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SPECIAL Municipal Council Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, July 29, 2025 – 9:00 a.m.

MODL Council Chambers – 10 Allée Champlain Drive, Cookville

- 1. Call to Order**
 - 1.1 Mi'kma'ki Territorial Acknowledgement
- 2. Changes/Approval of Agenda (as circulated)**
- 3. Staff Presentation**
 - 3.1 Municipal Wide Land Use Planning Project – Home Based Businesses 1-16
- 4. Consideration of Correspondence**
 - 4.1 Correspondence from Be The Peace re Alcohol in Convenience Stores 17-30
- 5. Staff Reports**
 - 5.1 Recreation, Parks & Tourism**
 - 5.1.1 Transformation of Dangerous Spaces – Letter of Support 31-41
- 6. In Camera**
 - 6.1 Land Negotiations under Section 22(2)(a) of the MGA
 - 6.2 Contract Negotiations under Section 22(2)(e) of the MGA
- 7. Adjournment**

Special Council
Item 3.1
Date: July 29, 2025
Authorization: T. MacEwan



The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg Information Report

Report to: Mayor and Municipal Council
Submitted by: Carin Mahon, Planner I
Date: July 22, 2025
Re: Municipal Wide Land Use Planning Project – Home-Based Businesses

Executive Summary

Home-based businesses (HBBs) provide residents with an opportunity to generate income without needing to leave home and are a cost-effective way to start a business. They also contribute to more diverse communities by providing services in rural areas. However, as the popularity of HBBs grow, it is important to consider their potential impact on residential uses in both rural and more densely populated contexts.

While provincial legislation does not explicitly focus on HBBs, it does recognize the connection between land use planning and economic development. The Statements of Provincial Interest emphasize that poor land use regulation can negatively impact the economic, physical, and social well-being of communities, underscoring the need for thoughtful planning to support local economies. Similarly, the Municipal Government Act (MGA) and Minimum Planning Requirements require municipalities to include policies that address economic development and land use compatibility, which can be applied to the regulation of HBBs. As MODL develops land use policies, it is important to manage the potential for land use conflicts particularly in residential areas without creating unnecessary barriers for small-scale entrepreneurship.

Background

MODL's Economic Development Strategic Action Plan (2023) states that "there is an influx of innovative and creative entrepreneurs operating home-based businesses" in the municipality. While HBBs can offer residents a cost-effective way to generate income, they can also lead to

land-use conflicts by negatively impacting neighbouring residents and other businesses. Some types of HBBs have the potential to increase traffic, noise, and pollution due to the nature of their business. When more disruptive types of HBBs are in higher-density residential areas or on private roads, this can be particularly disturbing to other residents. These are important considerations when planning for HBBs and emphasize the significance of determining compatibility for HBBs in certain areas.

Building Code Flexibility

In 2016, the Province of Nova Scotia amended the Nova Scotia Building Code Regulations to exempt HBBs that occupy no more than 25% of the total floor area (50 m²) of the homeowner's residence from certain requirements intended for commercial buildings. These exceptions include wider doors, a barrier-free entrance, additional washroom facilities, fire separations, and fire-rated doors. The easing of these requirements has made it simpler and more affordable to start a HBB in Nova Scotia, aligning more closely with the requirements for HBBs in other Provinces.

Home-Based Businesses (HBBs) in MODL

In 2023, there were approximately 256 HBBs located within the unplanned areas of MODL. This data was collected during the Land Use Mapping Project completed over the Summer of 2023 which was an earlier component of MODL's Municipal-Wide Land Use Planning Project. Unplanned areas refer to the parts of MODL that are not part of a MODL Secondary Planning Area.

Unlike traditional survey-based methods of data collection, the Land Use Mapping Project (2023) gathered data through direct observation. Municipal planning staff observed, documented, and mapped all the existing land uses across the Municipality (excluding the Secondary Planning Areas). Home-based businesses were identified when there was a visible sign from the road that clearly stated the business name and business type. Staff confirmed the identified HBBs by conducting a desktop analysis and checked if there was an online presence to verify the operational status of the business. It is important to acknowledge that not all registered HBBs were identified during this project, and that the data that was collected may be inaccurate due to the observational nature of the Project.

The findings from the Land Use Mapping Project (2023) revealed that the largest category of HBBs within the unplanned areas of MODL are trade-based businesses. This category includes businesses related to construction, carpentry, heating, plumbing, electrical, masonry, and roofing. The second largest category of identified HBBs are automotive-related businesses which includes auto mechanics, tires sales, small engine repair, auto salvage, and car detailing.

Following these, are general service HBBs which include landscaping, tree care, property management, snow plowing, excavation, furniture moving, consulting, graphic design, interior design, marketing, photography, taxi and transportation, elderly homecare, and housekeeping.

Municipal Government Act

Section 213 of the Municipal Government Act (MGA) defines the purpose of a Municipal Planning Strategy and emphasizes that the policies must provide a framework for social and economic development within a municipality. Section 214 explains the required statements of policy in a Municipal Planning Strategy which must include outlining objectives concerning various topics including economic development.

Regarding home-based businesses specifically, section 235 of the MGA outlines that a developer officer may grant a variance to the location and number of parking spaces required, the ground area of a structure, the height of a structure, the floor area occupied by a home-based business, and/or the height and area of a sign.

Minimum Planning Requirements

The Provincial Minimum Planning Requirements Regulations state that Municipal Planning Strategies (MPS) must contain statements of policy on commercial and industrial uses. The MPS may include statements of policy on “municipal investment for public and private development and coordinating public programs relating to the economic, social and physical development of the municipality”. It also states that the MPS may include policies regarding home occupations and home-based businesses, as well as land use matters relating to the physical, economic or social environment of the municipality.

Statements of Provincial Interest

While none of the Statements of Provincial Interest (SPI) explicitly focus on economic development or HBBs, the SPI document emphasizes the connection between land use regulations and the economy. It states that the “ill-advised regulation of land and water resources can have serious consequences on [the province’s] economic, physical, and social well-being”.

Discussion

The following section outlines how neighbouring rural municipalities to MODL regulate HBBs in their Municipal Planning Strategies (MPS) and Land Use By-laws (LUB):

1. Region of Queens Municipality (2022):

The MPS of Queens recognizes that HBBs provide opportunities for residents to start affordable and accessible businesses. There is also recognition that HBBs can have certain negative impacts on a neighbourhood which can include traffic and increased competition for other businesses. The Region of Queen's has taken a tiered approach in regulating HBBs where smaller and more limited HBBs are permitted in most areas where residential uses are the predominant use, and larger and more expansive types of HBBs are permitted only in the rural areas where a mix of uses is more common.

- A tiered regulatory approach is taken to account for the impact of different types of HBBs, with regulations around number of employees, commercial gross floor area, and outdoor storage outline in the LUB.
 - Level 1 HBBs: Small in scale with limited uses, permitted in most residential areas to maintain neighbourhood character.
 - Level 2 HBBs: Larger operations with broader permitted uses, including outdoor storage/display, allowed only in rural and mixed-use zones (e.g., Hamlet Core, Rural Commercial, Inland Rural, and Coastal Rural Zones).
- Activities such as art sales, craft workshops, and teaching (e.g., dance or music) are explicitly allowed as HBBs.
- HBBs operating in designated heritage properties may receive relaxations of certain bylaw requirements, including allowance for one additional on-site, non-resident employee.

2. Town of Lunenburg (2021):

The Town of Lunenburg is supportive of HBBs due to its strong tradition of such enterprises. While there are some controls in place to ensure compatibility with surrounding uses, HBBs are widely permitted. The Town of Lunenburg has established Use Zones that help to categorize the varying uses that are permitted in different areas. HBBs are permitted in the Lower Density Residential Use (RL) Zone, and the Medium Density Residential Use (RM) Zone.

- HBBs are permitted in any zone where residential dwellings are allowed, with specific limits set in the Land Use By-law.
- Regulations include HBB size, number of non-resident employees, and types of permitted commercial uses to ensure compatibility with surrounding uses.
- Under the MGA, the Development Officer may approve variances for HBBs including:
 - Parking space requirements
 - Structure size and height

- Floor area used by the HBB
- Sign height and area

3. Town of Bridgewater (2014):

In the Town of Bridgewater, HBBs are permitted in all residential zones when the use is secondary to a primary residential use. The town aims to support HBBs and mix compatible land uses as these can improve diversity and walkability within neighbourhoods. To minimize the impacts on surrounding residential areas, regulations are in place that specify number of employees, commercial gross floor area, and outdoor storage outline in the LUB.

4. Municipality of the District of Chester (2022):

Throughout the municipality, home-based businesses are permitted in a number of zones including the Single Unit Residential Zone, the Coastal Island One Zone, the Coastal Island Two Zone, and the Lakeside Zone.

- HBBs are permitted in the stated zones, with limits on size and type to ensure compatibility with nearby uses.
- Regulations around signage, open storage, and outdoor displays to reduce potential impacts on adjacent residential properties, are also outlined in the LUB.

5. Municipality of East Hants (2024):

HBBs in East Hants are permitted in most of the rural and residential zones and are “conditionally permitted” in the mixed-use zones. The Rural zones permit more disruptive types of HBBs like automotive repair, excavation services, and trucking services while these are prohibited in the Residential zones. Uses prohibited in Residential Zones include automotive repair, automotive sales or welding shops, abattoirs, butchers, and care centres.

