

OLD STRATHCONA
MAPPING &
PLANNING
COMMITTEE

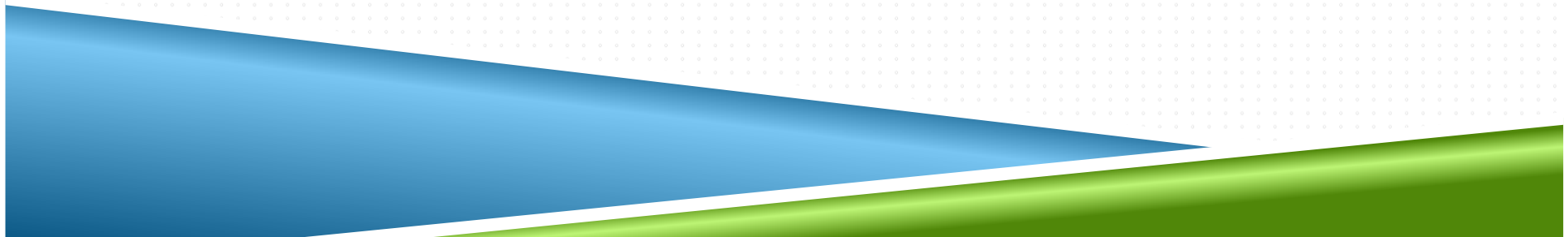
Safe Streets: The
Next Phase

May 1st, 2013



Safe Streets: The Impact of Social Exclusion on Youth who Engage in High-Risk Behavior

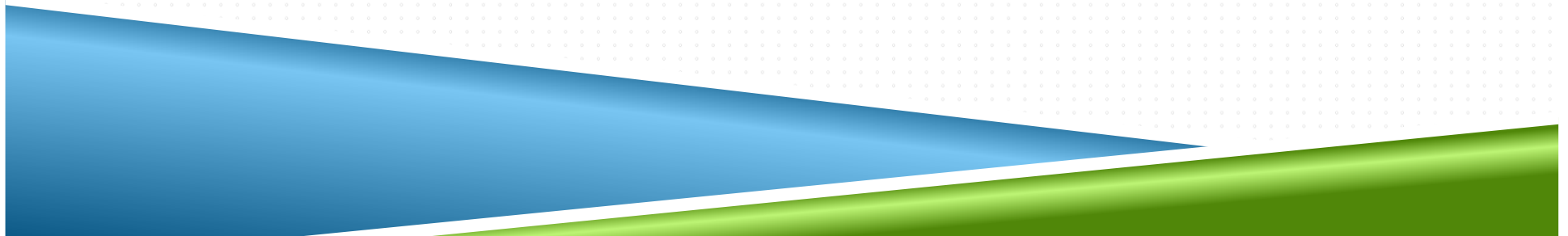
- ▶ How does social exclusion influence youth who engage in high risk behaviors?
- ▶ Restricted access to housing, employment, school programs and public spaces place youth at risk for being victimized by crime, and committing crimes, because such exclusion forces youth into spending their time on the street (Gaetz, 2004)



Safe Streets: The Impact of Social Exclusion on Youth who Engage in High-Risk Behavior

