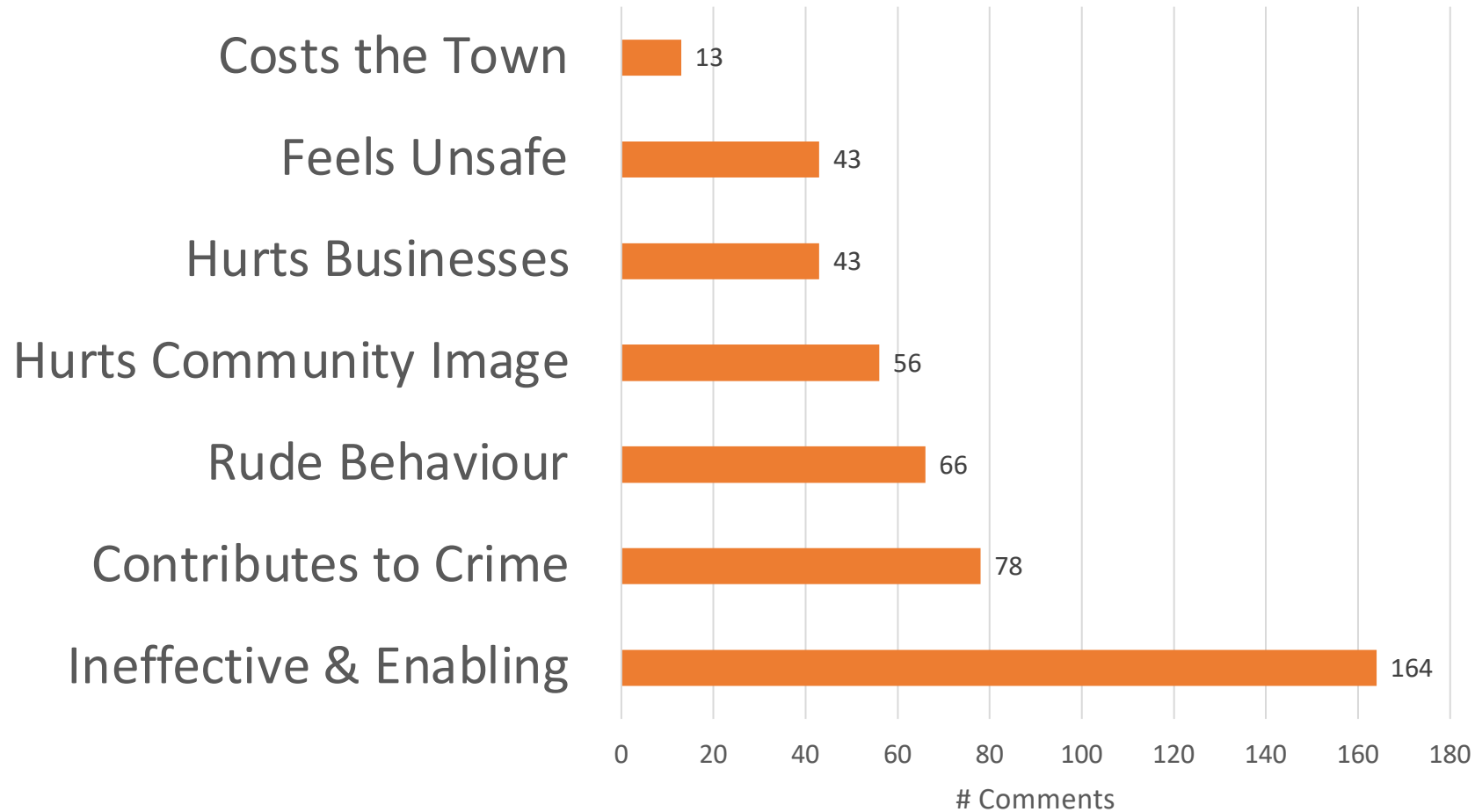
“I think that we need to direct the resources to help people that are trying to overcome their addictions. This seems to be enabling them. Also, as a senior, I don't feel safe walking or shopping uptown.”

Bigger Problem

“Oscars place provides temporary accommodations, over night only, so the people that use the service are forced out onto the street during the day. This increases the vagrant population in the downtown area. The people who access Oscar’s place do not have access to meals or bathrooms during the day. The facility is not equipped to stay open during the day which places the responsibility on the town. No business wants homeless people coming into their stores to use bathrooms. The homeless shelter is not helping people, it’s creating a larger problem within the town.”

“I don’t believe It should remain open. I see it as a bigger problem, the ages are getting younger and younger. The groups are getting bigger and bigger. It is very unfortunate that there are homes these individuals can go to, but they choose this lifestyle instead.”

Q.3a Why Close Oscar's Place?



Not Homeless

“It is a monetary burden on The Pas and this shelter enables individuals to stay in town even though these individuals have principal residences in isolated communities. The individuals that are in fact not homeless create a poor image to the town and contribute to the public disturbances and intoxication along with littering. The constant panhandling and aggressive approaching of patrons prior to entering businesses hinders the likelihood of repeat customers and the feeling of safety.”

Address the Real Issue

“It is being misused, enabling, and contributing to the escalating social problems in the town. Also it's not addressing the real issues of housing, and co-occurring disorders.”

~ ~ ~

“A homeless shelter should provide more than just a place to sleep for homeless individuals. A shelter should help to rehabilitate these individuals. If this is not achievable, then I believe the shelter should be closed. As it currently is just giving people a place to sleep, then kicking them out to disrupt the community, steal from town businesses and put themselves and others in danger.”

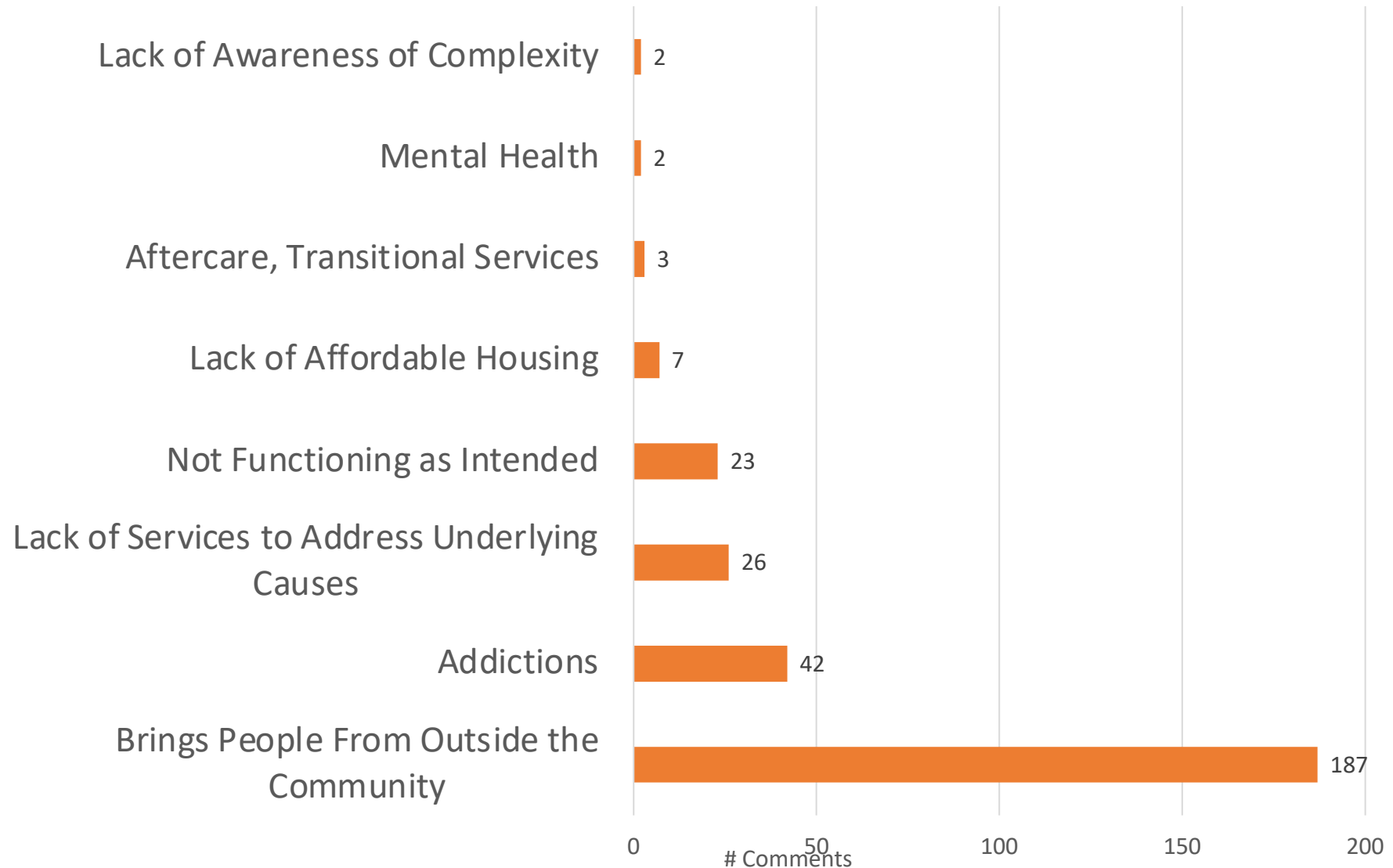
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“It causes far too many issues in our community. The people are ill & need more than the hotel we provide them with. We should lobby to have the government build a Traditional healing centre outside of town that would provide resources for potential healing. If one person is saved it would be worth it. We are now just all enablers.”

