Safe Cities London
Scoping Study & 2021-2023 Action Plan

Presentation to Community & Protective Services Committee

March 2, 2021

Trigger Warning

This report examines the realities of violence against women and girls and includes detailed descriptions of violence experienced in our community. This subject matter may create feelings of discomfort and may be triggering to survivors of sexual assault or violence.

Please be advised that some descriptions of violence against women and girls contained in this report include potentially disturbing language that may not be appropriate for all audiences.

It is important to practice self-care when engaging with this material. If you or someone you know requires support or information relating to violence, please call Anova's 24/7 crisis and support line at 519-642-3000.

UN Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces

- In 2013, the United Nations Commission for the Status of Women identified various forms of sexual violence against women and girls in public spaces as a distinct area of concern, and called on governments to prevent it.

- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development set "the elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres" as one of its specific goals (Target 5.2).

- Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces is one of the UN Women's Flagship Programming Initiatives designed to ensure that UN Women can deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- This flagship program will support national governments to address SDG targets across multiple goals.

UN Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces

What are participating cities required to do?

Participating cities commit to:

1. Identify gender-responsive locally relevant and owned interventions.
2. Develop and effectively implement comprehensive laws and policies to prevent and respond to sexual violence in public spaces.
3. Investments in the safety and economic viability of public spaces.
4. Change attitudes and behaviours to promote women's and girls' rights to enjoy public spaces free from violence.

- Cities are required to undertake a scoping study of the incidence (where, what, who, when) of sexual violence and harassment in public spaces.

- Data gathered through the scoping study will be used to determine locally relevant actions to prevent and better respond to sexual violence and harassment in public spaces.

Safe Cities London

- In 2017, Municipal Council unanimously endorsed London's participation in the UN Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces initiative, appointing Anova as the lead organization for this work.

- In 2018, Municipal Council approved the allocation of financial resources and interim assistance to Anova for the completion of the scoping study. Funding used to build a website, purchase participative mapping software, and hire a Coordinator.

- Community-led Safe Cities London Advisory Committee and Research Sub-Committee were created to guide the scoping study. Scoping study conducted between July 1 – December 31, 2018.

- Analysis and preparation of the Safe Cities London Scoping Study throughout 2019.

- Safe Cities London Action Plan development July 2020 – January 2021.

Safe Cities London Advisory Committee

- Anova
- City of London
- Western University
- King's University College
- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
- Women & Politics
- London Public Library
- London District Catholic School Board
- Canadian Coalition to Empower Women
- Fanshawe College

- Thames Valley District School Board
- Western University Students' Council
- Urban League London
- London Transit
- Atlohsa
- YMCA of South Western Ontario
- Brescia University College
- London Police Service

Safe Cities London Scoping Study

Overview

- The scoping study sought to better understand the local context related to targeted acts of violence experienced by women and girls, including sexual violence in public spaces, as well as factors that influence the perceptions of safety for women and girls.

- Setting the Context
  - Gender-Based Violence
  - Reported Forms of Violence
  - National Trends
  - Local Context

Safe Cities London Scoping Study

Data Collection

- Between July 1, 2018 and December 31, 2018, 1,825 pins were created on the online map of London at various locations where self-identifying females felt safe or unsafe.

- Paper copies of the mapping tool questions were made available at community organizations and events.

- Focus groups with 36 participants were conducted with individuals from specific target populations. These included: Indigenous women and girls, newcomer women and girls, women and girls with disabilities, and members of the LGBTQ2+ community.

- Participation in a focus group and the use of the participative mapping tool were optional. Therefore, the results of the analysis reflect the information individuals chose to share and were comfortable disclosing.