Phase 1: Safe & Unsafe Routes

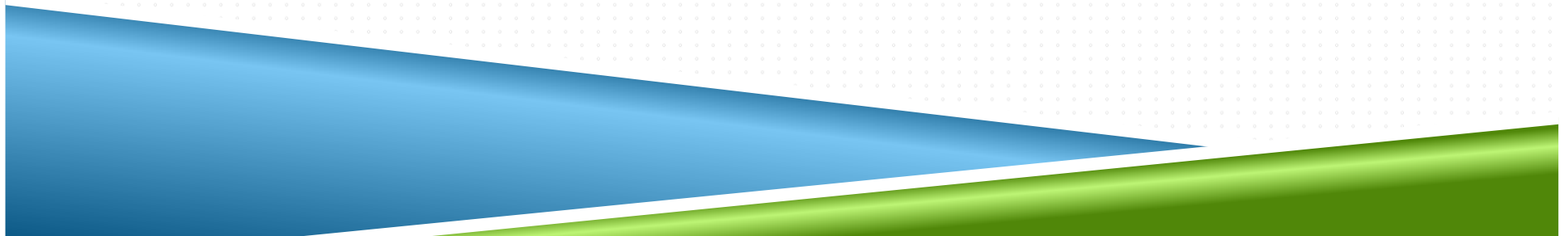
- ▶ Youth completed a mapping activity to record their typical daily routes and destinations,
- ▶ Youth shaded the areas they considered safe green and the areas they considered unsafe red
- ▶ 57 youth at 4 agencies (iHuman, OSYS, YESS and ICYHP) participated. The youth were 14-24 years of age.



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Safe & Unsafe Routes: Findings

- ▶ How far the youth traveled on a typical day was a surprising result
- ▶ Male youth traveled farther on a typical day than female youth
- ▶ Female youth reported more unsafe areas and fewer safe areas
- ▶ Transportation is a huge barrier



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Phase 2: Youth Transit Pilot

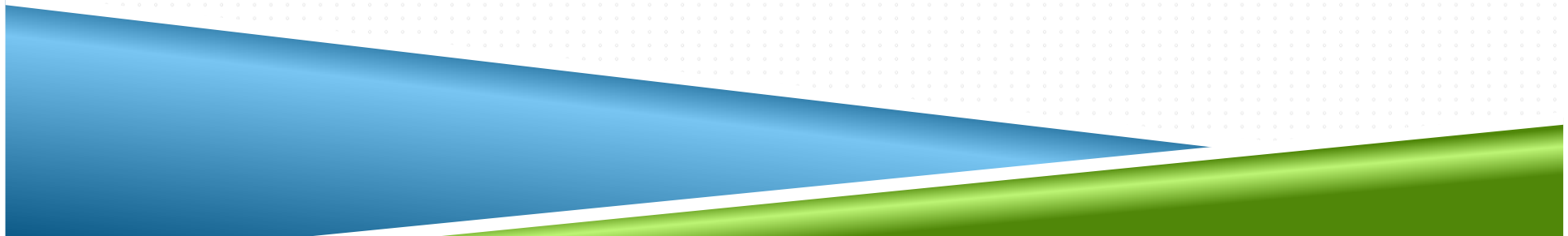
- ▶ In partnership with the University of Alberta's Social Support Research Program
- ▶ Funded by Homeward Trust
- ▶ Youth received either bus tickets or bus passes for 3 months
- ▶ A discussion was facilitated between the youth and an ETS representative to promote transit safety



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Youth Transit Pilot: Preliminary Findings

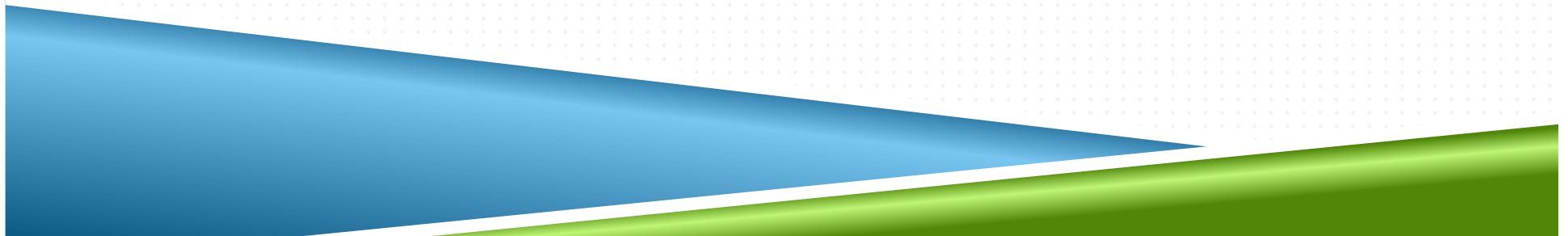
- ▶ Youth felt that transportation access helped them connect to employment, training and other resources
- ▶ It made them feel “human” and less worried about how to access supports
- ▶ The youth preferred bus passes to tickets
- ▶ One youth was able to secure housing using his transit passes to access supports and resources