Safety & Addictions

"I feel there are too many transient people coming and going. Not necessarily the true homeless population are getting use of it. Not comfortable walking in the downtown area. Once they are kicked out of homeless shelter in the morning, they form their crowds outside establishments, day goes on and they are passing the bottle around, or you'll find them passed out in nooks and crannies of businesses. Begging for money when you go to Giant Tiger. Doesn't give the town a very welcoming feel to visitors...Its the first thing you see when you are in the downtown area. Disturbing. People get kicked out of their own communities and gather in town, knowing if they can sober up by the time Oscar's place is open, they have food and shelter for the night, then can continue their drunkfest during the day. I know they all have a story, just like we all do. But for the majority of them, its been about choices, not truly homeless! They had a home and family but Sadly addictions have taken over their life. What they need is addictions treatment! Not a place to allow them to sleep it off and continue with their daily binges of alcohol and whatever else. They have relocated here knowing they can have their fun but still have a place to sleep. If Oscar's place closes, they may realize, hey, maybe I need to smarten up and get my life back on track or will head back to their own community/find an alternative community. When there were talks about it closing not that long ago, majority of them had an alternate plan already! I think Oscar's Place should be closed!!"

Q.3b Underlying Causes Of The Issues



Crime

"I feel I should be closed until there can be proper funding to have it a 24 hour shelter with programming to help its users/clients. At this point all it is is enabling people to be on the streets during the day as the shelter is closed. It is not a shelter at this time and should not be called a shelter. People are coming to The Pas under the impression we have a homeless shelter and we don't."

"It is attracting people that are not from our community and the crime rate has gone up and taxing our police to deal with these ppl instead of dealing with other issues. Our community is no longer safe to walk down the streets because of the ppl this place attracts to our community. It drives business away and tourism due to these ppl coming to our community to stay there."

"The town has never had as many homeless people as they've had since it opened. It has gotten worse year after year. We have a shelter for vulnerable women and children already. There are welfare programs, EI programs, etc for others. People may need a hand up, not a handout which is what this is... if they need rehabilitation, they need to go down that route. Transient people hanging around the streets is getting out of hand and I believe oscar's place being open is contributing to that."

50/50

“Without any programs or any help being provided to the transient population, I believe Oscar's Place actually hurts more than it helps. Allowing people to create a negative lifestyle that is supported by Oscar's Place rather than efforts focusing on creating a positive lifestyle. I believe if Oscar's Place was able to actually help people to further their life, rather than enabling a destructive one, it should stay open and receive tons of funding.”

“Oscar's place is enabling people and showing the younger generation that their behaviour is ok. Don't get me wrong 50% of the problem is Oscar's place.....other 50% is the LC in a terrible location. With the behaviour the “homeless” people are displaying is wrong for people of the community, visitors, tourists and young children to see.”

“People don't feel safe walking in town.”

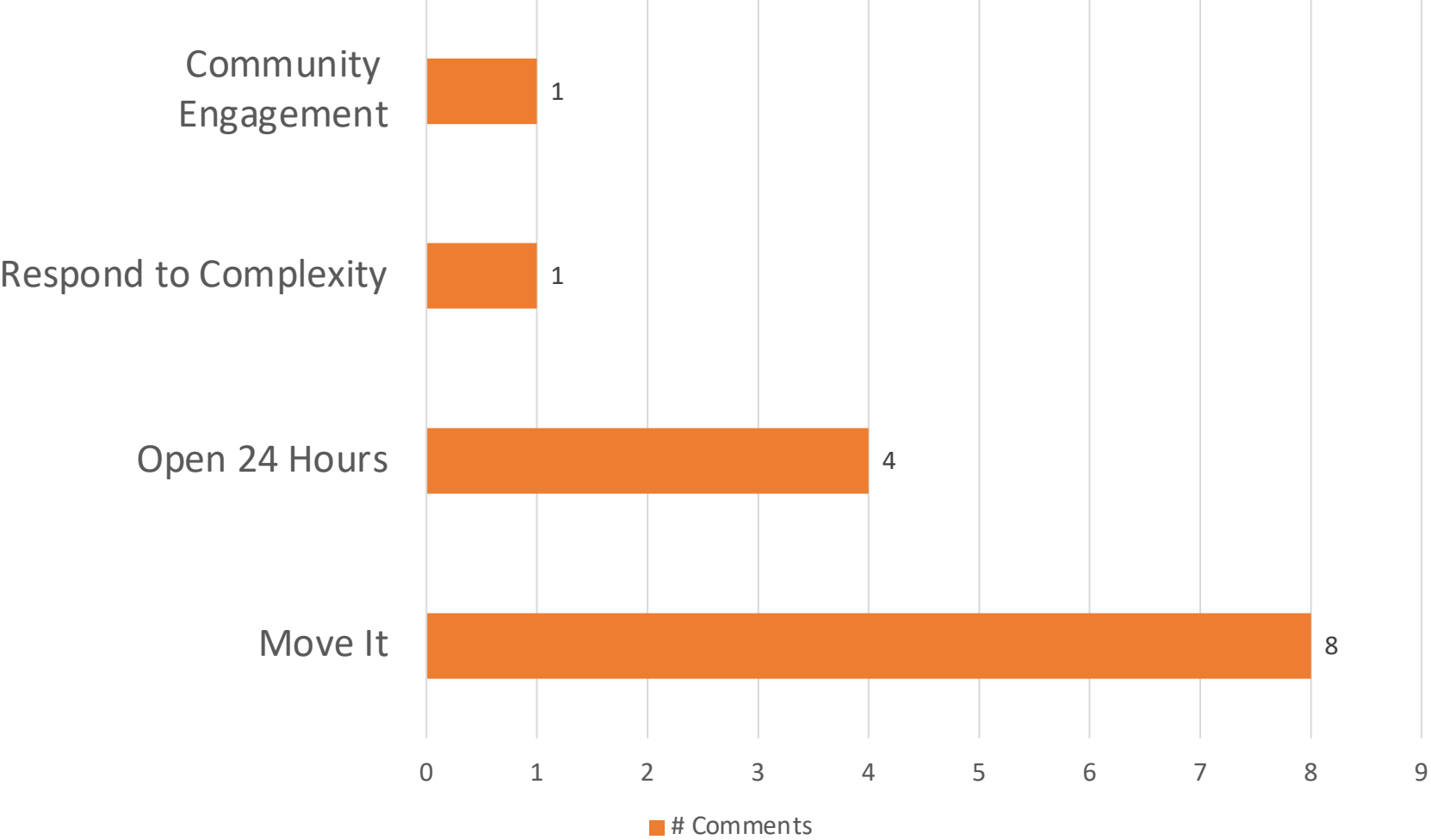
Abuse

"I think that ever since having Oscar's Place we have seen a huge influx of transient people that are now lingering in our community causing nothing but destruction, abuse of community resources, a drain on healthcare, and a fear of violence to local citizens. All these things have caused lifelong community members to move away and has given our community a reputation for being a disgraceful place to live and visit."

"I feel like the majority of clients at Oscar's place utilize it as a hotel. Somewhere to stay while they socialize in the pas. They drink and loiter in the community rather than their home town. We have other resources for women who need homes while leaving abusive situations. I do not believe Oscars place is utilized by truly homeless people, just transient persons looking for a free meal and bed."

