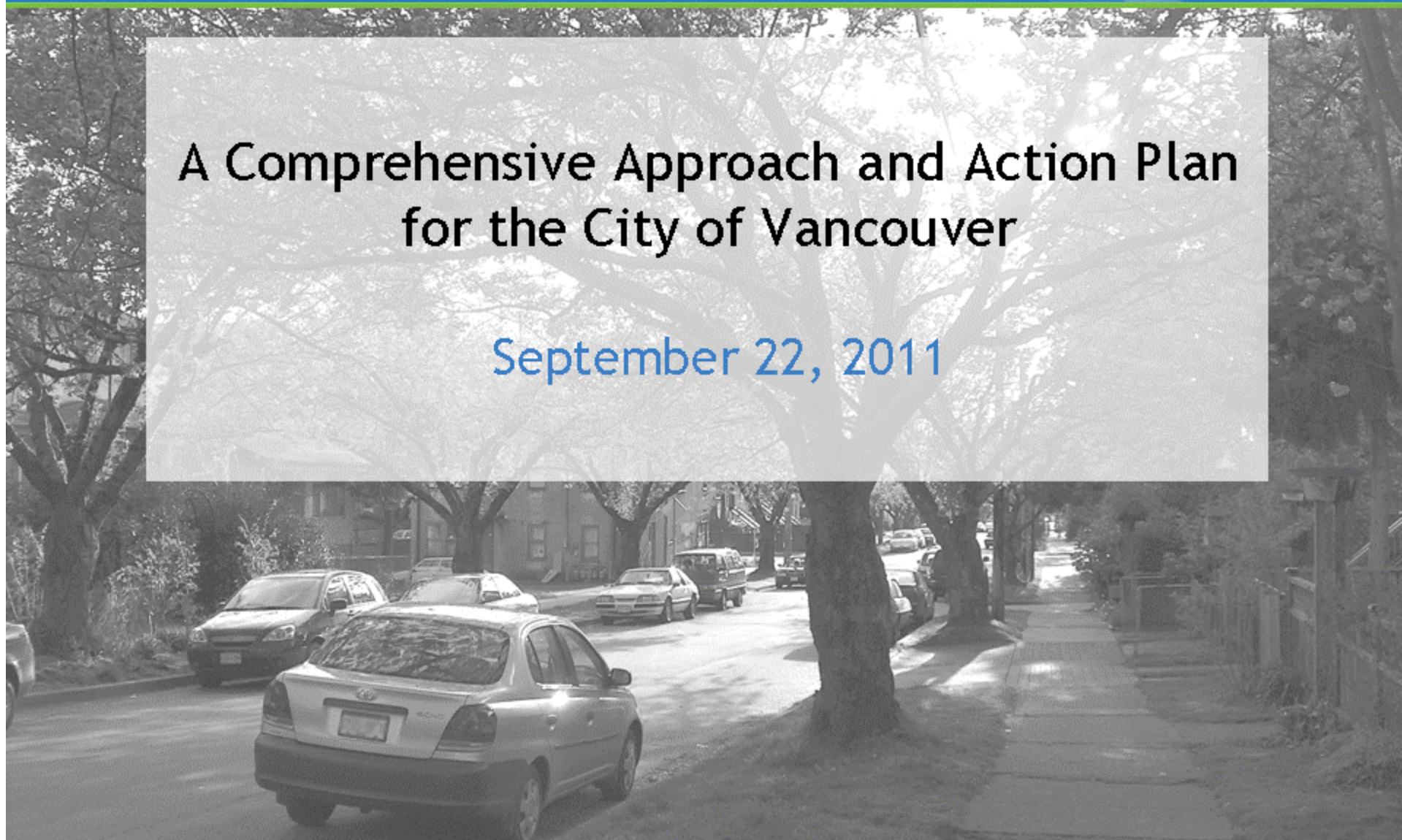


# *Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Protecting Vulnerable Adults and Neighbourhoods Affected by Sex Work*

## **A Comprehensive Approach and Action Plan for the City of Vancouver**

September 22, 2011





# Overview:

- Advances Urban Health Objectives
- Connects to Council Priority: *“Safe and Inclusive Communities”*
- 2009 Council Motion