- HBBs are encouraged in residential and rural areas to support flexible, small-scale commercial development.
- Commercial floor area requirements are outlined in the LUB to maintaining the residential character of the building whilst operating a HBB.
- A limited range of business uses is permitted within the Residential and Rural Zones, as defined in the Land Use By-law.
- Office, professional, and goods and services uses may be allowed as HBBs if compatible with the surrounding residential area.

- Standards for parking, landscaping, signage, and outdoor storage/display are established to minimize impacts on neighbouring properties and preserve residential character.
- Accessory buildings on residential lots may be used for HBBs, subject to applicable regulations.

6. Municipality of the County of Kings (2021):

Similar to Queen's County, the County of Kings uses a tiered approach when regulating HBBs. However, the Kings County approach is different as it focuses on location rather than type of HBB. For example, level 1 HBBs are those that are permitted in the Growth Centre and Level 3 HBBs are those that are permitted outside of the Growth Centre.

- HBBs are permitted in all zones where residential development is allowed.
- Must be accessory and incidental to the dwelling and located on a public road.
 - Personal offices and studios may be on private roads but cannot receive public visits.
- The operator must reside in the dwelling.
- Limits are placed on the number of non-resident employees.
- Business types are restricted to those that do not cause undue impacts such as noise, fumes, traffic, or parking issues.
- Larger or more intensive uses may be allowed if the lot has frontage on a collector road.
- Exterior changes to the dwelling must be compatible with the neighbourhood.
- Automotive repair, heavy equipment, and professional trades are only allowed in:
 - Agricultural Zone (A1)
 - Rural Mixed Zone (A2)
 - Resource Zone (N1)
 - Accessory buildings for these uses must be located at least 200 feet from any existing dwelling.
- Heritage properties used for HBBs may be eligible for regulatory incentives.

Tools & Approaches

Flexible Regulations in Rural and Mixed-Use Areas

Permit HBBs as an accessory use to all zones that permit residential uses. Allow for a wide range of HBB types to improve commercial activity, especially in rural and mixed-use areas. Develop flexible regulations for HBBs to not create barriers for businesses through overregulation. For example, not requiring development permits for businesses that have little to no impact on neighbours.

Regulate Based on Zone and Business Scale

Differentiate between various types of HBBs to address the potential negative impacts on predominantly residential areas. Based on the size, type of commercial activity, and possible traffic impacts. For example, categorize by level 1 and level 2 HBBs.

- Level 1 HBBs are more restrictive with a limited type of permitted business uses. They are smaller in size, and outdoor storage and display is either prohibited or a very small amount is permitted.
- Level 2 HBBs can be larger in size and a wider range of business types are permitted. Outdoor storage and display are permitted.

Only permit level 1 HBBs in areas zoned as predominantly residential, but permit both level 1 and level 2 HBBs in all other rural and mixed-use zones with less restrictions.

Standards in Residential Areas

For level 1 HBBs in predominantly residential zones, establish commercial floor area limits that preserve the residential character of the property while supporting the business's economic viability. Regulations can also address the number of non-resident employees, commercial vehicles, signage, and the use of outdoor storage or display to minimize impacts on neighbouring residential properties. To reduce traffic disruptions in quiet residential neighbourhoods on private roads, require public road frontage for all HBBs in residential zones, with exceptions for low-impact uses such as home offices, studios, or one-on-one instruction classes.

Engagement

Feedback from residents and interviews with external stakeholders have revealed a number of priorities and objectives focused on supporting the local economy and establishing MODL as a hub for economic expansion and diversification.

The MODL 2040: What We Heard Report

The report indicated that economic development was a community priority for residents. Responses from the public emphasized the need to attract and support local businesses, strengthen local economic resilience by prioritizing efficient land use and supporting local producers, retain youth, and maintain affordability.

Through public engagement sessions on the MODL2040 project, some priorities relating to economic development were identified:

- Improving or reducing processes related to development

- Attracting new businesses, increasing support for small businesses and non-profit organizations
- Strengthening the local economy
- Employment opportunities for youth and cost of living challenges
- Overcoming internet connectivity issues to enable HBBs

Bridgewater and Area Chamber of Commerce

Planning staff have connected with the Bridgewater and Area Chamber of Commerce to gain a better understanding of the economic trends in the area. The Chamber has reported a significant increase in memberships over the last few years which has included a mix in business types (ie. homecare, restaurants, gas bars, food services, healthcare). Most new members to the Chamber are newly established businesses, which indicates that the area is experiencing economic growth.

According to the Chamber, there has been an influx in professional service-based businesses coming to the area. These include businesses such as accounting, bookkeeping, catering, and coaching services.

Strategic Communications

As of June 23, 2025, staff conducted 12 open house engagement sessions with the public in communities across the municipality, 6 drop in sessions at the Municipal Office Building, and a virtual open house online to enhance awareness of the municipal-wide planning project and solicit public feedback to help inform Draft #2. Planning staff will also join the Economic Development Department's workshop with small business owners, scheduled for October 2025.

Work Plan

The municipal-wide planning project is being conducted in accordance with an approved work plan and aligns with several strategic Council priorities. Council has been briefed on the workplan and timelines for several years leading to today.

Alternatives

N/A – this report is for informational purposes only.

Conclusion

Encouraging home-based businesses can support local economic growth and provide residents with affordable income opportunities, but it also requires thoughtful planning to manage potential risks such as traffic, noise, and land-use conflicts, especially in higher-density neighbourhoods or on private roads.

| Report Preparation | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Department | Planning and Development Services |
| Report Prepared by | Carin Mahon, Planner I |
| Report Approved by | |
| Date Reviewed by C.A.O. | |

Home-Based Businesses (HBB)

July 22, 2025
Planning & Development Services



What is a Home-Based Business (HBB)?



A business that provides the sale of goods and/or services to the public, while being accessory to a residential dwelling that is the principal residence of the business operator.

Nova Scotia Building Code:

- Business is secondary to residential use
- At least one full-time occupant lives and operates the business on-site
- Not a high- or medium-hazard industrial operation
- Uses either < 50 m² or < 25% of the home's floor area

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Planning and Development Services



Relevant Legislation

Nova Scotia Building Code Flexibility

In 2016, the Building Code was updated to exempt smaller scale HBBs (<25% of the total floor area of the residence or 50m²) from certain commercial building requirements:

- Wider doors
- Barrier-free entrances
- Additional washrooms
- Fire separations/Fire-rated doors

Municipal Government Act (MGA)

- Section 214: The Municipal Planning Strategy must include goals and policies on topics including economic development
- Section 235: A Development Officers can approve exceptions for HBBs, such as parking, building size, business space, and signage

Provincial Minimum Planning Requirements Regulations

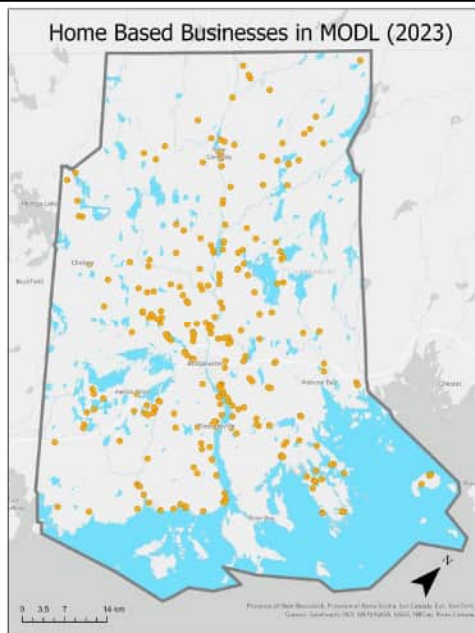
Section 11(e): "A municipal planning strategy may include statements of policy on home occupations and home-based businesses".



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Home-Based Businesses (HBB) in MODL

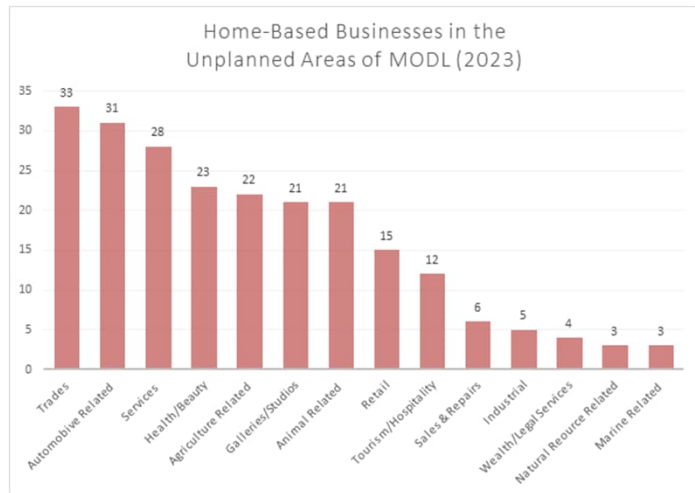
Approximately **256** HBBs located within the unplanned areas of MODL (2023)



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Planning and Development Services

Home-Based Businesses (HBB) in MODL

- Largest category was trade-based businesses (e.g. construction, carpentry, heating, plumbing, electrical, masonry, and roofing)
- Second largest category was automotive-related businesses (e.g. auto mechanics, tires sales, small engine repair, auto salvage, and car detailing)
- Third largest category was general services (e.g. property management, consulting, graphic design/interior design, transportation, elderly homecare, and housekeeping)



Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
Planning and Development Services

Jurisdictional Review – Home-Based Businesses (HBB)

| Municipality | Approach |
|---------------------|---|
| Queens | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tiered HBB rules based on business scale - Level 1 HBBs: Small-scale, limited use; allowed in most residential zones - Level 2 HBBs: Larger, broader use + outdoor storage/display; rural & mixed-use zones only - LUB sets limits on non-resident employees (2 for lvl 1 HBB, 3 for lvl 2 HBB), floor area (<25% of gfa for lvl 1, <40% for lvl 2), signage (0.75 m²), and outdoor storage (permitted for lvl 2, but not lvl 1) - Heritage properties may get HBB regulation relaxations, incl. 1 extra non-resident employee |
| Town of Lunenburg | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HBBs permitted in any zone where residential dwellings are allowed - LUB sets limits on business type, non-resident employees (Max 2), floor area (<25% of gfa or 47m²), and parking (Max 2 parking for commercial vehicles) |
| Town of Bridgewater | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HBBs permitted in any zone where residential dwellings are allowed - LUB sets limits on business type, non-resident employees (Max 2), floor area (<25% of gfa or 32.5m²), signage (Max 1 sign), and parking (Max 2 parking for commercial vehicles) - Outdoor storage prohibited |

Jurisdictional Review – Home-Based Businesses (HBB)

| Municipality | Approach |
|--------------|--|
| Chester | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HBBs permitted in Single Unit Residential Zone, Coastal Island One Zone, Coastal Island Two Zone, & Lakeside Zone - LUB sets limits on business type, floor area, signage, and parking - Outdoor storage required to be in the rear of the property with a screened fence |
| East Hants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HBBs permitted under different requirements based on if it is in a rural zone, residential zone, or mixed-use zone - Based on the zone, LUB sets limits on business type, floor area (<50% of gfa), signage (Max 1 m²), non-resident employees (Max 2), parking (Min 1 site that is not for the dwelling), and outdoor storage (Not permitted in residential zones) |
| Kings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tiered HBB rules based on whether it is location within or outside of the growth center - Level 1 HBBs: Small-scale, limited use; allowed in the growth center - Level 2 HBBs: Larger, broader uses; allowed in growth center if it can be accessed from a collector road - Level 3 HBBs: Largest scale; allowed outside of the growth center - LUB sets limits on business type, non-resident employees (0 in lvl 1 HBB, 2 in lvl 2, and 4 in lvl 3), floor area (<25% of gfa in lvl 1, <40% in lvl 2&3), signage (Permitted in lvl 3, but not in lvl 1&2), and parking (Min 1 site that is not for the dwelling for lvl 1, lvl 2&3 depend on HBB type) - All levels of HBBs require public road frontage |

Tools and Approaches

Flexible Regulations in Rural and Mixed-Use Areas

- **Allow for a wide range of HBB types to improve commercial activity**
- **Flexibility of regulations for HBBs to not create barriers for businesses**
(e.g. Not requiring development permits for businesses that have little to no impact on neighbours such as private offices)

Regulate Based on Zone and Business Scale

- **Permit HBBs as an accessory use to all zones that permit residential uses**
- **But limit HBB type/scale in predominantly residential zones**
- **Use a tiered approach:**
 - Level 1 HBBs: More restrictive, smaller in size, limited types of permitted business
 - Level 2 HBBs: Larger in size and a wider range of business types are permitted



Tools and Approaches

Standards in Residential Areas

- **Limit HBB types in residential zones to level 1 HBBs**
- **Maintain residential character and to minimize impacts on neighbouring residential properties through:**
 - Commercial floor area limits
 - Number of non-resident employees
 - Number of commercial vehicles
 - Signage, outdoor storage, or displays
- **Require public road frontage, with exceptions for low-impact uses such as home offices, studios, or one-on-one instruction classes**



Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
Planning and Development Services

Regulation Options – Draft #1

- Permit HBBs as an accessory use to all zones that permit residential uses
- Apply requirements for HBB **specifically only for residential zones** (Hamlet Residential Zone, Rural Residential Zone, and the Lakeshore Residential Zone)

| Home-based Businesses in Residential Zones | |
|--|--|
| Permitted Uses | Animal Care Art Gallery/Studio Business or Professional Office Commercial School – 6 or fewer students Craft Product Workshop Craft Shop Day Care Centre – 6 or fewer clients Medical Clinic Personal Service Shop Residential Care Facility Service and Repair Shop - excluding small engine repair |
| Max number of non-resident, on-site employees | 2 |
| Max Floor Area | <25 % or 50 m ² of the gross floor area of the main dwelling unit, whichever is less. Day care centres and residential care facilities exempt from this requirement. |
| Outdoor Storage and Display | Total outdoor storage and outdoor display area cannot exceed 10 m ² . Outdoor storage and outdoor display not permitted in the front or flankage yard or in minimum required side and rear setbacks. |
| Retail Sales | Limited to the sale of products made, assembled, refinished, or repaired on the premises. |
| Signage | 1 non-illuminated wall or ground sign, not exceeding 1 m ² permitted, and must be located within the property boundaries. |
| Parking | A minimum of 1 off-street parking spaces must be provided on the lot in addition to any parking spaces required for the residence. No more than 2 commercial vehicles stored on or operated from the lot. |
| Road Frontage | Public road frontage required. |



Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
Planning and Development Services

Regulation Options – Draft #1

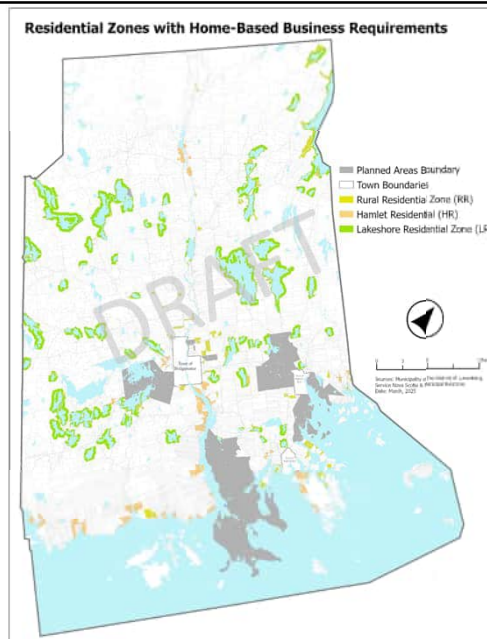
- Exemptions for certain types of HBBs from the residential zone requirements
 - Accessory buildings may be used for the HBB instead of the main residential building, if it does not exceed the max floor area (<25 % of the residential footprint or 50 m²)
 - No development permit required for personal offices, studios, or classes with instruction of one student at a time
- Registered heritage properties with a HBB in residential zones are eligible for bylaw relaxation:
 - Permitted on-site, non-resident employees increased by 1.
 - Max size of a sign for a home-based business increased from 1m² to 3m².
- A Development Officer may grant a variance to the floor area of a HBB, subject to Section 235 of the MGA



Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
Planning and Development Services

Regulation Options – Draft #1

- HBB requirements would only apply to **residential zones** (Hamlet Residential Zone, Rural Residential Zone, and the Lakeshore Residential Zone) shown on the right
- **Approximately 15.9%** of currently unplanned properties in MODL would fall under this requirement



Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
Planning and Development Services

Thank you
Questions?



Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
Planning and Development Services

Hello dear municipal colleagues,

I am sending this along in the 11th hour of public consultations by the Provincial government about expanding alcohol access to convenience and grocery stores. This is part of dismantling barriers to interprovincial trade—alcohol being one of the primary commodities- but in reality they are conflating these two efforts as related, which they are not. We already have plenty of access to alcohol. As well, they are considering expanding where people can consume alcohol, eg., in public places like parks, beaches, recreational spaces, regardless of the presence of children and youth.

Repeated research shows that increasing alcohol access in the number of outlets and hours open, correlates directly with more drinking and more harms of all sorts, including gendered violence, especially sexual assault which is often alcohol facilitated.

We have called on the government to conduct a full health/public health impact assessment, before this decision is made, so the evidence can guide the decision, not political whim and optics of economic development. The fact is the costs of harms far outweigh any provincial revenue, by double or more. At a time when we already have trouble accessing, mental health and addiction, services, doctors, emergency services, police, and other services, it is unconscionable to put further inevitable burden on these systems and on Nova Scotia taxpayers for those costs, not to mention persistently high rates of DUI motor vehicle accidents and fatalities.

The vast majority of the stakeholder groups government is consulting through a PR firm are industry and retail entities, who of course are the only ones who stand to derive economic benefit. It seems like health and public health people are being effectively muzzled. These consultations finish on June 30th.

For your reference, I have attached:

- Notes we compiled for our meeting with Ministers Lohr and Druhan on May 14th in response to a letter we sent, signed by a dozen colleagues in the sector. The letter appears at the bottom, with references.
- An article in the Chronicle Herald after our conversation with reporter on IPV risks particularly
- A letter written recently by our Community Health Board with excellent verified info re community health
- And **below an open letter we will send later today to media.**

Also see this CBC article from health perspective: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/alcohol-beer-wine-spirits-tim-houston-corner-stores-sales-1.7546173>

Folks are sending us a lot of other resources and general stats which I'm happy to share.