"It was supposed to be used as a transitional place to assist people the tools to live on their own. It is a safe warm place to stay and attracts all the people in the north to come to have a place. The population of of people that have nowhere else to go is just going to grow. Majority of this population are not contributing to our economy. These were not the purposes of oscars place! This has affected our town in a negative way. You want people to start businesses.... look around uptown. Can't even walk into a store without being harassed."

Q.3c Suggested Solutions



Impact

"I feel that the facility has been operating long enough to show that it is not improving the problem in our area. Perhaps if a professional study was done to identify a 'system' that would prove to improve the problems of homelessness and transient people that showed that Oscar's Place would need to be a fundamental part of it, I may change my opinion."

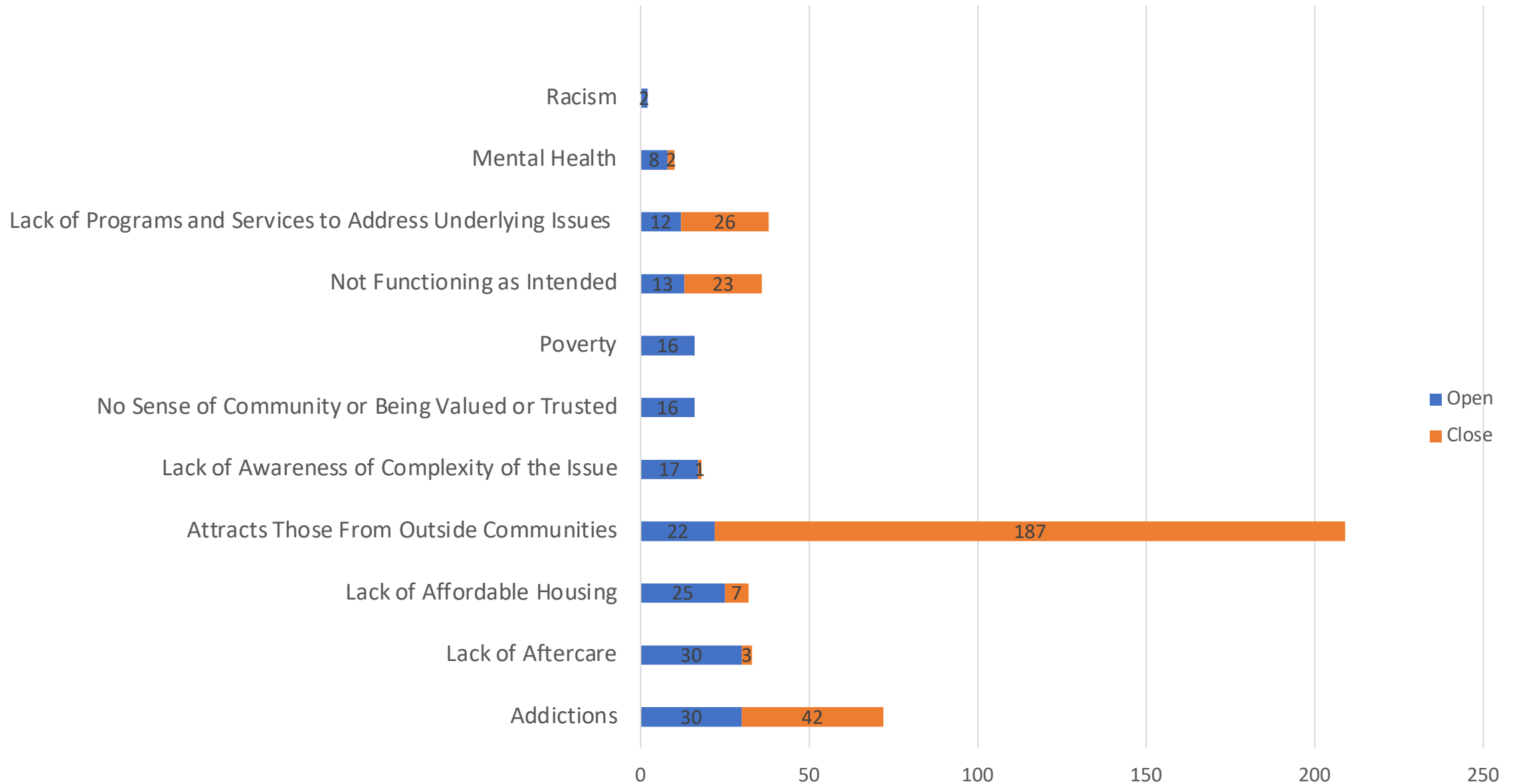
"I strongly feel that Oscar's Place has contributed to the significant increase in the number of transient, intoxicated and violent people on the streets of The Pas since it has opened. Yes, we were seeing an increase before Oscar's Place was built, but the problem seemed to snowball immediately afterwards...Oscar's place was meant to help out homeless people who could then transition into proper homes, and be self sufficient, contributing members of the community, but instead it's just somewhere for people to sleep at night who have no interest in changing their lives or helping themselves. And don't blame it on there being no housing for them to transition to because these people are intoxicated ALL THE TIME so they clearly have NO INTEREST in changing! I know of only 1 person who had needed to use Oscar's Place for a short period of time for its intended purpose when she found herself homeless with her baby and she said it was an awful and scary experience. Oscar's Place has had its chance to prove itself and it has failed miserably. It has contributed to the derelict look of our community and even if they did a major beautification of the property to look like a park, it would not change the fact of the number of drunks that are sprawled all over there sleeping during the day, fighting, peeing outside and harassing customers in the mall parking lot for money. Oscar's Place has got to go! I would rather see more funding for Rosaire House for the people that truly want the help, who are trying to keep their families together, who are trying to keep their jobs, and who actually care about being contributing members of society."

Long-Term Solution

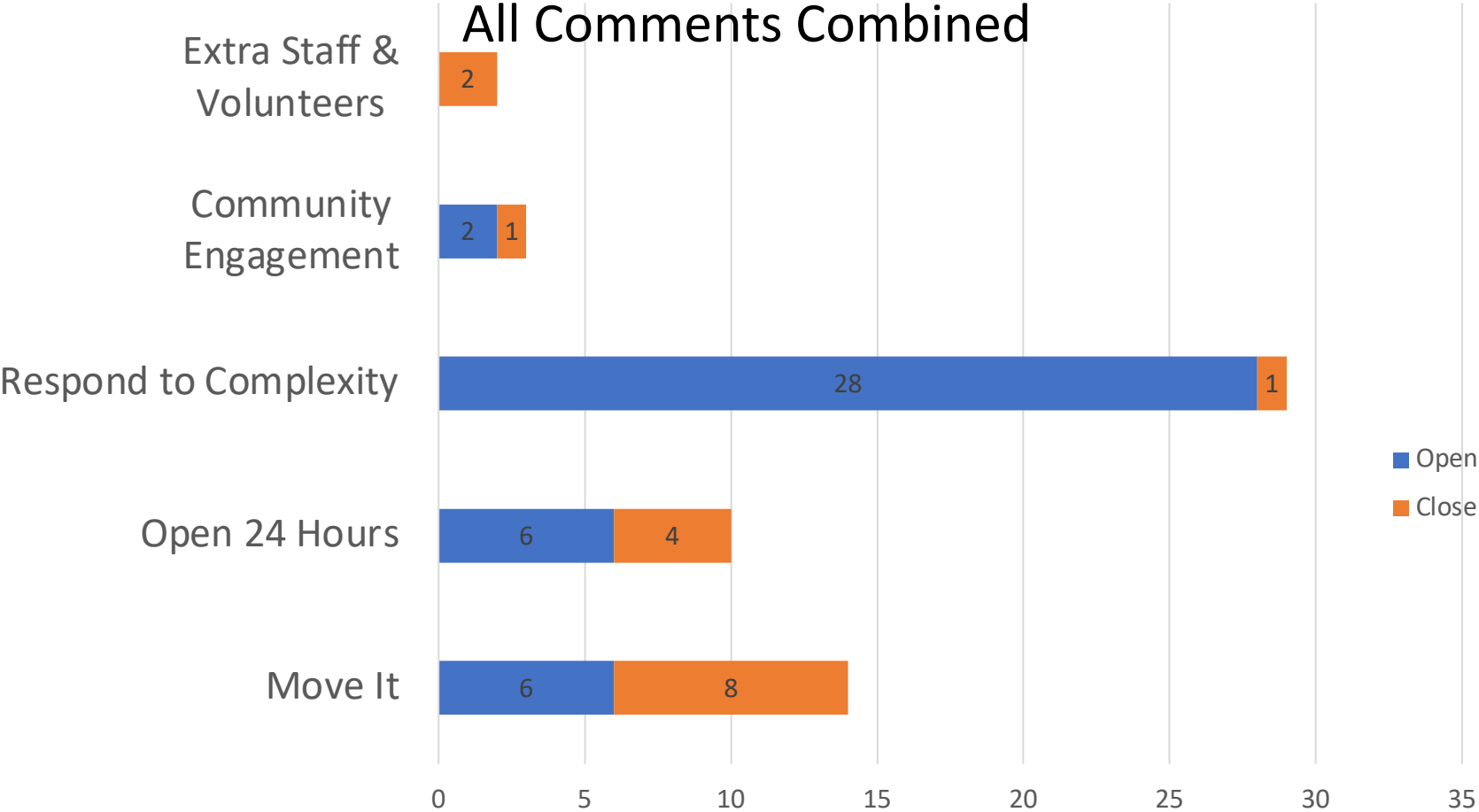
“Because it is not a long term solution, we are doing nothing to help the homeless population, similarly they are not being motivated to help themselves. We provide a free place for them to go sleep and then boot them out in the morning where they go uptown and harass people, often become intoxicated by one substance or another, steal, and are aggressive. Our local businesses often suffer ie, banks as they are constantly in the vestibules and harassing people for money. I would like to see a program teamed with AFM who could provide safe housing with the condition that they attend addictions counseling. Not necessarily force them to be sober as one needs to decide that for themselves to be successful. I think following more of a housing first approach, maybe convert Oscar’s place into small apartments, and in order to live there they must work on their addictions with AFM and make an effort to find work, rather than just continuing to harass the public and abuse the resources that are handed to them. A homeless shelter is supposed to be for emergency or acute situations, not long term housing. While I don’t believe we can blanket one approach that would work for all of our homeless population, I believe that we can do something different to identify which individuals actually want help changing their lives rather than enabling bad behavior.”