## **Four Pillars Framework:**

1. Prevention
2. Treatment
3. Harm Reduction
4. Enforcement



## Presentation Overview

- Definition of Terms
- International & Canadian Context
- Effects: Who and What?
- Considerations and Approaches
- Strategies Moving Forward





# International Legal Frameworks: Adult Sex Work:

**Selling  
Sex**

decriminalized

criminalized

**Buying  
Sex**

decriminalized

criminalized

**Related \***  
**Actions**

decriminalized

criminalized



The Netherlands



New Zealand



Canada



United Kingdom



Sweden



United States



South Africa

\*communication, procuring, brothels



## Canada/Vancouver Contexts

- i. On the Streets
- ii. Indoors
- iii. Sexually Exploited Children and Youth
- iv. Neighbourhood Issues
- v. Public Services and Investments



## i. On the Streets

<b>Population</b> <i>(estimates)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1000-2000 in Vancouver</li><li>• 80% women</li><li>• 20% men and transgendered people</li><li>• 40% Aboriginal</li></ul>
<b>Risk Factors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Poverty and housing instability (87%)</li><li>• History of sexual abuse as children (82%)</li></ul>
<b>Effects:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Violence: 90% assaulted; 70% threatened</li><li>• Chronic illness (25% are HIV+)</li><li>• Addictions (82%); Mental health: PTSD (72%)</li><li>• Children apprehended to government care</li><li>• Lack of access to protection &amp; services</li></ul>

*\* street-based female sex workers*

## ii. Indoors

<b>Population</b> <i>(estimates)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Represents ~80% of sex work</li><li>• 80% women</li><li>• 20% men and transgendered people</li><li>• 40% immigrant women and women of colour</li></ul>
<b>Risk Factors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Low income, language &amp; cultural barriers</li><li>• International migration and trafficking</li><li>• Unstable immigration status</li></ul>
<b>Effects:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Violence and threats</li><li>• Lack of access to protection and services</li><li>• Further research needed. e.g. longitudinal study by BC Centre for HIV/AIDS</li></ul>



### iii. Sexually Exploited Children and Youth

<b>Population</b> ( <i>estimates</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overall numbers are unknown.</li><li>• Research focuses on 'at risk' youth</li></ul>	
<b>BC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 80% girls/ 20% boys</li><li>• 37% street youth exchanged sex for basic needs</li><li>• Aboriginal youth are overrepresented</li></ul>	
<b>Vancouver</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase in Aboriginal street youth</li></ul>	
<b>Risk Factors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Abuse</li><li>• Low self esteem</li><li>• Family poverty</li><li>• Homelessness</li><li>• Inadequate housing</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Government care</li><li>• Disability (e.g. FASD)</li><li>• Poor school attendance</li><li>• Lack of community &amp; cultural connection</li></ul>



### iii. Sexually Exploited Children and Youth (continued)

<b>Online Risk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All children and youth are at risk online</li><li>• 10% of students in grades 7-12 have been in online contact with someone who made them feel unsafe</li></ul>	
<b>Effects:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Physical health</li><li>• Mental health and addictions</li><li>• Exposure to violence and abuse</li><li>• Homelessness</li></ul>	
<b>Preventative Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child &amp; youth programs</li><li>• Natural surveillance in neighbourhood</li><li>• Community and cultural attachment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feeling safe</li><li>• Positive identity</li><li>• Positive peer influences</li></ul>

## iv. Neighbourhood Issues

- Outdoor sex work is visible in some neighbourhoods
- Indoor sex work occurs in all neighbourhoods
  - Hidden from view
  - Residences, businesses and online
- Sexual exploitation of children and youth
  - Indoors across neighbourhoods (often hidden), and outdoors in some neighbourhoods (more visible)
  - In residences, malls, hotels, street
  - Online



## iv. Neighbourhood Issues (continued)

- Neighbourhood Safety
- Garbage, needles, condoms
- Sex work near schools, family residences
- Impacts on businesses and their reputations
- General liveability
- Empathy toward sex workers
- Concerns about child/youth sexual exploitation



## iv. Neighbourhood Issues (continued)

I don't want to displace our problems onto other communities

I am concerned for the safety of the sex workers... Lack of ... safety for sex workers makes for a less safe environment for... women and children in the neighbourhood.

