



Nowhere to Go

In Opposition to Bylaw 20700

Changing Behaviour in Public Spaces

Carrot vs. Stick – monetary fines are ineffective for people who have extremely high or low amounts of money

Fines will increase conflict and have no meaningful impact on the most problematic behaviors.

People in survival mode don't care about fines as opposed to having a safe, warm place to exist where they will not be harassed.

Interactions with police and bylaw officers will further erode trust in established institutions and their ability to safely find support without losing what little they have.

Essentially criminalizes being homeless in public because there is nowhere to go.

Case Study: Me

Unemployed (not by choice) autistic mother of three with PTSD who fled domestic violence 3 years ago. Looking for work with help from Employabilities etc.

Income: \$700 Civida rent subsidy. Not eligible for EI, waiting to hear from income support. Money in the bank: \$200. Rent due March 1: \$1,300 Other bills: \$1000

Debt: \$80,000

If nothing changes, I will face eviction in March, and lose all custody of children.

Where do I go?

Case Study: Me

1. Call 211 – likely directed to Hope Mission or other temporary shelter
2. Conditions are crowded with a lot of people with severe issues and not enough resources – breeding ground for violence and I've already got enough trauma and lost everything, I would be scared to go there
3. Even if I slept there, I have nowhere to go during the day to keep warm or sheltered
4. Bylaws – to discourage transit loitering or temporary shelters
5. What's another \$250 of debt when I already owe more than I will ever be able to pay off?
6. Warmth/Privacy/Safety is worth more than fines – I don't care if loitering isn't allowed, I'm staying warm. Risk of getting arrested and more traumatized - inhumane

Case Study: Additional Barriers

I am white and small, less likely to be seen as a threat. I have no addiction issues but use weed on occasion to manage anxiety. Would likely self medicate if experiencing trauma of homelessness. All my time and energy would be devoted to survival, no joy in life.

My Cree neighbor was homeless for 2 years. She has severe trauma and mental health disorders. Transit is how she kept warm because Hope Mission closed during the day. There was nowhere she could self medicate safely. She was disconnected from any community and scared of authority figures.

Punishing people for having nowhere to go to keep safe and warm is inhumane.

People who have nowhere to go don't usually care about fines or the impact on communities who reject them. Redirecting behaviour through positive connection is more effective. If you give them somewhere to go that meets their needs, they will not be where you don't want them.