Q.2b UNDERLYING CAUSES OF THE ISSUES

(All Comments Combined)



Q.3c SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS



Q.4 If you're not sure about the need for Oscar's Place, what information do you need to make an informed decision?

- Total Comments 266
- Comments Fell within 2 Categories
 1. What Information Do You Need?
 2. Suggested Solutions

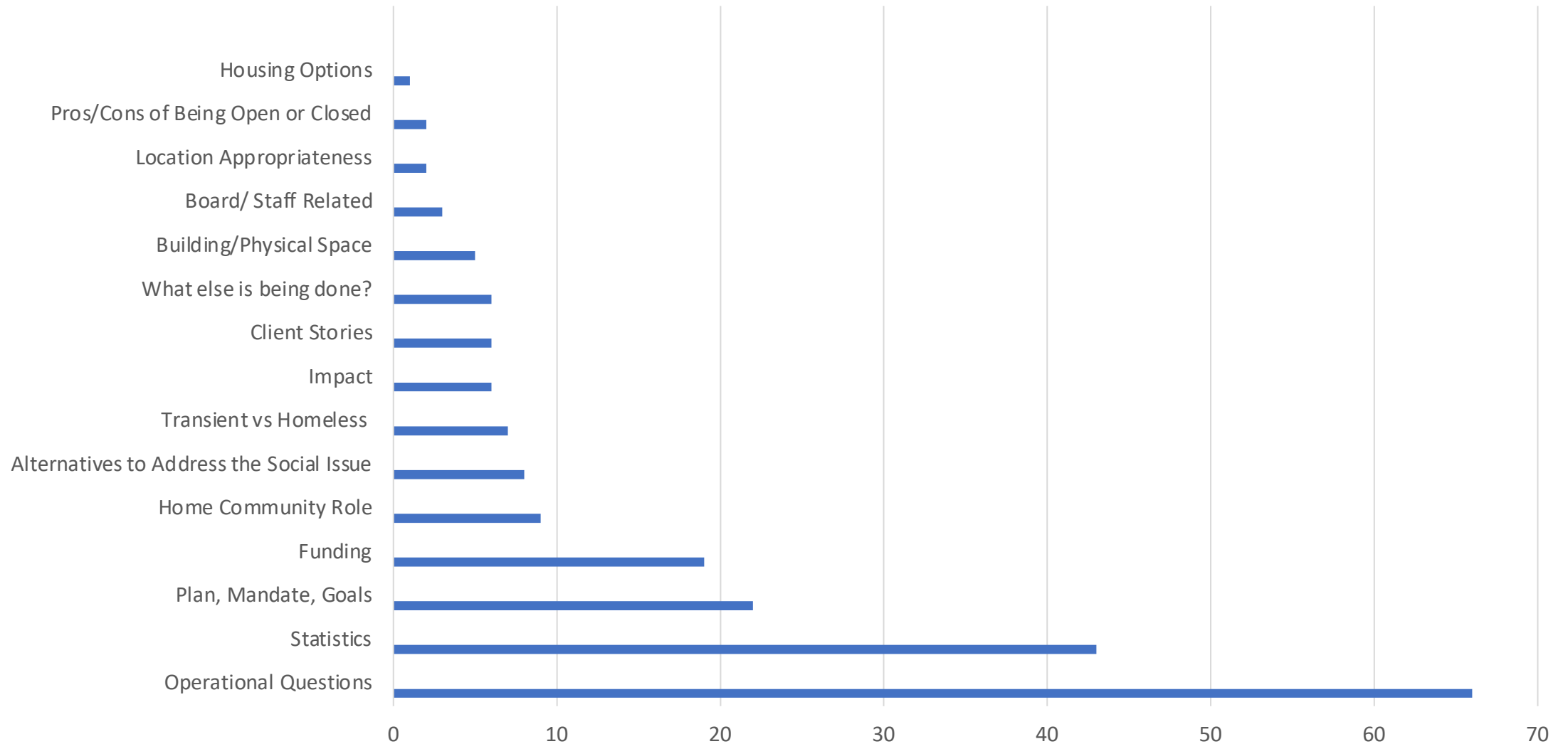
Who pays? What's the intention?

“Who pays for all of this, The Pas, RM, OCN, Federal Gov't, provincial Gov't. What actually happens at Oscar's Place from the time people come into register... Problems between individuals. Not enough info. Are these people the same people uptown walking the streets, back lanes, banks, HBR building? You need to educate the public way more on what's going on with the every day operations. Rules, problems, on a weekly, monthly basis to the public on the operations. Mail, paper, radio, internet.”



“I need to know the intention and objectives of the shelter and how it will consistently deliver on those objectives. It shouldn't stay open if the existing service is the target. It was built to help people move from one lifestyle (driven by addiction and mental health issues) to an improved one (transitioning into a life of sobriety and happiness with support and guidance). It should only be open if the target is a service that supports transitioning to sobriety.”

4.a What Information Do You Need?