We have empathy for the street prostitutes but... a problem with... pimps, drug dealers, condoms and other drug paraphernalia in our streets, parks, and around our schools.

Sex workers... work in front of my business. People are afraid to come into my store and this hurts my business.



## v. Public Services and Investments (Sample)

Public Services Categories		Annual Cost (Est.)
Policing	VICE Squad	\$1.5 million/year
	Sex Industry Liaison Officer	\$80,000
	School Liaison Officers	Proportion of time
Community Services and Parks	Parks Board Youth Workers	Proportion of time
	Social Services Grants to address sexual exploitation prevention, provide services to youth at risk, and support sex worker safety.	\$550,000/year
Senior Government Services	Housing	Millions of dollars/year
	Health	
	Social Services	
	Victim Services & Crime Prevention	
	Justice System	

# Considerations and Approaches

- I. Role of the City and Senior Governments
- II. Past City Strategies - Lessons Learned
- III. Information Gathering and Evidence
- IV. Regulation and Enforcement Objectives



# I. Government Roles: Senior Governments

Senior governments are mandated to play lead roles in:

- Federal laws
- Health
- Housing
- Education
- Social services
- Immigration
- Safety and policing



# I. Government Roles: Municipal Governments

<b>Mandated</b>	<b>Discretionary</b>
Land use regulation (includes business licensing)	Social planning
Safety (VPD Policing: legal basis rests with senior government)	Grants and research

## II. City of Vancouver: Past Responses

### 1980s and 1990s:

- Engineering-focused and policing-focused efforts to address street sex work
- e.g. traffic calming, signage, lighting, and ticketing

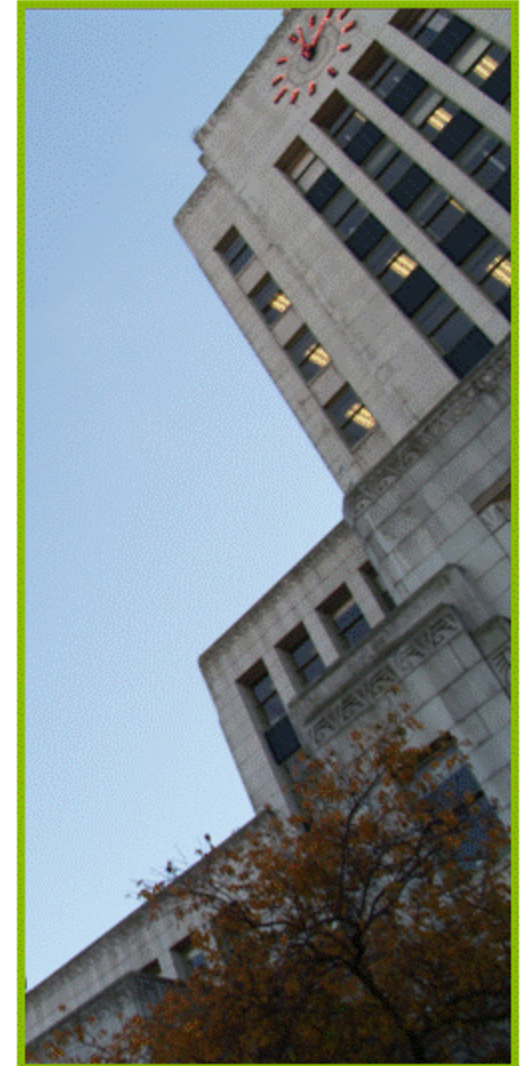
### Lessons Learned

- Sex worker displacement creates safety risks and displaces issues to other neighbourhoods
- Obstructed streets inconvenience residents and businesses