With kind regards,

Sue

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www.bethepeace.ca

Open Letter:

Alcohol Expansion in Grocery Stores Risks Public Safety – Especially for Women and Families

By: Colleagues concerned about alcohol access and increased rates of gender-based violence

Nova Scotia is considering a major shift: expanding alcohol sales into grocery and convenience stores, as well as locations for open carry of alcohol products. While this may sound like a move toward convenience or economic growth, it carries serious, even deadly consequences – especially for women, children, and marginalized communities already vulnerable to harm and with barriers to supportive services.

The evidence is overwhelming: increased alcohol access, specifically the number of outlets and the hours of availability, is directly correlated with an increase in harms from over-drinking - violence, injuries, sexual assault, illness, addictions motor vehicle accidents and deaths. Nova Scotia already has one of the highest rates of heavy drinking in the country. Nova Scotia is also largely rural where there are more licensed firearm owners, the rates of GBV are 75% higher than the rate for urban women, particularly gun-related femicides, and higher rates of addiction. We also top national statistics for police-reported intimate partner violence (IPV), sexual exploitation, and human trafficking. Expanding access will only pour gas on an already raging fire.

As colleagues and organizations working to end domestic, intimate partner, sexual and other forms of gendered violence, we are not against freedom or convenience. But alcohol is not an ordinary product. It's a known driver of many harms to our collective health, safety and well-being, including: domestic violence and homicides; high rates of sexual assaults on university campuses; persistently high incidents of fatal crashes; mental health and addiction issues and emergency room overcrowding. It fuels a culture where women who are sexually assaulted while drinking are less likely to report and because they know they are more likely to be blamed.

A survivor put it best: *"People experiencing violence will die. This is not an exaggeration."*

In the quest to remove inter-provincial trade barriers, alcohol is one of the primary commodities. The pressure to conform to neighbouring provinces and please the public's appetite for convenient access is intense. But the connection with actually expanding where alcohol can be purchased and also consumed, does not make sense. Alcohol is already widely available. On close inspection, even the economic argument falls apart. The cost of harms caused by alcohol overuse is roughly twice the revenue the Province takes in^[1]. In 2006, the province earned \$224 million in alcohol revenue but the associated costs from health care, law enforcement, addiction treatment, lost productivity, and social services, exceeded \$490 million. Public dollars— our tax-payer dollars— will be further stretched to fix issues caused by our own policies. The only people who would benefit from expanding alcohol access are producers and retailers, whose sales of alcohol are already considerable. The risks to almost everyone else are alarmingly high. Yet the province has not committed to a robust health impact assessment that would outline all the impacts with credible evidence for decision-making.

Survivors and frontline workers are sounding the alarm about the negative impacts of this move. Among the top 3 policy interventions that the World Health Organization recommends to address alcohol-related harms, including increased rates of gender-based violence, is reducing the physical availability of retail alcohol.

In September, Nova Scotia declared intimate partner violence an epidemic. The Mass Casualty Commission (MCC) mentioned alcohol over 60 times as a contributing factor to violence and mass casualties, identifying “alcohol as a key immediate cause of sexual assault and connection to other forms of gender-based violence.” The Inquiry Report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG2S) mentioned alcohol 70 times related to higher rates of suicide among youth, higher rates of family and gender based violence, and removal of children. Increasing access to alcohol is not aligned with these grim statistics. Do we really need more and easier access to alcohol?

We’ve seen this story before. Provinces like Newfoundland and New Brunswick moved ahead without public health reviews, but Nova Scotia can choose a different path. We urge the government to pause long enough to conduct a full, gendered, intersectional health impact assessment. Include Indigenous and African Nova Scotian voices. Include survivor voices. Tap the wealth of government public health experts and addiction specialists who are at the ready to compile the data. **Protect the people who will bear the real cost of this decision.**

We don’t let people drive without seatbelts just because they want to. We regulate for safety and the public’s health, not popularity.

Expanding alcohol sales might win some political points - and increase revenue for some. But the long-term cost will be paid in women’s shelters, hospitals, policing, and people’s lives. It is governments job to protect the public’s health and safety. They cannot shirk this responsibility.

The Province is currently conducting a public consultation, (not a health impact assessment), until June 30th. If you share our concerns, please make your voice heard to your MLA, Cabinet Ministers, the Premier and Municipal government leaders. Before it’s too late.

Sincerely,

[¹] Since Ontario made a similar move in 2015 economists estimate the financial impact is in the billions - \$1.4 billion by 2030. [Financial Accountability Office of Ontario <https://fao-on.org/en/report/alcohol-sales-expansion/#:~:text=The%20FAO%20estimates%20that%20the,beverage%20alcohol%20marketplace%20in%20Ontario.>]



Notes on government expanding alcohol availability June 2025

Subject: Urgent concern about proposed expansion of alcohol availability into grocery and convenience stores.

In our letter the request was: that government pause this process until a comprehensive health impact assessment can be completed.

BACKGROUND:

- **Loblaws, Sobeys, Convenience Store Assoc** have been lobbying for this for years--- big retailers want it.
- **Also, local craft producers want it too.**
- Scores political points (votes) if the government does it
- The public wants it! And they see it as a civil liberty issue,
- Even though as it stands now, **people have plenty of access to alcohol even in rural communities** with NSLC outlets in convenience stores. But these are staffed with trained NSLC staff and have limited hours.
- **Pressure from other provinces- in the trans-canada lifting of trade barriers—alcohol and food are the main commodities affected by these.**
 - Atlantic provinces have done this, too: NL, PEI (I think is in process), NB have all moved to publicly available alcohol without any public health assessment

THE PROBLEM:

THIS WOULD BE A HUGE SHIFT FOR NOVA SCOTIA, which already has:

- one of heaviest drinking rates in Canada
- the highest provincial rates of police reported IPV and sexual exploitation and human trafficking — much of which involves alcohol/substances.

One participant in an alcohol research study said,

“Alcohol is so deeply engrained in our culture it is hard to get people to look at it rationally.”

- If you have a concern about gender based violence (GBV) you **HAVE** to have a concern about rapid expansion of alcohol access—b/c they are so linked

We are asking NS gov to be more thoughtful—to consider not just the financial or political equation but the health/mental health, violence and social consequences of the decision— to lessen the impact on women, kids, families, those most vulnerable to harms from alcohol misuse.

Eg., we wouldn't remove seat belt laws just because people don't want to wear seat belts. The public relies on their government to protect their health and welfare.

THE RESEARCH AND STATS:

- The link between increasing access (# of locations, increased hours of operation) and heavy drinking and alcohol-related harms is well established.
- Greater access to alcohol means greater alcohol consumption
- Are studies on health and societal impact...
- **Alcohol misuse is a significant risk factor in GBV of many kinds:** IPV, DV, family violence, homophobic and trans violence, and **particularly alcohol-facilitated sexualized violence among youth and young adults---**
 - *think Dal frosh week and the out of control parties on the streets even police couldn't control... then at 2 in the morning, they can just go to nearest convenience store and get more alcohol?*
 - *Most sexual assaults on university campuses happen in those same first 5 weeks of the school term—and so much of that is alcohol fueled and facilitated.*
- **When victims of GBV HAVE BEEN DRINKING they are less likely to report to the police → b/c of VICTIM-BLAMING** -- an assumption that **THEY have more blame assigned to them** than when sober **Eg., JR HOCKEY CANADA TRIAL**
- (2006 **systematic review of 11 studies** that **found that harmful use of alcohol was associated with almost 5 times increased risk of exposure to IPV** compared with mild or no use.
- **High rates of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder FASD**—the rates of heavy drinking among female youth is growing. When over half of pregnancies are unplanned, young women are drinking before they even know they're pregnant- keeping the rates of FASD high—creating lifelong challenges.

COMMUNITIES PERSPECTIVE

- We must consider perspectives from already marginalized communities who experience greater risk and also barriers to culturally adept services and supports—Indigenous, Black and African Nova Scotian, newcomer/immigrant communities, 2SLGBTQ+, etc. Alcohol has been used as a tool of oppression and submission... transgenerational trauma.
- Communities in NS and across Canada are experiencing intense strain and uncertainty- tariffs, wars, housing crises, unaffordability of necessities → alcohol being used as coping tool and to numb difficult feelings in stressful times or to deal with trauma and victimization is a perfect storm from a collective trauma lens, survival lens.
- **Gov is also considering expanding where people can drink, eg., open carry in parks, beaches, outdoor recreational places where children and youth are present. It normalizes alcohol consumption for everyone, as it becomes ubiquitous.**

The MASS CASUALTY COMMISSION:

- mentioned alcohol as a contributing factor over 60 times.
- mass casualties and rural contexts.
- Perpetrator was an alcoholic, his worst behaviour and threats (to kill) happened when drunk.
- He used alcohol as a weapon against others: manipulated those who struggled with addiction, bribed and exploited vulnerable victims with alcohol
- Globally- tracking MC incidents – data collection on history of alcohol abuse or dependence, evidenced in many other MCs (Recomm V.1) -
- In prevention- evidence of connections between reducing alcohol abuse and crime prevention, particularly GBV. (MCC, violence volume, p. 211)
- ALSO - women’s use of alcohol—when she is a victim of GBV, especially SV it can and is used against her in court. (MCC, V p. 324) eg., in the current Junior Hockey Canada SA trial!
- Specific issues in rural NS - more licensed firearm owners-- in combo with increased rates of heavy alcohol use and addiction --- AND of GBV – recipe for disastrous consequences to women and families
- In homicide of intimate partners, the Canadian Coalition on Gun Control cited research that 56 percent of the women were killed by spouses with firearms. Women’s concerns about the presence of guns in the home increased where there was also “serious drinking,” addictions, or talk of suicide.” MCC, violence, p 323)

In Violence Volume 3:

◇ *the need to recognize the consumption of **alcohol as a “key immediate cause” of sexual assault and connection to other forms of gender-based violence*** [p.291]

In Community Volume 4:

*...working with Community Health boards to develop a Mental Wellness and Resilience Tool Kit; **the Municipal Alcohol Project, to try to shift the normative culture of heavy alcohol use; and bringing a health lens to the interagency Committee on Family and Sexual Violence.*** [p.345]

*The key strategic priorities {HRM} identified...(6) **reduce harms associated with alcohol and drugs*** [p.451]

REVENUE GENERATION: *seems* lucrative and the public wants it.