Questions

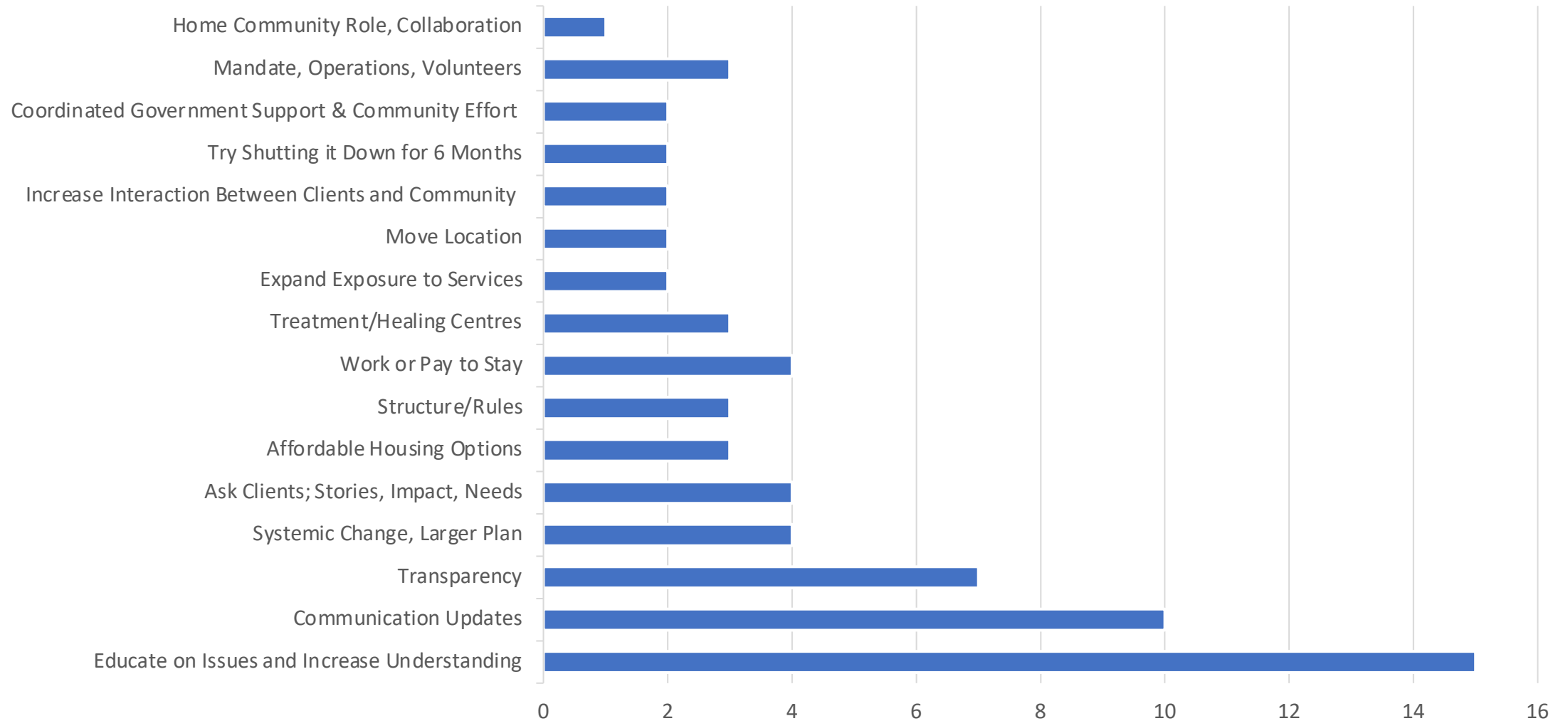
- *“How do other shelters navigate addictions/mental health treatment?”*
- *“What is holding our shelter back from being a helping hand vs an enabling one?”*
- *“Not a matter of should it be closed or open, matter of how to make it more effective.”*

Mandate, Impact, Alternatives

“I’m not sure what the mandate of Oscar’s Place is. Our initial name was Joshua House. The mandate was to provide a shelter of last resort for transient people who could stay one night. Somehow the building and our initial purpose was derailed. I am very disappointed that groups of drunk people have become a common sight in our community.”

“How has it helped the people roaming our streets in the past to now. Is there an alternative that would make it better for all? What is the operating budget? Is the town being compensated by any government agencies for vagrants/homeless that are not from here? When does the issue become a public health and safety concern that warrants intervention? The RCMP seems to spend a whole lot of time on this segment of our population and I would like to know the cost.”

Suggested Solutions



All Levels of Government

“Oscar's place needs buy in from all levels of government to become the force that it can be for wholesale changes to our current transient population.”

“I have taken the time to inform myself on the issue have reviewed what has been done successfully in other places. Perhaps the town and council could take the lead and do the same to help educate ...individuals in this community so that we all make decisions based on human rights and love.”

“What we need is a system that helps treat all the underlying causes of homelessness; lack of education, addiction treatments, employment assistance.”

Work Together



“Need to identify the underlying problems to homelessness and work as a community to find solutions. Look to other communities who have been able to successfully build support systems, and work towards housing solutions. The community needs to stop seeing the homeless as someone else’s responsibility and work together. The mentality is they should all go back to their reserves. Look at this as an economic development opportunity to provide services and housing.”

“Clients do maintenance; painting, give them a reason to treat [Oscar’s Place] with respect.”

Collaborative Action

“I would like to know what organizations in our community have a mandate to deal with homelessness and addictions, then I would like to know if they are working in conjunction together to address the issues in our community. Is there a strategic plan? Who is funding this?”

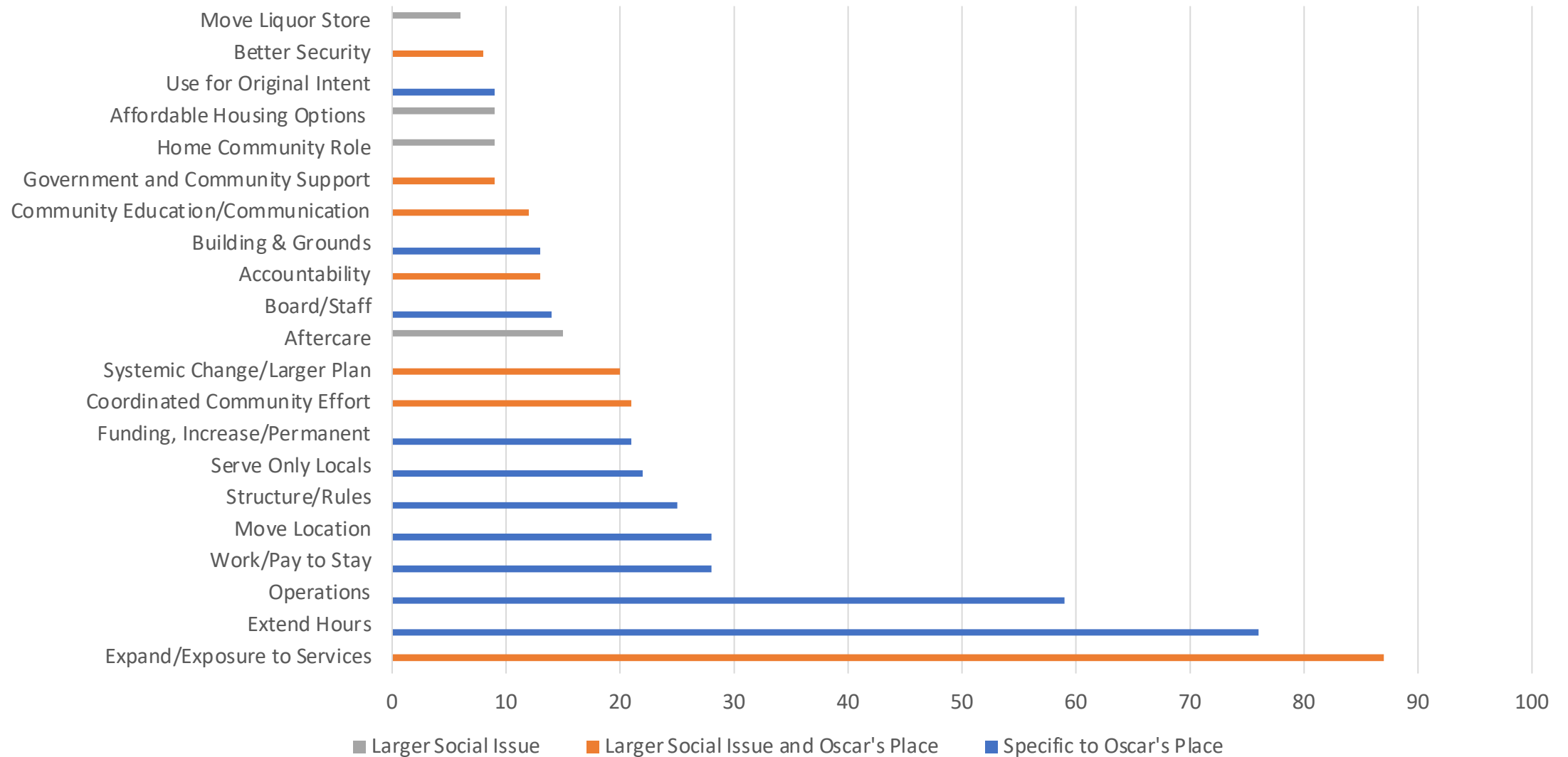
Broader View

"I am sure of the need in affordable housing and hotels for short-term stays. I am sure of the need for chemical addictions treatment. Why is Oscar's Place the only place addressing both human needs in the area? Informed decisions should include answers to questions such as: where is the regional funding for drug/alcohol inpatient treatment going each tax year, and how can some unlivable housing be converted to town run programs for affordable housing and healthy living? (ie. A Harbor in the Storm program offers reduced daily housing rates for patients and their families who live elsewhere and need short or longer-term stays for medical treatments unrelated to addictions. The Pas and area needs a broader view of the current situation than blaming Oscar's Place or "outsiders" (what is that about? We are all outsiders unless we are Swampy Cree, Metis, Ojibway here long before the buildings and bridge existed). Instead of continued relocations, how about looking at living with and caring for each other in the North? Groups such as the Bear Clan Patrol provide free community services that could be helpful here, when residents of Oscar's Place are booted outdoors during the day, without a drop-in center or public space for gatherings during winter months. If The Pas wants tourism, people of all walks of life need places to go within the confines of COVID-19 protocols. This includes public restrooms that may need to be cleaned and monitored by professional teams for sanitation and safety, instead of placing this burden on local businesses."