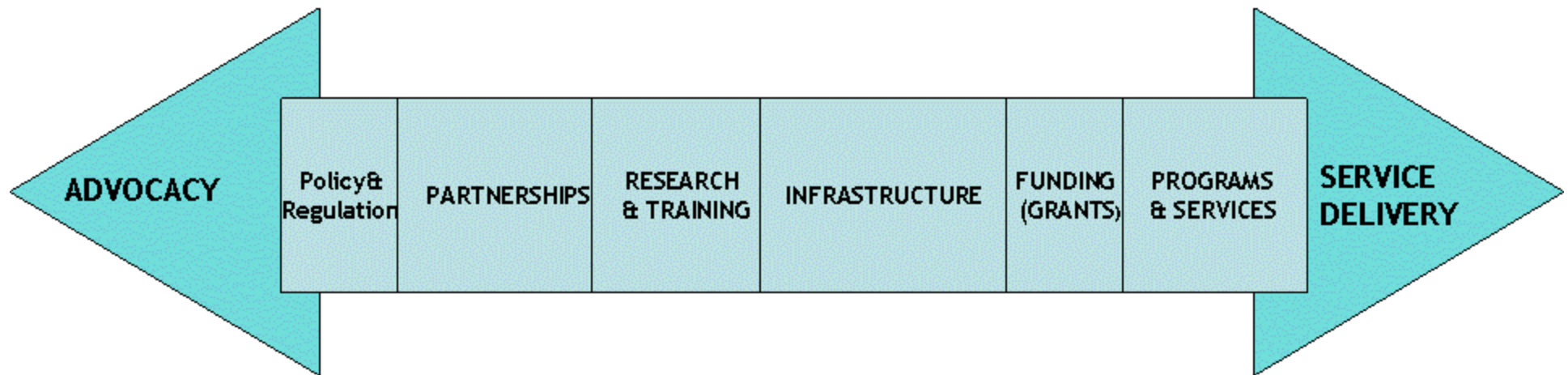


### III. Information Gathering and Evidence

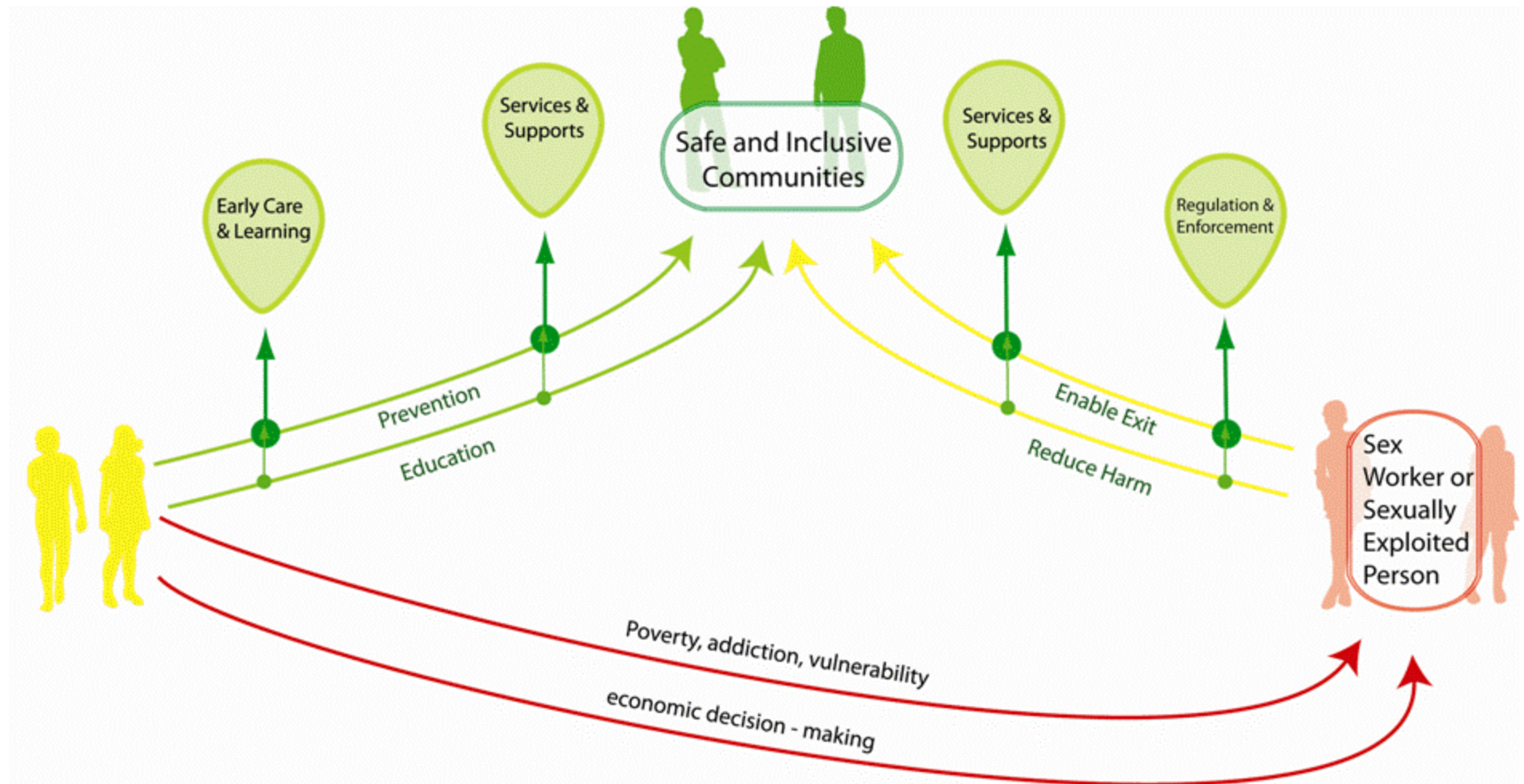
- Over 50 groups and individuals contacted
- Over 50 research articles reviewed
- Inventory of current initiatives and gaps