ECONOMIC BENEFIT IS DIRECTLY CORRELATED WITH THE COMMUNITY HLTH HARMS

The revenue generated covers only half of government's expenditures for health care, mental health and justice expenses, etc, linked to alcohol consumption.

In 2006, the alcohol revenue to the provincial government was \$224 million.

The COSTS to Nova Scotia were more than twice that.

- **Direct social costs were estimated at \$242 million**
- **Indirect social costs- almost \$250 million [2011 NS GOV report].**
[Alcohol-Indicators-Report-2011.pdf](#)
- In Dr. Robert Strang's Report- NS does not make \$\$ from sale of alcohol b/c of the tremendous cost of harms that accompany increased access in our communities—
 - those costs are harder to quantify.

→→ Impaired driving/fatalities- the rates are persistently high-a significant community issue

→→ GBV, cancer and other chronic diseases

→→ Impact on young people--- both academic performance, but also given unprecedented rates of anxiety, depression, violence, alcohol is a significant aggravating factor.

- Putting it in grocery aisles, normalizes it even more
 - Also makes it much harder on those in recovery struggling everyday to avoid the temptations to consume alcohol.
- Alcohol is already widely available. How much more access do we need? And for whom??
For whose benefit??

Economic gain is for producers, but the cost to EVERYDAY TAXPAYERS IS HUGE—as if access to health and mental hlth services are not hard enough—without alcohol related harms taking up precious health and emergency services time and resources- clogging emergency rooms.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE ASSESSMENT OF THE HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH, SOCIAL IMPACTS??

- **Why not consult your own experts? Internal to govt??**
 - Public Health divisions, IWK MH&A health promotion teams
 - Dr. Robert Strang
 - Dr. Matthew Bowes, chief medical examiner, alcohol co-morbidities and co-mortalities are quite substantial eg., in opiate overdose deaths, a good % of those have alcohol involved
 - RCMP and municipal police forces re alcohol harms and crime
 - Indigenous and African NS community leaders
- **public school educators?**—about the impact of normalizing alcohol as readily available as milk, bread, yogurt, candy--- when kids see these side by side?
- **In MH & Addictions**—its hard to expect a person to not drink when they are totally surrounded by it, and you make it affordable and **put it with normal groceries... and continue to market it as normal**, and then blame people when they overdrink.

Its not THAT we drink, but HOW we drink—not about individual choice or freedoms , but the impact on public health, safety and well-being.

If keep alcohol as monopoly by govt of NS— Gov leaders can be a vector of change for community health and welfare. **If its privatized, there is no vehicle for public health protection** other than suing a multi-national company —like with tobacco companies—years of litigation and after many, many deaths

THE LETTER

Dear Honourable Ministers Thompson, Lohr and Druhan:

As a nonprofit focused on addressing the roots and consequences of intimate partner violence [IPV] and gender-based violence [GBV], we and colleagues are writing today to share deep concerns about the proposed expansion of alcohol availability into grocery and convenience stores. This policy shift may appear economically sensible, but the public health implications, particularly for women, children and youth affected by intimate partner violence are too serious to ignore.

Alcohol is not an ordinary consumer product. Its **availability shapes behavior, health outcomes, mental health and well-being, and safety in profound ways**, including newly confirmed cancer risks. Research suggests that **expanded access is directly correlated with increased rates of heavy drinking, alcohol-related harms, and most urgently, intimate partner violence.** The data from the NS Municipal Alcohol Project (MAP) work years ago, confirmed that availability- how many outlets and the times they are open, directly correlates to increased consumption and harms. This is particularly concerning regarding youth and the alarmingly persistent rates of **alcohol-facilitated sexualized violence among university age young adults.**

Intimate partner violence, as has been clearly outlined in the Report of the Mass Casualty Commission, is not just a private issue. It is a public health crisis that requires a whole of government, whole of society and public health response. Alcohol access, consumption and misuse play a key role in what has been declared an epidemic by our government.

According to a meta-analysis by Foran and O’Leary (2008), **women with partners who binge drink are 5 to 6 times more likely to experience IPV.** Another global review found that **alcohol use by male partners significantly increases both the risk and severity of IPV** (Devries et al., 2014). In Nova Scotia, 79% of IPV victims are women, and rates of police-reported IPV remain stubbornly high (Statistics Canada, 2021), especially in Nova Scotia. **Increased access to alcohol has clear potential to worsen these statistics.**

Beyond IPV, we know that liberalizing alcohol sales could lead to greater harm across the board. International research has shown increases in **hospitalizations, ER visits, suicide, and alcohol-attributable deaths** when alcohol availability is expanded (Popova et al., 2009; Sherk et al., 2018). In British Columbia, a 10% increase in private liquor outlets led to a 2.4% rise in alcohol-related deaths (Stockwell et al., 2011). These are not abstract numbers. They represent lives lost, families fractured, and a health system under strain.

Closer to home, the Canadian Institute for Health Information (2020) reports that Nova Scotia already experiences **some of the highest rates of heavy drinking in the country. With limited access to mental health and addiction services, we are simply not equipped to manage the potential consequences of greater alcohol normalization, ease of purchase and expanded hours.**

We are requesting that you initiate a health and public health impact assessment before proceeding further on expanding alcohol availability. This assessment should include gender-based intersectional analysis, (GBA+), involve community members with lived experience of IPV, and take into account Indigenous,

African Nova Scotian and rural communities—where alcohol-related harms often intersect with systemic barriers to supports and services.

immediate real-world harmful and negative consequences.

Convenience should never come at the cost of family safety or our collective public health and well-being.

Want to **support a considered public health approach** to this decision.

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Alcohol accessibility impacts intimate partner violence, group says

[Francis Campbell](#) June 13, 2025



Be The Peace and 12 colleague organizations sent a letter to the premier and several ministers when it was learned that the government was considering changes to alcohol availability. Photo by Unsplash /Unsplash
There will be a direct correlation between increased alcohol access in Nova Scotia and the incidence of intimate partner violence, says the co-founder of the Be The Peace Institute.

“Research has shown over and over that the expansion of locations and hours of alcohol availability is directly correlated with harms from overuse and heavy drinking, including intimate partner violence,” said Sue Bookchin, the executive director of the institute launched in 2015 and headquartered in Mahone Bay.

“In fact, it can be lethal,” said Bookchin.

The public and government concern that resulted in intimate partner violence being declared an epidemic in the province is not reconcilable with increasing the availability of alcohol, Bookchin said on behalf of the non-profit institute working to address the roots and consequences of gender-based violence and advance systemic change for gender equity and social justice.

The provincial government announced two weeks ago that it wants to canvass Nova Scotians about where they can buy and consume alcohol.

Finance Minister John Lohr told reporters that Canada is changing and an increased push for more open interprovincial trade and alcohol is a big part of that.

The government is spending \$300,000 to give more than 250 stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback and to conduct a [public opinion survey](#) of some 1,500 Nova Scotians that began two weeks ago and will continue until June 30.

Lohr said Thursday that the timeline for the public opinion survey is on track.

Read More

1. [Province wants opinions on where Nova Scotians can drink, buy alcohol](#)
2. [JOHN DeMONT: Blind pigs to corner stores: The raucous story of hooch in N.S.](#)
3. [Upstreet Craft Brewing seeks creditor protection to restructure debt, but beer keeps flowing](#)

Asked how soon after gathering and assessing public opinion a change would be made and if it would require legislation, Lohr said that would depend on what rules the government wanted to change.

“When we figure out if there is going to be a change, what is the change?” he said. “Until we know if and what we are changing, then we can figure out how we do that. Sometimes it requires legislation and sometimes it doesn’t. Without knowing what we’re changing I can’t predict that, but it’s very possible” legislation would be required.

Alcohol is currently sold at just over 300 retail locations in the province, including Nova Scotia Liquor Corp. corporate and agency stores, private wine and specialty stores, onsite stores at breweries and wineries, and farmers’ markets but Lohr says considerations for any potential changes could include expanding retail options or allowing more places where people can drink alcoholic beverages.

Pause survey for assessment: advocacy group

Be The Peace and 12 colleague organizations sent a letter to the premier and several ministers when it was learned that the government was considering changes to alcohol availability.

The letter, which was followed by a meeting of some of the co-signing organizations with Lohr and Justice Minister Becky Druhan, urged the government to pause the process until a comprehensive health impact assessment could be completed.

“Alcohol is not an ordinary consumer product,” the letter read.