Q.5 If you think Oscar's Place should be open IF changes were made, what changes are needed?

- Total Comments 354
- Comments Fell within 3 Categories
 1. Changes Related to the Larger Social Issue
 2. Changes Specific to Oscar's Place
 3. Changes to the Larger Social Issue and Oscar's Place

Q.5a What Changes are Needed?



Study, Ask, Complex

“A proper study needs to be done to find a solution. Look at other municipalities that both have had and do have similar problems. Identify what is being done wrong and what could be changed to improve the situation.”

“Homelessness has multiple needs and issues. We certainly need space available for our homeless population, individuals and families. We also need supports for the addictions that appear to be prevalent with some of our transient homeless population. Oscar’s Place, although it provides shelter for the evening for their clients, does not appear to be able to meet the more complex needs their residents are facing, I have known families years ago that were staying at Oscar’s Place, and although grateful, was certainly not the most family friendly place with regards to the other residents that were present. The Pas/province needs a plan to meet the needs of homelessness. Oscar’s Place was a nice facility however the needs of the residents seem to be more complex for what they can address.”

“What we need is church groups, support centres, mentorship programs, real resources set up to combat alcoholism and drug abuse so individuals can leave this destructive lifestyle and people from other communities should be receiving aid and assistance from the communities where they are from.”

Systems, Reaching for Help

“The change isn’t needed to Oscar’s Place, it’s the systems put into place that continue to support oppression and the cycle of addiction and poverty.”

“Oscar’s Place would become beneficial to those affected when the concept of homelessness is accurately addressed from a social, health, and housing perspective... we don’t need a bandaid solution when our community is hemorrhaged.”

“Location and work ethic. Give these people something to be proud of. A hand up starts with the person reaching for help... in the winter, these people could be doing things like shoveling snow, cleaning garbage, etc. Give them a reason to be proud of themselves.”

Funding, Location, Purpose

“Permanent funding is required. Advocacy and referral services are needed. A healing program that provides supportive counselling, clothing depot, food bank and more staff to assist in case managing and reporting. A group of caring citizens to monitor the growth of this great need in the Pas. Leadership need to draw up a statement of commitment and support for this facility. Directed effort to coordinate community services to address homelessness in the Pas.”



“People need a purpose, show them how to improve their life. Change location far from town. Earn/learn skills - their way to dignity. Teach work skills and a huge addiction centre needs to be built so they can be 'sober' and learn skills...During the dirty thirties, jobs were created within the community and people picking up garbage, cutting wood, mowing lawns, some lived in rooming houses. Move it to the Lake or a new subdivision.”

Housing & Education

"I think there needs to be changes in transitional housing/practices, and providing guidance/education on programs offered in the area or province that individuals seeking help can refer to. Seems like it's a dead end after Oscar's Place - if there is an educational aspect already implemented, then we could work at promoting that to the public (ASK Wellness provides local education and advocates for transient populations)."



"Possibly the location will decrease visibility and negative stigma. There have been social assistance associations like "ASK Wellness" that are located in the downtown core of cities to help with transient populations, but the actual emergency shelters are located on the perimeters of downtown cores."



"They need to be able to extend the hours of operation and services provided and they need to be supported in doing that. They need more funding and support from the Tri-Councils, provincial and federal governments. The community needs education on homelessness, its impacts and the lack of support and resources in our area/region for people who are experiencing homelessness."

Mandate & Community Issue

“A decision needs to be made what Oscars Place is. If it’s only funded as an emergency shelter that is all it should be doing. If the role is to be expanded then it needs to be properly funded. Oscar place is not the problem a complete lack of appropriate and timely support services are the problem. Coupled with a breakdown of the ability of the police and judiciary system to control anti social and criminal behavior on the street.”



“Open longer hours, better town funding, recognition of all those that work there, and encourage understanding as to why this is a community issue.”

Consultation, Change, Contact

“I think the community needs to be educated of the specific needs of this population and the social problems that are existing in this community. Shutting the door on the most vulnerable will only escalate this matter.”

*“1. Funding from communities if they have banished the occupant at Oscar's.
2. Zero tolerance for individuals that are arrested or charged with an offence. You break the law, you don't get a spot. 3. Emphasis placed on re-establishing contact with their home community (if they have been banished), and reinstatement into that community.”*

“Change means growth...I think the board may need revamping. Provide training to its members and define roles. Provide the staff with training as well.”

“Consultation with other communities, and local community at large. Accountability of residents, not a free for all, “crash house”.

Depends



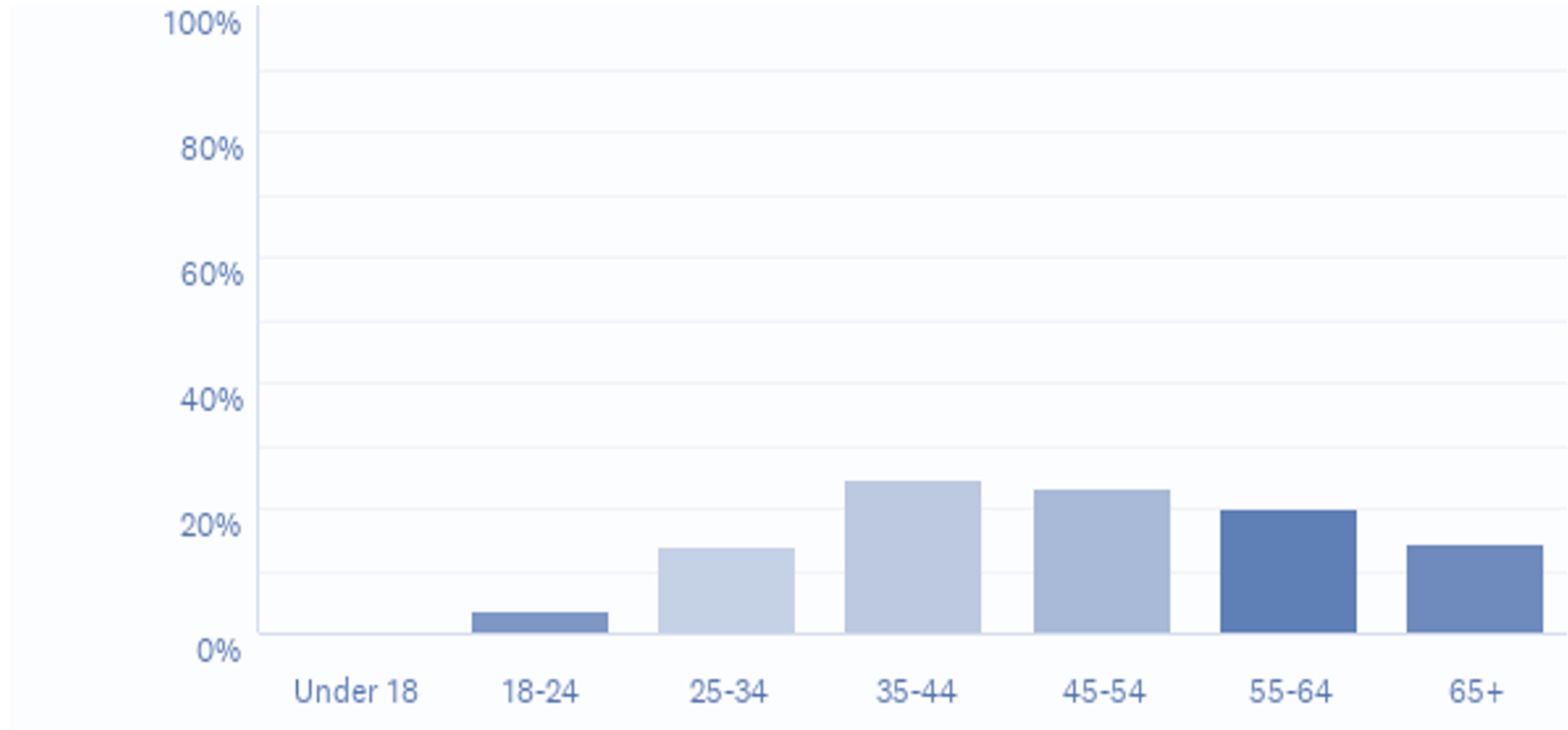
“Depends. If it is to offer more services than as an emergency shelter then it should be properly funded to do so. On the other hand the town is gravely lacking in support services like detox and additional treatment, affordable and transitional housing, temporary housing, food bank and homeless meal services , etc. All those things that can lead to reducing homelessness. Oscar’s place is not designed or funded to do these things but because it tries it get unfairly pilloried for all the real or imaginary problems street people and homeless people bring to a community. That is the reason for the unpopularity and condemnation Oscars place receives.”