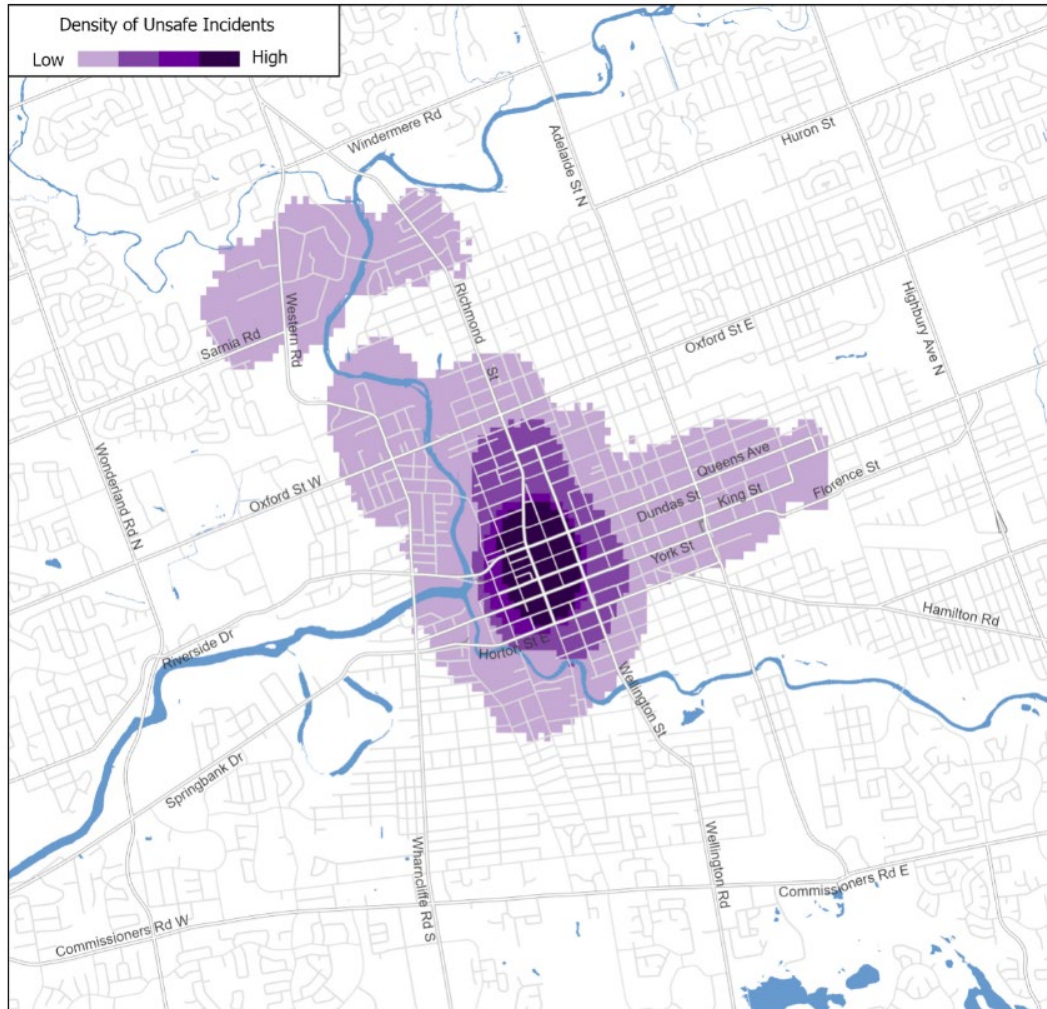# Safe Cities London Scoping Study

Data Analysis

- Quantitative responses from the participative mapping tool were collated and analyzed by question to prepare descriptive statistics.

- Qualitative data from the participative mapping tool and focus groups were analyzed to identify themes about the nature and types of violence occurring in public spaces in London, factors that promote or negatively impact feelings of safety, perpetrators of violence, and the types of locations where violence occurred.

Data Limitations

- Self-Reported Data
- User Anonymity
- Study Sample

Safe Cities London Scoping Study

Results

Safe Cities London Scoping Study

Nature and Type of Violence Experienced in Public Spaces

- The most common themes from respondents about incidents of *sexual violence* included: non-physical sexual harassment, physical sexual harassment or aggression, and being followed, restrained, or restricted in a sexual manner.

- The most common types of incidents involving *violence that is non-sexual* reported by respondents included: being approached, restricted, and/or followed, non-physical harassment, physical harassment or aggression, and criminal violence.

Safe Cities London Scoping Study

Risk and Protective Factors

Factors that influence perceptions of personal safety and/or risk of experiencing violence. Some of the factors outlined were described by respondents as being either a protective factor or a risk factor or both.