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Transit Pilot Findings (Continued)

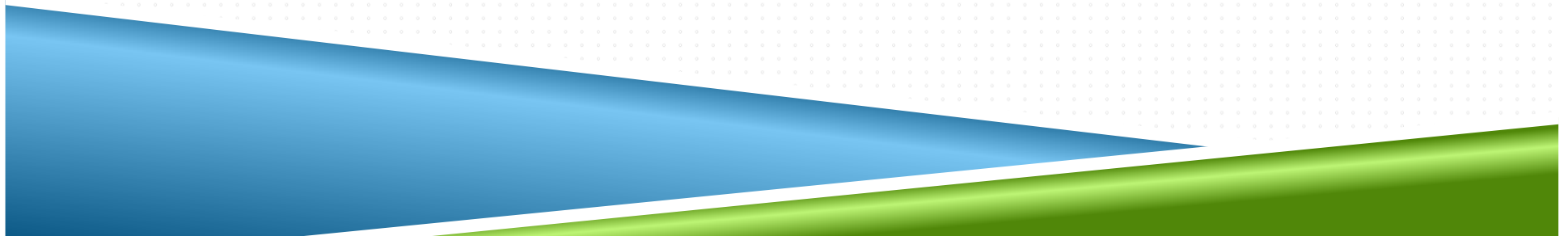
- ▶ Youth felt profiled because of their race or because they looked homeless.
- ▶ Youth reported being asked where they got their tickets, having their passes inspected and being singled out of crowds to be asked to see their tickets.
- ▶ Two youth reported having their tickets confiscated.



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Transit Pilot Preliminary Findings (Continued)

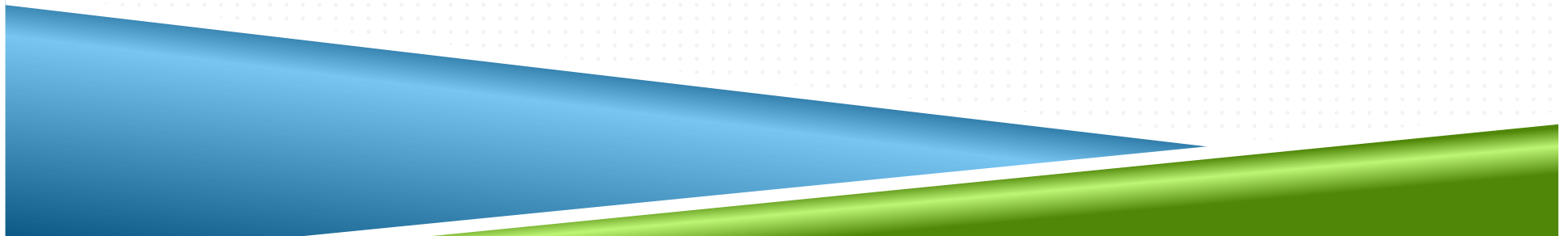
- ▶ Youth discussed the risks of being homeless and how entrenchment happens
- ▶ Youth thought that more early and intensive supports (including housing and transit) would reduce harm and prevent them from getting entrenched in the homeless population



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Phase 3: Further Investigation into Impact of Social Exclusion

- ▶ Currently under development
- ▶ How do youth decide a space is safe or unsafe, and what are their recommendations to make unsafe places safer?
- ▶ What is the impact of social exclusion on their decision-making?



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Final Thoughts: Youth Services & Research

- ▶ As direct service providers, youth services are constantly evolving to meet the changing needs of the youth population they serve.
- ▶ As policy is developed based on research, building research capacity into youth service funding could mean policy is informed quickly on best practices to meet the needs of youth.