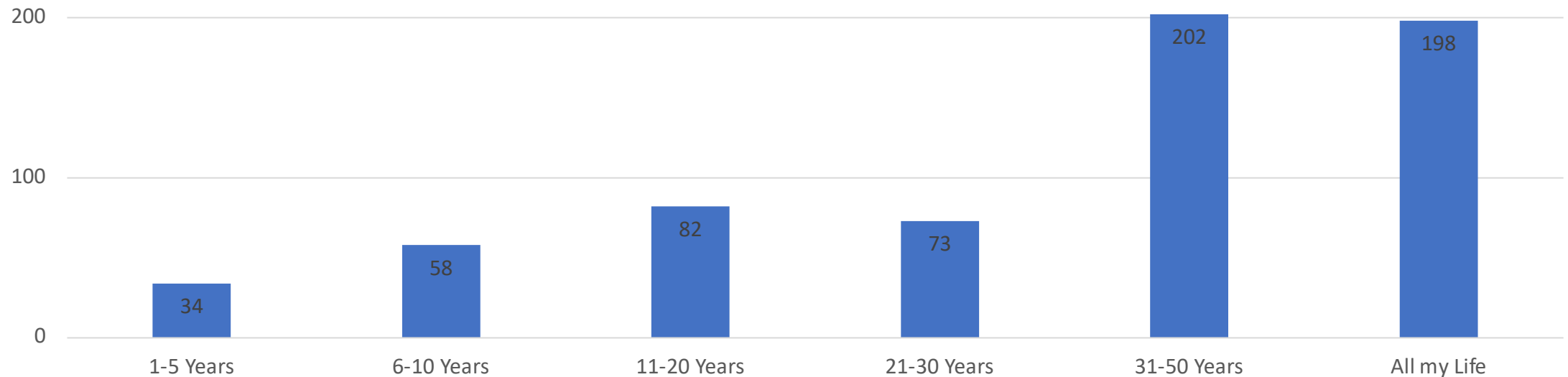
“We need to work together, not alone in solving this issue.”

“The conversation continually circles back to what can/will “The Town of the Pas” do with regards to remedying the problems with regards to our homeless and vulnerable population. My belief is the conversation needs to instead shift to “What can we the communities of the North” do to help successfully reintegrate these people back into communities. Each person should be surveyed for where they come from, who they last lived with, how long they’ve suffered from mental health issues, drug/alcohol abuse, and how long have they been displaced from their families/community. The town should then work in conjunction with the mayor/leader/chiefs of their known communities, and thru a shared partnership of resources and funding, work to provide real social services to help these people live better lives. It’s been dumped on ToFTP council and the RCMP’s back for far too long and it’s time we all came together in solidarity and helped make a difference for those who need it most.”

Q.6: How old are you?

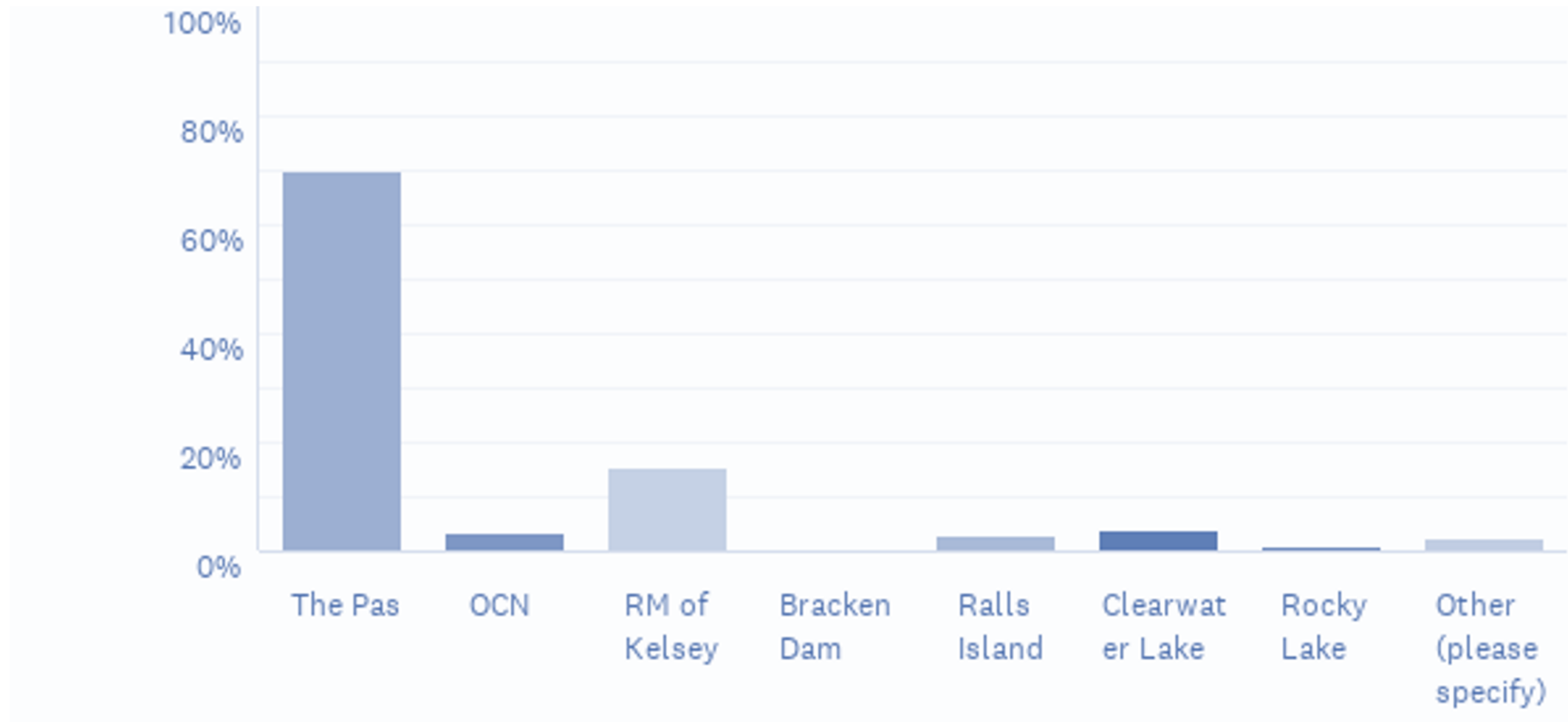


Q.7 How Long Have You Lived in the Area?



- The majority of responses (73%) are from residents who have lived in the area for over 20 years or all their lives. This implies a deep-rooted history and understanding of changes over time.
- Of those who answered 'all my life,' 54% think Oscar's Place should close, 43% think it should remain open, 3% are unsure.
- The lowest response rate, 5%, came from those who have lived in the area for less than 6 years.

Q.8: Where do you live?