### III. Range of Social Development Tools



### III. Key Factors and Intervention Points





## IV. City Regulation & Enforcement: Objectives

Business Licensing	Zoning	Police
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responsible business operations</li><li>• Focus on safety and neighbourhood impacts (noise, litter, loitering, assaults, signage etc.)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure neighbourhood compatibility of uses</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safety of all persons connected to business</li><li>• Focus on the safety of women, neighbourhood impacts and criminal elements (gangs, trafficking etc.)</li></ul>

## IV. Business License Categories and Annual Fees Personal Services

**Provincially  
Regulated**

**Not Provincially Regulated**

### Health Care Offices

(Registered  
Massage  
Therapist)

**\$124**

### Beauty & Wellness

- Relaxation massage in combination with cosmetic services
- Training required

**\$295**

### Health Enhancement

- (i.e. Shhiatsu, reiki)
- Training required
- Time limited permit
- Restricted hours
- Conditional approval

**\$232**

### Body Rub

- Unqualified touch techniques
- No training required
- Restricted hours
- Downtown Only

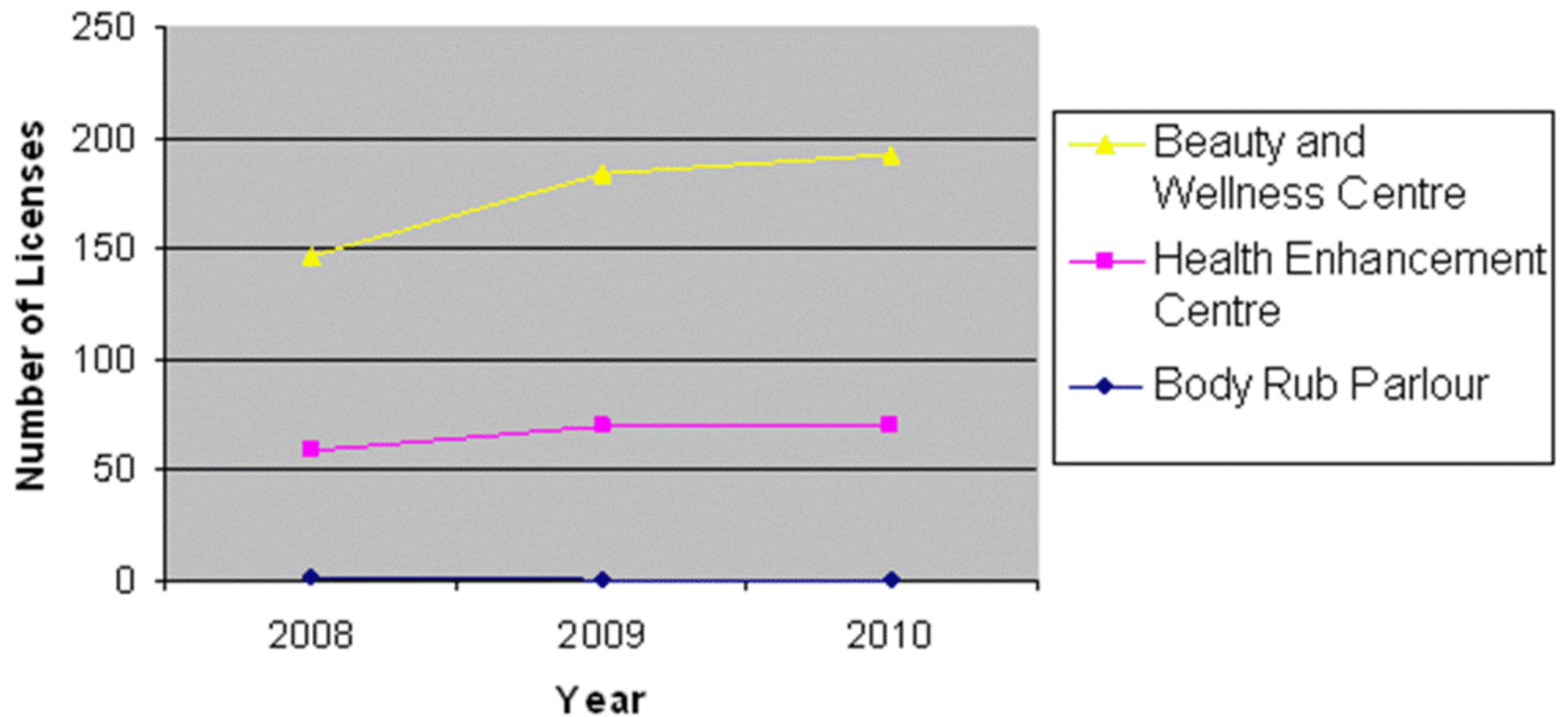
**\$9,504**

**Most  
Regulated**



**Least  
Regulated**

## IV. Personal Services: Business Licenses Issued Per Year



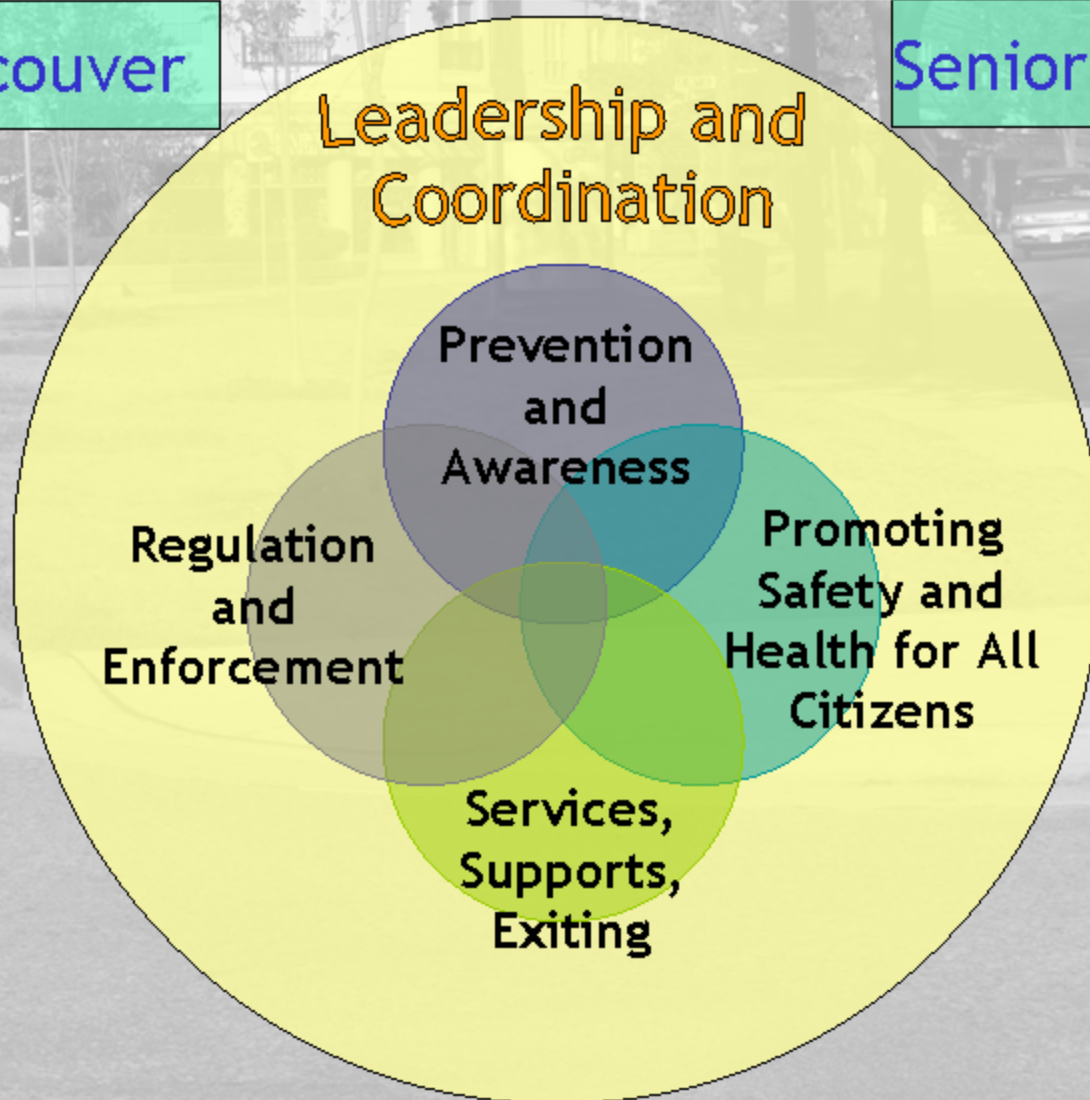


# Strategies Moving Forward

## A Comprehensive Framework for Action

City of Vancouver

Senior Governments



## Strategies Moving Forward: Leadership and Coordination

### City to take leadership in coordination and action:

- Through a City-wide mechanism involving community and government stakeholders
- By enabling partnerships with senior governments, community organizations and researchers


Key stakeholders include NGO's, equality-seeking women's organizations, business, research, and senior governments.

# Strategies Moving Forward: Prevention and Awareness

City of Vancouver