“Its availability shapes behaviour, health outcomes, mental health and well-being, and safety in profound ways, including newly confirmed cancer risks. Research suggests that expanded access is directly correlated with increased rates of heavy drinking, alcohol-related harms, and, most urgently, intimate partner violence.”

Among other studies, the letter referenced data from the Nova Scotia Municipal Alcohol Project from some years back that confirmed availability – how many outlets and the times and hours of operation – directly correlates to increased consumption and harms.

“This is particularly concerning regarding youth and the alarmingly persistent rates of alcohol-facilitated sexualized violence among university-age young adults,” the letter says.

The writers go on to say Nova Scotia has some of the highest rates of heavy drinking in the country, especially pronounced in rural areas, where risks for intimate partner are also highest given the likelihood of the presence of guns, limited access to mental health and addiction services, and no public transportation as a means for escape.

“We are requesting that you initiate a health and public health impact assessment before proceeding further on expanding alcohol availability,” the letter says.

The assessment should include gender-based intersectional analysis, involve community members with lived experience of intimate partner violence and take into account Indigenous, African Nova Scotian and rural communities, where alcohol-related harms often intersect with systemic barriers to supports and services.

“Nova Scotia has an opportunity to lead with evidence, empathy, and equity,” the letter concludes.

“Convenience should never come at the cost of family safety or our collective public health and well-being.” Bookchin said alcohol is currently readily available in the province and asks who benefits from an increase in access. “An economic benefit, for whom?” she said. “For local producers and retailers who get to sell more of it; it is not an economic benefit for the province because of spending at least twice as much on the harms as whatever revenue would be generated through taxes,” she said.

“We as the taxpayers should be concerned about that. We as health-care users, we as the people who are supporting women’s shelters and resource centres and other kinds of responses, justice system responses and child protection responses to family violence, should be concerned about where our tax dollars are going. “It’s not going to be a benefit to us or the province. It’s going to have a detrimental effect on all the services that we rely on that we already can’t get access to, when you are waiting 10 hours in outpatients to be seen.”



Phone: 902-521-3534
Email: westernCHBs@nshealth.ca
Coordinator: Lisa Pomfrey-Talbot
Chairperson: Sabrina Gannon

June 12, 2025

The Honourable John Lohr
Minister of Finance
financeminister@novascotia.ca
7th Floor, 1723 Hollis St.,
Halifax, NS B3J 2N3

The Honourable Michelle Thompson Minister
of Health and Wellness
Health.Minister@novascotia.ca
Barrington Tower, 1894 Barrington St., Halifax,
NS B3J 2R8

Dear Ministers Lohr and Thompson:

Lunenburg County Community Health Board is one of the 35 Community Health Boards in Nova Scotia. We are a committed group of volunteers legislated to be the voice between the community and Nova Scotia Health of what is needed to create healthier communities through improving the social determinants of health.

We are writing to express serious concerns regarding the current consideration of government to expand sales of alcohol into convenience stores and additional grocery stores. We strongly believe that should the government implement alcohol sales in corner stores, such a move would significantly increase harm to Nova Scotians.

While often framed as a matter of consumer convenience, it is important to recognize that Nova Scotia's alcohol retail system is already largely privatized. Fewer than 30% of off-premise liquor outlets are currently government-owned. This has already led to weakened safeguards originally built into the Liquor Control Act—such as limits on outlet density, operating hours, and oversight on sales to minors or intoxicated individuals. Nova Scotians also have access to delivery services from NSLC outlets that provides additional access and convenience.

The consequences of alcohol-related harm are already widespread and well-documented. In 2022 alone, alcohol was responsible for 571 deaths and more than 44,000 emergency and hospital visits in Nova Scotia. Expanding sales into convenience stores—many of which lack the oversight, training, and accountability of NSLC outlets—would further jeopardize public health and safety.

We are also concerned that the Government is seeking feedback around where alcohol can be consumed. In our consultations for our 2019-2025 Western Zone Community Health Plan, which we, as CHBs, are mandated to create under the Health Authorities Act, substance use was identified as one of 4 priority areas impacting the health and wellbeing of our communities. Increasing access to sales and loosening





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restrictions around where it could be consumed will have negative health consequences for our communities.

Urgent action to protect public health is required. That is why we are calling on the Government of Nova Scotia to immediately suspend any further privatization of alcohol sales, including convenience stores, and not to reduce restrictions on where alcohol can be consumed until a health impact assessment is complete.

Public awareness of alcohol’s health risks remains low. Over 40% of Canadians are unaware that alcohol consumption increases cancer risk. In fact, alcohol is linked to at least nine types of cancer, including breast, colorectal, liver, and pancreatic cancer. All forms of alcohol—beer, wine, and spirits—carry these risks. Increased access to alcohol will also increase the risk of injuries, gender-based violence, and fetal alcohol syndrome.

Despite generating \$432 million in revenue, alcohol-related harm costs Nova Scotia taxpayers over \$652 million annually. After accounting for that revenue, the province remains responsible for over \$219 million in net losses related to health care, lost productivity, criminal justice, and other direct harms.

In May 2023, the Canadian Alcohol Policy Evaluation (CAPE) project gave Nova Scotia a failing grade ("F") in 8 out of 11 policy areas, highlighting significant gaps in our provincial approach to alcohol control. Notably, there are currently no limits on outlet density and no restrictions on online sales or sales alongside unrelated services. Oversight rests with the NSLC, which reports to the Department of Finance—a structure that does not prioritize health and safety.

The NSLC has a unique role to play in promoting responsible alcohol use. With 110 corporate stores and 65 agency stores, it is well positioned to regulate access, protect minors, and deliver evidence-based health messaging—something that cannot be easily replicated in a convenience store environment.

Public support for stronger alcohol regulations is clear. A 2023 survey by the Canadian Cancer Society found that over 90% of Atlantic Canadians support greater awareness of alcohol’s health risks and policies to reduce consumption. Government-controlled retail remains the most effective platform for delivering that messaging and facilitating culture change.

In addition to restricting the availability and marketing of alcohol, we support the development of a province-wide alcohol strategy—created independently from the alcohol industry, grounded in health equity, and supported by sufficient resources. A whole-of-government approach is essential to reduce harm and improve outcomes.

THERE ARE NOW MORE WAYS TO ACCESS CARE IN NOVA SCOTIA.

Download the YourHealthNS app today.

App Store Google Play



**LUNENBURG
COUNTY**
Community Health Board
nova scotia
health

Phone: 902-521-3534
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Coordinator: Lisa Pomfrey-Talbot
Chairperson: Sabrina Gannon

We strongly urge the Government of Nova Scotia to prioritize health and safety in alcohol policy decisions. Expanding access without sufficient safeguards will only intensify the burden of alcohol-related harm on our healthcare system, our communities, and our families.

We look forward to your response and continued dialogue on this urgent issue.

Sincerely,
Sabrina Gannon, Chairperson
Lunenburg County Community Health Board

cc:

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THERE ARE NOW MORE WAYS TO ACCESS CARE IN NOVA SCOTIA.
Download the YourHealthNS app today.

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Special Council
Item 5.1.1
Date: July 29, 2025
Authorization: T. MacEwan



The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

Request for Decision

Report to: Municipality of the District of Lunenburg Council

Submitted by: Ruth Wawin, Tourism & Event Development Officer

Date: Tuesday, July 29, 2025

Re: Letter of Support for Alchemia Art Workshop-Transformation of Dangerous Spaces

Recommendation

Move that Council authorize the Mayor to write a letter of support endorsing the project Transformation of Dangerous Spaces

Executive summary

On May 27, Christopher Quigley of Alchemia Art Workshop presented the Transformation of Dangerous Spaces project to Council, requesting a letter of support. Council's direction is now sought on whether to provide a letter of support endorsing the project.

Background

On May 27, Christopher Quigley, Executive Director and Creative Director of Alchemia Art Workshop presented to council to request a letter of support for the project Transformation of Dangerous Spaces.

Alchemia Art Workshop is a non-profit organization dedicated to creating transformative public art that directly engages the public on urgent social issues. Transformation of Dangerous Spaces is described as a traveling immersive installation designed to confront men with the realities of gender-based violence, coercion, and accountability. Through a series of modified recreated bathroom stalls, within controlled exhibition spaces, the work transforms a common, overlooked space into an arena of discomfort, reflection, and necessary confrontation.

During the presentation Quigley highlighted that Transformation of Dangerous Spaces is designed to integrate with federal, provincial, and municipal frameworks focused on gender-based violence prevention, public safety strategies, and outreach and community wellness mandates.

Quigley also emphasized that the installation includes evaluation tools, opportunities for visitor feedback, impact tracking, and the option for facilitated discussions led by community educators, trauma therapists, and partner organizations such as shelters and transition homes.

Quigley concluded his presentation to Council with a request for written support and endorsement of the Transformation of Dangerous Spaces project. He noted that such support could play a critical role in unlocking access to arts and justice-related grant funding and in opening doors to partnerships with other institutions.

The following individuals and organizations have provided letters of support for the project:

- Be the Peace Institute
- GuysWork – a Nova Scotia school-based program that helps young men examine how traditional masculinity norms can impact their health and the health of their peers
- Harbour House
- The Honourable Susan Corkum-Greek, MLA for Lunenburg
- Jessica Fancy-Landry, MP for South Shore–St. Margarets
- Mahone Bay Tourism & Chamber of Commerce
- Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, the Office of Women’s Social and Economic Opportunity (Ontario)
- Town of Lunenburg
- Town of Mahone Bay

Discussion

Based on the presentation provided to Council on May 27 by Christopher Quigley, Council's direction is now required on whether to issue a letter of support for the Transformation of Dangerous Spaces project.