Summary of Responses:

WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

- The majority of respondents live in The Pas, 70%.
- Responses from the RM of Kelsey make up 16%.
- The remaining are from Clearwater Lake (4%), OCN (4%), Ralls Island (3%).
- The RM of Kelsey, Clearwater Lake and Ralls Island all have reasonable representation based on population numbers. However, the survey did not adequately capture the voice of people from Opaskwayak Cree Nation.
- It is reasonable to note that residents dealing daily with Oscar's Place clients live or work in close proximity therefore it is not surprising that the majority of respondents live in The Pas.
- The lack of engagement with OCN members should be addressed for future communication and community engagement.

Summary of Responses:

CLOSE or OPEN OSCAR'S PLACE?

- Survey respondents are divided in terms of why they do (50%) or don't (37%) want Oscar's Place to close. A majority suggest it should be closed, however 13% remain undecided.
- There are similarities in comments between those who want to keep it open and those who want it closed in terms of what they view as the (1) underlying causes and their (2) potential suggestions.
- When all categorized comments are combined there is greater clarity.
- When all comments are combined, the top four **underlying causes** of the many and differing issues with Oscar's place become clearer:
 - a. The increasing number of visitors that Oscar's Place attracts from communities outside the Pas are increasing demands.*
 - b. This is an issue of untreated, complex addictions.*
 - c. There is a lack of programs and services to address underlying issues e.g. day programs, counselling, affordable housing, jobs.*
 - d. Oscar's Place is not functioning as originally intended.*
- When all comments were combined for "suggested solutions", the significant finding was:
 - ***Respond to the complexity!***

Summary of Responses:

WHAT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION DO YOU NEED?

- There is a general lack of awareness and understanding of Oscar's Place regarding:
 - History
 - Statistics
 - Mandate
 - Funding
 - Rules
 - Impact
 - Services
 - Client Stories
- Respondents are concerned about a lack of transparency citing a lack of public communication and information sharing.
- There are questions related to collaboration (or lack thereof) with other service agencies, other local action, long-term plans, and alternatives focused on systemic issues.
- Home community support and reintegration is viewed as a high priority by survey respondents.
- Education regarding homelessness and transient populations and underlying causes; racism, poverty, mental health, addictions, is essential.
- Participants want to find solutions by learning from how other communities have successfully dealt with the issue.

Summary of Responses:

WHAT CHANGES ARE NEEDED?

The Larger Social Issues

- Responses included identified needs for:
 - Integrated services
 - Aftercare
 - Affordable housing options
 - Treatment centres
- *“I don’t know, there is no easy answer,” “no hope,” “band aid to the problem”* were sentiments shared throughout the responses
- The role and responsibility of home communities
 - Reintegration back to home communities is seen as “high priority”
 - *“Is there any discussion between local leadership and outlying community leadership?”*
- Relocate the liquor store
 - Suggested as a way to move problems away from the downtown area, not as a means to address addiction issues

Summary of Responses:

WHAT CHANGES ARE NEEDED?

Specific To Oscar's Place

- **Keep Oscar's Place open 24 hours**
 - Many reasons are cited with most related to providing a place for individuals to go during the day, rather than hanging out around the downtown area.
- **Ensure referrals or provision of rehabilitative services**
 - Services need to be expanded to provide counselling, addictions treatment, skills and employment training, literacy, mental health treatment, education, and housing.
- **Client accountability and responsibility**
 - Clients must work or pay to stay at Oscar's Place.
- **Only serve people who are local, from The Pas and Opaskwayak Cree Nation (OCN)**
- **Improve or change the operations provided by Oscar's Place**
 - This theme includes many ideas: more rules particularly related to alcohol and structure, however some were contradictory: *"Can't stay if under the influence" vs "Serve sober and non-sober, most are addicted so do NOT refuse intoxicated individuals"*. Regardless, it is clear that policies are needed that are developed and implemented by multiple stakeholders (including the individuals being served).
 - Use Oscar's Place for its original intent (a transitional place to assist people to live on their own).
 - Revisit and strengthen the Board structure and its directors to ensure more engagement and ownership for its success. Board Governance training will be an important investment. *"OCN, Moose Lake, Cormorant, leaders of surrounding areas should be Board members linking clients to resources to help their community members"*.
- **Provide more and permanent funding for increased services, more and better-trained staff/pay, programs**
- **Relocate Oscar's Place to a place "out of town"**

Summary of Responses:

WHAT CHANGES ARE NEEDED?

Larger Social Issues & Oscar's Place

- **Respond to the complexity of the underlying causes with an expansion of services and/or coordinated referrals.**
 - Expand and increase exposure to services that address the underlying causes.
 - Focus on education, communication, and accountability.
- **Address homelessness through a coordinated response from a social, health, and housing perspective.**
 - Promote an understanding that homelessness is a community issue.
 - A coordinated community-led effort is needed to drive change.
 - Seek support from all levels of government and the community.
 - Address the systems in place and the capacity to address the complexity of underlying causes.
 - Minimize the impact of Oscar's Place clients on the surrounding area through better security and services.

UNDERLYING VALUES REFLECTED BY RESPONDENTS

- While there is anger and frustration in evidence, there are also many respondents who convey kindness, compassion, and an understanding that this is about broader issues and underlying causes that will require community engagement, collaboration, and cross-sectoral initiatives to resolve.
- There is generally an understanding of the complexity of the issue of Oscar's Place. However, that complexity has also contributed to frustration as there isn't a collective vision or coordinated effort for moving forward.
- While there are indications that people want to contribute to fixing the issues, there is also acknowledgement that this needs to be about The Pas and area needing a broader view of the current situation rather than blaming Oscar's Place or "outsiders". As one respondent put it, *"...We are all outsiders unless we are Swampy Cree, Metis, or Ojibway as they were here long before the buildings and bridge existed. Instead of continued relocations, how about looking at living with and caring for each other in the North?"*
- It is generally acknowledged that wherever possible the Town of the Pas, Rural Municipality of Kelsey, and OCN (Opaskwayak Cree Nation) will need to be involved in generating shared solutions.

SUGGESTED OPTIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD

While the data provided thus far provides specific interim recommendations for Oscar's place, it will also be essential to respond to the complexity of the issues by engaging the broader community and stakeholders. The following are next steps for consideration:

- 1. Support the emerging efforts of Oscar's Place in addressing the issues reflected in the survey e.g. Impact, Transparency, Location, Clean Up Crew, Hiring for Odd Jobs.**
- 2. Develop a Terms of Reference and seek Town and RM of Kelsey Council, Onekanew mena Onushekewuk support for an Adhoc Committee (6-8 members) who will be tasked as "Shift Disturbers" to mobilize community-led innovation. Use an agreed-upon position description as a recruitment tool in order to allow individuals to step forward and indicate their interest.**
- 3. The first initiative of the Shift Disturbers would focus on improving the effectiveness of the social delivery system in The Pas and surrounding area. Future possibilities could include:**
 - youth engagement (working with existing youth and providers in the tri-community area to collectively address matters involving youth in need of opportunity)
 - promoting tourism (working with the Destination Marketing Committee and existing groups for coordinated efforts)
 - supporting business development (working with The Chamber of Commerce and others)
 - welcoming newcomers (working with The Pas Immigrant Services and others), etc.

SUGGESTED OPTIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD (cont'd)

4. The Shift Disturber Crew would support citizen engagement by recruiting other stakeholders to serve on a variety of subcommittees and/or work with existing groups.

5. Subcommittees of the Shift Disturber's could potentially include:

- Education and Awareness (Outcome: promote greater understanding and compassion of homelessness, effective alternatives and research)
- Interagency Collaboration Committee (Outcome: facilitate cross-sectoral and interagency dialogue and collaboration to maximize impact and collective resources)
- Strengthening Capacity for Making Shift Happen (Outcome: Increase leadership and organizational capacity by facilitating learning opportunities for individual, organization, and community growth and development)
- *Join with others to promote provincial and federal investment that will ensure affordable housing. (Outcome: Advocate and Increase options for affordable housing options.) Note: a resourced, housing and homelessness strategy has been recognized as a critical first step.*

HOW SHIFT CONTINUES TO HAPPEN: Into the Future

- This survey is one piece of the larger Make Shift Happen initiative.
- Ongoing efforts are underway, collaborating with and gathering information from a range of populations and projects:
 - SCAN (Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods)
 - OCN Link Group
 - Community Activators and Advocates
 - Youth, etc.
- The movement is towards developing an overall crime prevention and community well-being strategy.
- It can only happen with your leadership.

Thank you for being involved.



For More
Information

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