- **Structural Factors** (public illumination, built environment, police presence and response, security conditions and measures, strong communities, education and training)

- **Social and Cultural Factors** (alcohol and drugs, culture of street involvement, presence of people, bystander intervention and receiving help from others, knowledge of previous incidents in an area, disruptive behavior, social norms and discrimination, traffic and driving)

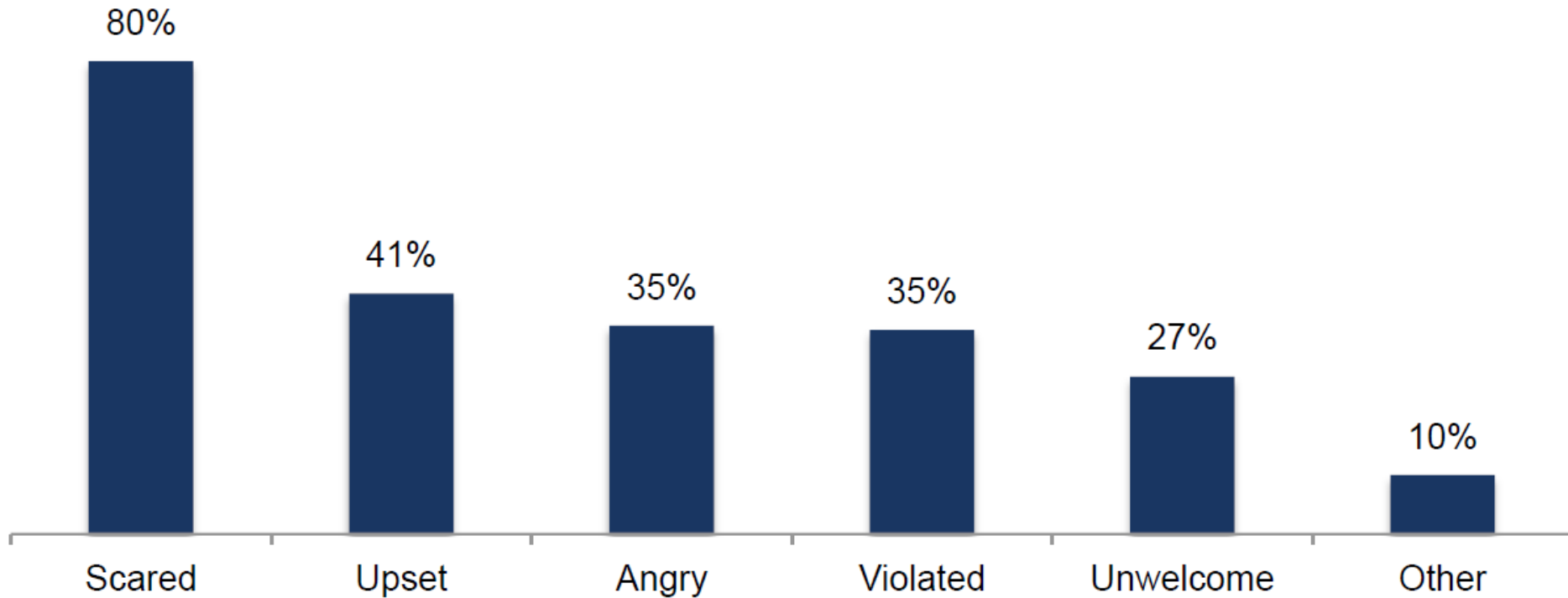# Safe Cities London Scoping Study

Places and Spaces: Where Violence is Occurring

- In transit
- Parks, paths, and green spaces
- Residential areas
- Local businesses, shopping areas, and service centres
- Downtown
- Night life entertainment spaces
- Campuses and schools
- Workplaces