Strategic Focus

A letter of support for Transformation of Dangerous Spaces aligns with MODL’s strategic priority of Quality of Life, which focuses on social inclusion for our residents. By fostering critical conversations around masculinity, silence, and complicity, the project contributes to a safer, more equitable society, enhancing the well-being and inclusion of residents.

Budget/Financial Implications

N/A

Climate Change/sustainability

N/A

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA@MODL)

The Transformation of Dangerous Spaces project aligns with the objectives outlined in the IDEA at MODL strategic plan, which commits the Municipality to fostering inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility. By challenging harmful norms around masculinity, the project promotes social equity and respectful engagement, key elements of the IDEA framework. This immersive, awareness-building initiative supports a safer and more inclusive community environment, particularly for equity-deserving groups affected by gender-based violence.

Strategic Communications

N/A

Work plan

There is no significant impact on staff's work plan.

Alternatives

If Council was concerned that the installation could cause harm to survivors of abuse council could decline to pass a motion of support for the project.

Conclusion

Council's direction is required on whether to provide a letter of support for the Transformation of Dangerous Spaces project.

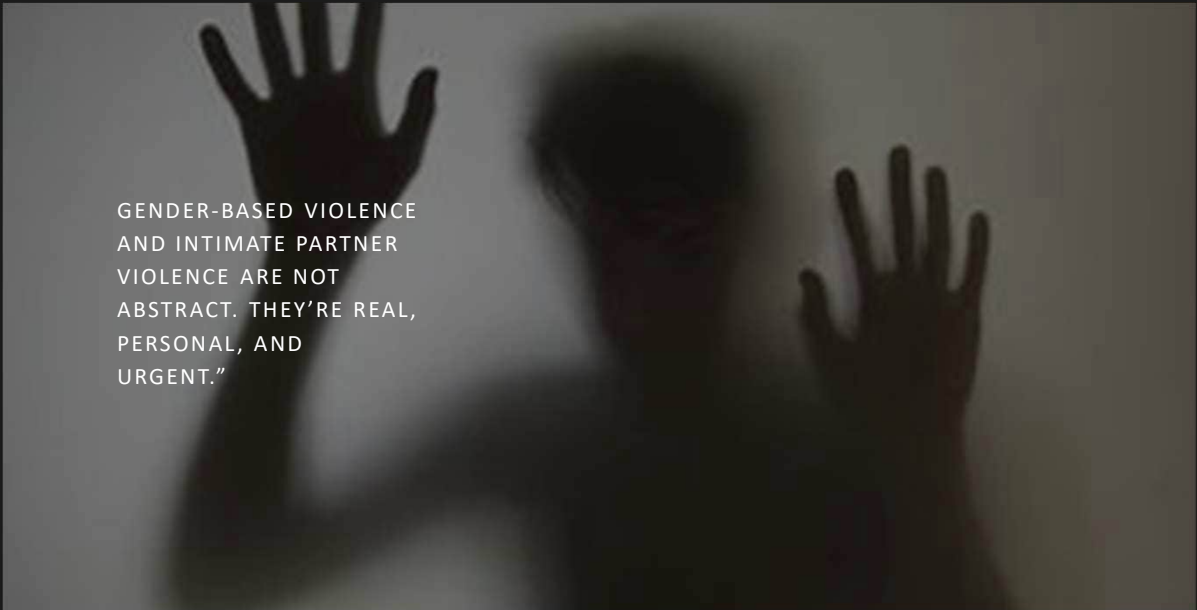
| Report Preparation | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Department | |
| Report Prepared by | Ruth Wawin, Tourism & Event Development Officer |
| Report Approved by | |
| Date Reviewed by C.A.O. | |



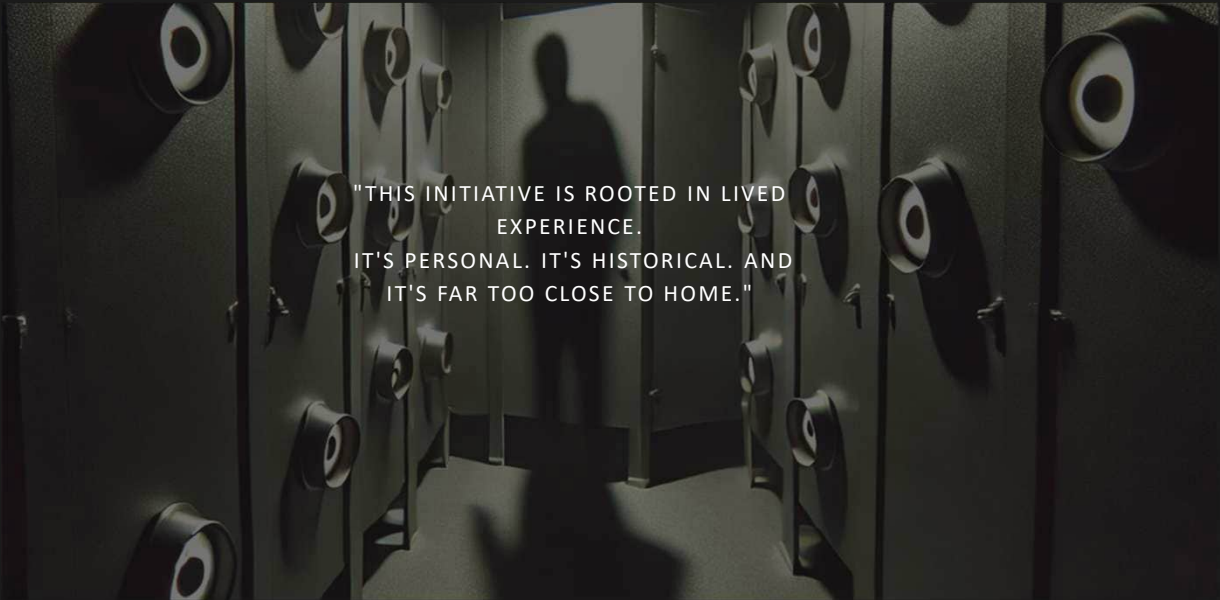
A PUBLIC ART INSTALLATION
ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
& MALE ACCOUNTABILITY

Transformation of Dangerous Spaces

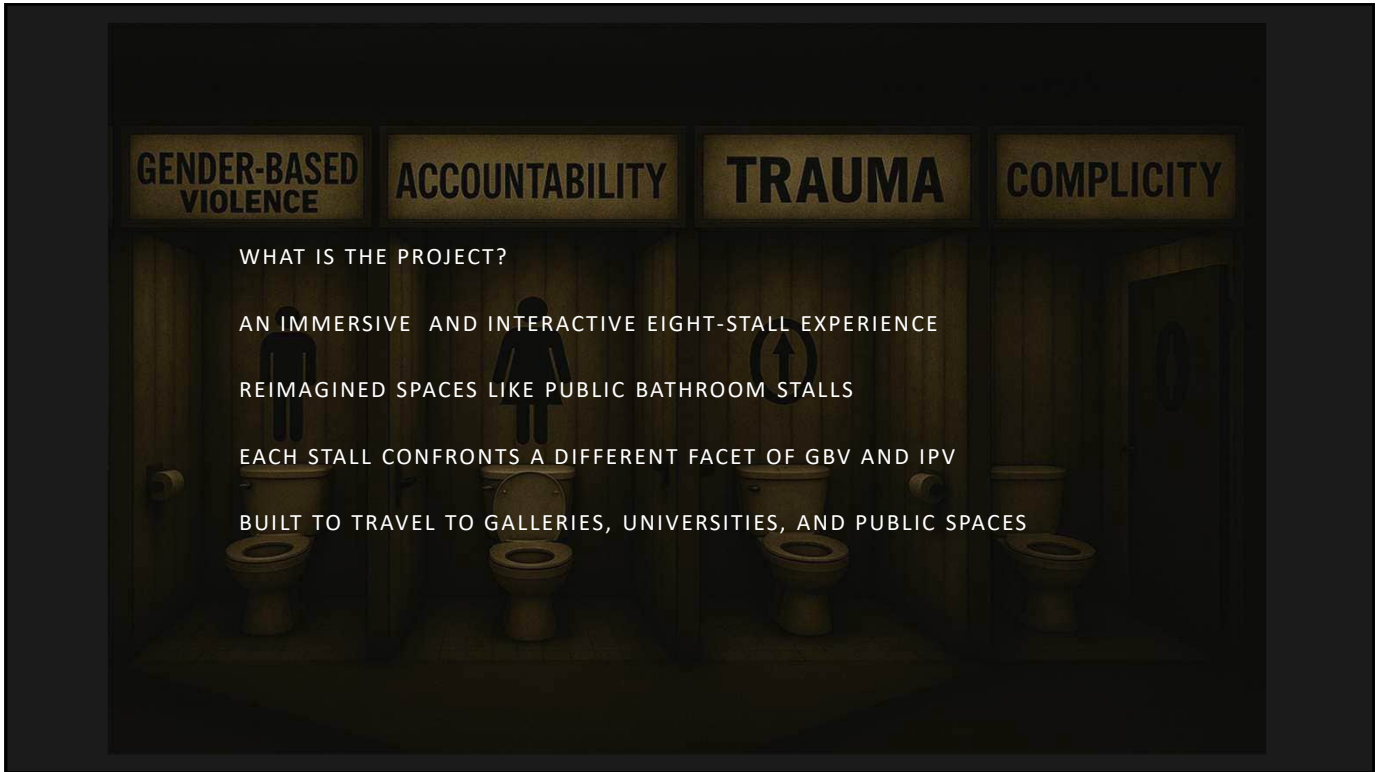
AN IMMERSIVE, TRAVELING PUBLIC ART INSTALLATION
CONFRONTING MEN WITH THE REALITIES OF GENDER-BASED
VIOLENCE, CONSENT, AND ACCOUNTABILITY.