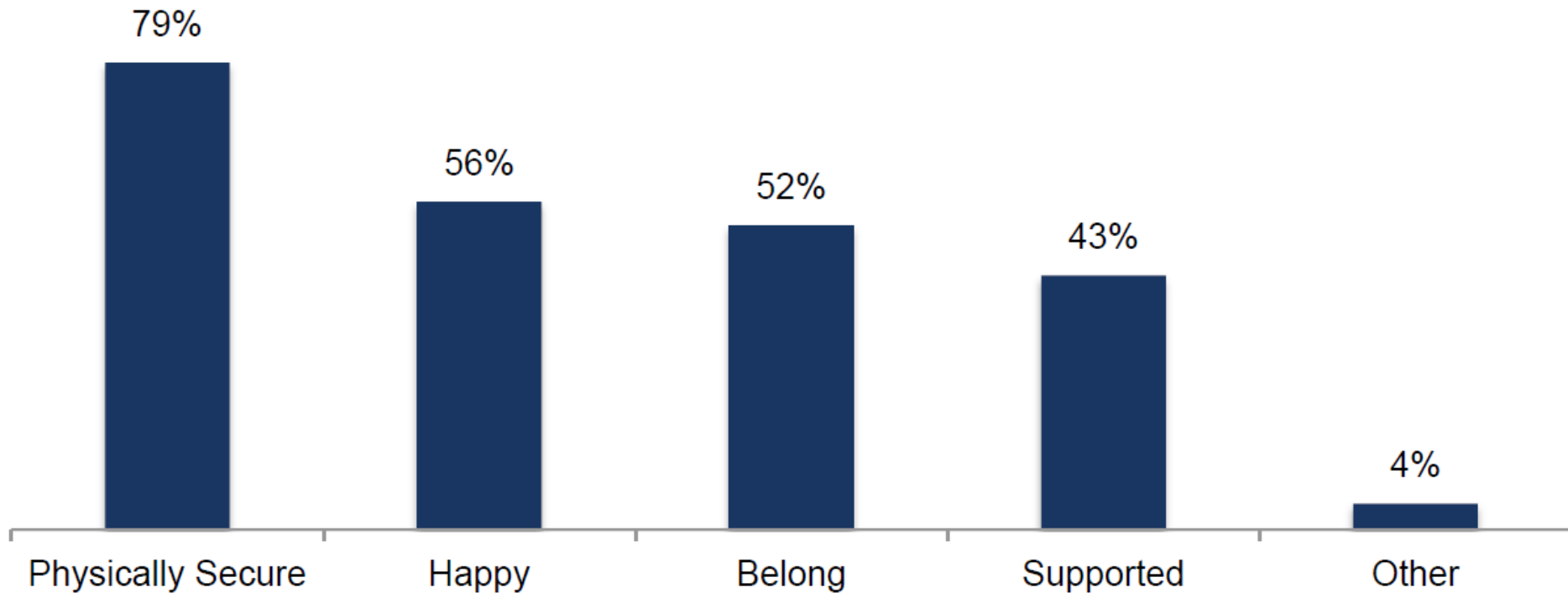# Safe Cities London Scoping Study

Impact on Women and Girls

How Respondents Felt At Unsafe Locations (n=1,511)

Category	Percentage
Scared	80%
Upset	41%
Angry	35%
Violated	35%
Unwelcome	27%
Other	10%

Safe Cities London Scoping Study

Impact on Women and Girls

How Respondents Felt At Safe Locations (n=246)

- Physically Secure: 79%
- Happy: 56%
- Belong: 52%
- Supported: 43%
- Other: 4%

Safe Cities London Action Plan

Vision

London is a safe city where women, girls, nonbinary, trans, and survivors access public spaces and freely participate in public life without fear or experience of sexual violence.

Guiding Principles

- Intersectionality
- Accountability
- Innovation
- Collaboration
- Evidence-Informed
- Accessibility
- Trauma-Informed

Area of Focus: Social Norms

Outcome

Londoners have a comprehensive understanding of sexual violence in public spaces that inspires individual and community action to make public spaces safe for women, girls, nonbinary, trans, and survivors.

Expected Results
1. Increased knowledge of what is sexual violence, what causes it, and the intersectional impacts.
2. Increased skill and desire to take appropriate action.

Area of Focus: Policy & Practice

Outcome

Evidence-informed policy and practice that shifts culture, mindset, and behaviour to make public spaces safe for women, girls, nonbinary, trans, and survivors by creating a community in which sexual violence in not accepted or tolerated.

Expected Results

1. Increased use of an intersectional gendered lens in policy development related to public spaces.
2. Improved use and monitoring of new and existing policies to support behaviour change.
3. Improved evidence and understanding of the impact of policy use.
4. Increased use of environmental design as a tool to promote safety.

Area of Focus: Collaboration

Outcome

A responsive and preventative system working together to make public spaces safe for women and girls.

Expected Results

1. Increased collaboration among system partners.
2. Improved awareness and understanding of the system and its gaps.
3. Increased capacity to create change.

Next Steps

Moving to Action

- Action Plan implementation
- Action Plan monitoring and evaluation