A person's silhouette is shown from the chest up, with both hands raised against a light, slightly blurred background. The person's face is obscured by shadow.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
AND INTIMATE PARTNER
VIOLENCE ARE NOT
ABSTRACT. THEY'RE REAL,
PERSONAL, AND
URGENT."

A person's silhouette is standing in the center of a hallway. The walls are covered with numerous pairs of eyes, each looking directly at the person. The lighting is dim, creating a sense of being watched.

"THIS INITIATIVE IS ROOTED IN LIVED
EXPERIENCE.
IT'S PERSONAL. IT'S HISTORICAL. AND
IT'S FAR TOO CLOSE TO HOME."



1. The One-Way Mirror Stall – Participants feel watched and exposed, mirroring the scrutiny survivors face when speaking up.
2. The locker room Stall – Plays recorded locker-room style misogynistic language, confronting men with the normalization of harmful rhetoric. This stall explores the evolution from analog socialization of men and boys to the modern-day digital solitary socialization.
3. The Choice Stall – A forced-choice scenario simulates coercion, showing how if No is not an option, then
 - ‘Yes’ isn’t true consent.
4. The Confessional Stall – Confronting Complicity
 - Anonymous confessions from men projected on the walls.
 - Participants add their own; voices overlap into a shared reckoning.
5. The Silence Stall – Survivors Erased
 - Text of survivor stories fades while whispers of doubt grow louder.
 - Participants watch truth disappear before their eyes.
6. The Weight Stall – Trauma Has No Scale
 - A scale displays statistics, not weight.
 - Surrounding projections immerse participants in data and survivor voices.
7. The Role Reversal Stall – Being Watched
 - Shadows, peepholes, eyes.
 - Participants feel what it’s like to be objectified and surveilled.
8. The 21 Seconds Stall – The Final Seconds
 - Countdown. Silence. Then chaos.
 - Reminds men that violence escalates quickly—and they are responsible for stopping it

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE



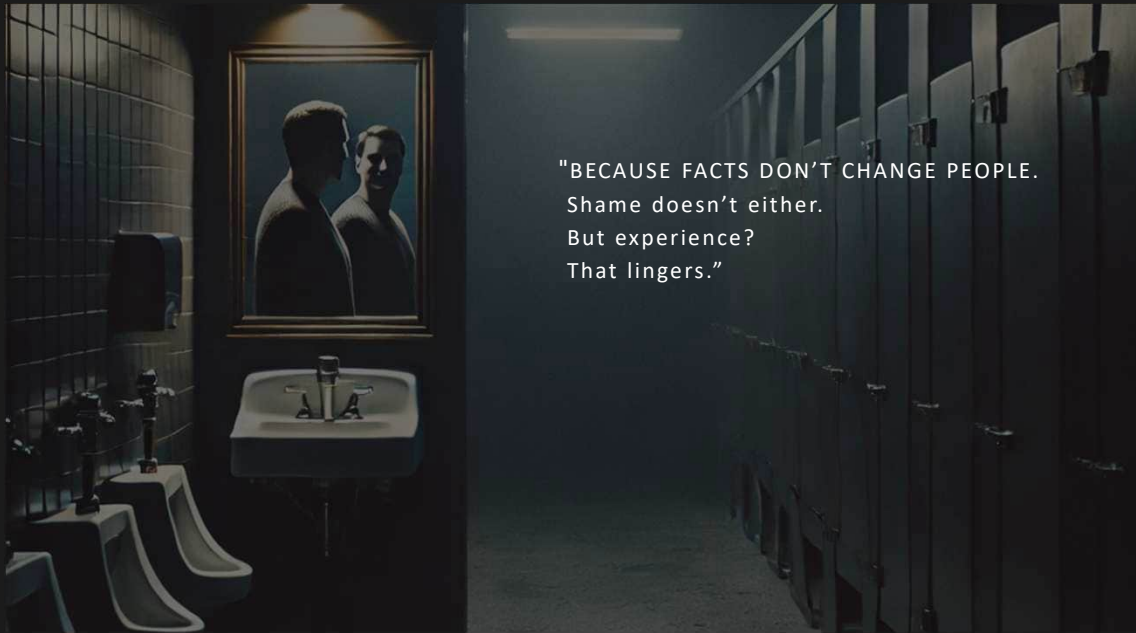
IN CANADA, 30% OF WOMEN experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime.



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada



THIS ALIGNS WITH:

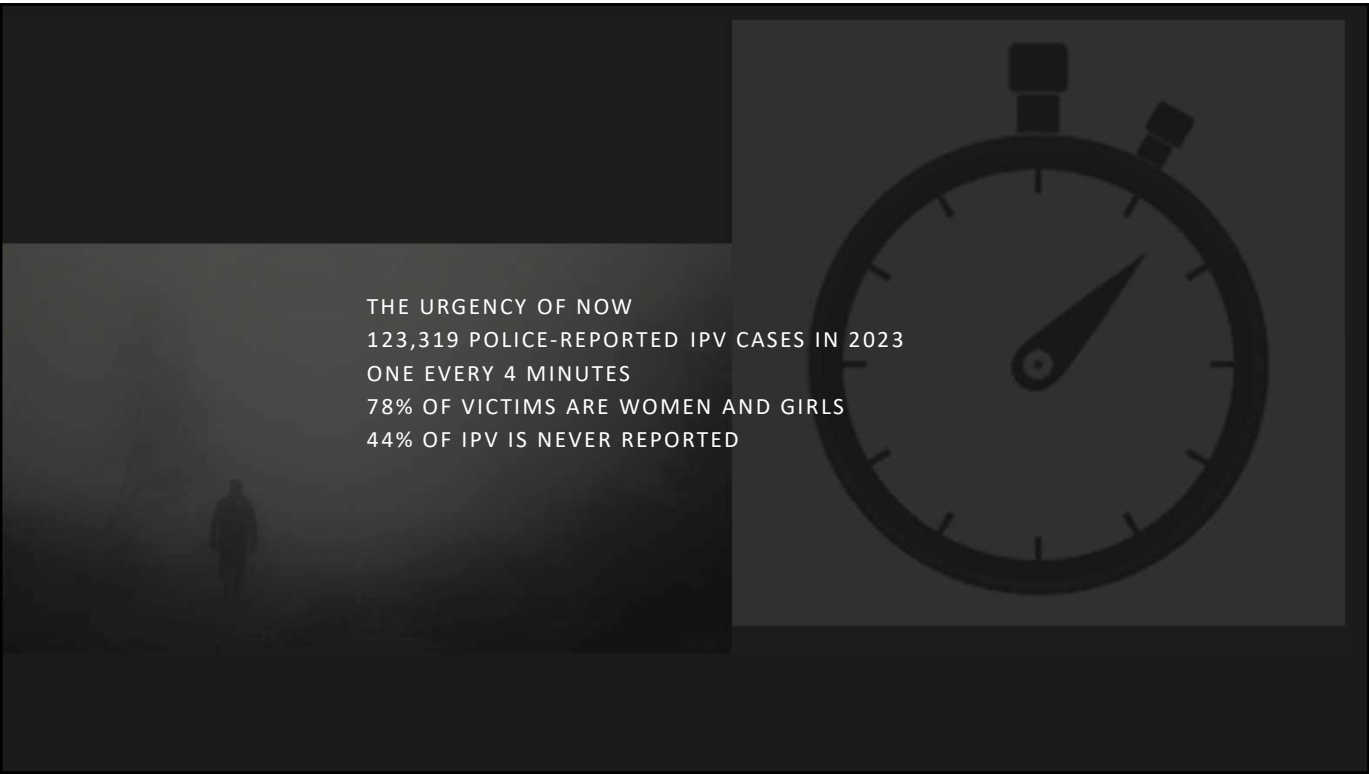
- GBV prevention frameworks
- Municipal safety and wellness mandates
- Public health and education initiatives
- Evaluation tools + trauma-informed facilitation



Actively engaged with over 70 organizations and advocacy groups

To drive systemic change

To deliver a visceral educational artistic experience



THE URGENCY OF NOW
123,319 POLICE-REPORTED IPV CASES IN 2023
ONE EVERY 4 MINUTES
78% OF VICTIMS ARE WOMEN AND GIRLS
44% OF IPV IS NEVER REPORTED



WE'RE SEEKING:
HOSTS AND MUNICIPAL PARTNERS
IN-KIND SPACE AND STAFFING
PROMOTION AND FUNDING REFERRALS
PUBLIC ENDORSEMENT TO UNLOCK GRANT ACCESS



"EVERY COMMUNITY HAS DANGEROUS SPACES.
EVERY COMMUNITY HAS THE POWER TO TRANSFORM .



THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.
LET'S TRANSFORM THE SILENCE INTO
ACTION.

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