- **Early learning and care:**

Aboriginal- focused child care, middle years supports, e.g. after school programming for 9-12 year olds, gender specific & culturally appropriate



Prevention  
and  
Awareness

- **Public awareness:**

Continue work with the Province to promote public education and prevention opportunities  
(e.g. 'Stop the Sexual Exploitation of Children & Youth' Week)

- **Enhance staff role in providing information and referrals**

- **Neighbourhood safety and violence prevention initiatives**



## Strategies Moving Forward: Safety and Health

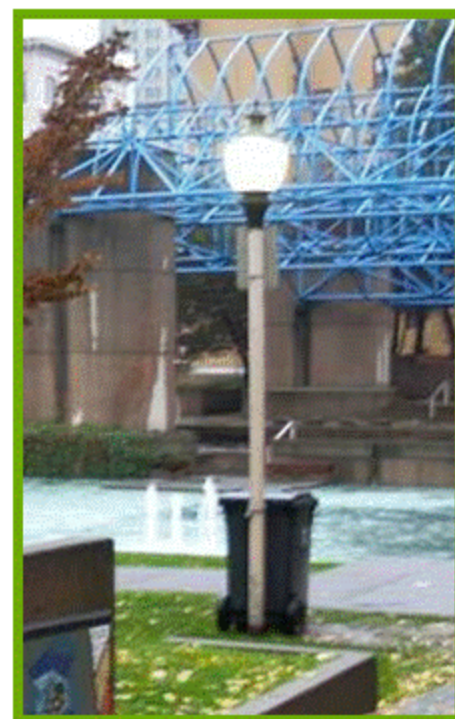
- **Safe pedestrian lighting**

beginning with a pilot in Renfrew-Collingwood, in consultation with residents

- **Use of civic facilities**

Identify potential for providing immediate response to citizen safety (i.e. fire halls, community centres)

Promoting  
Safety and  
Health for All  
Citizens



## Strategies Moving Forward: Services, Supports, Exiting

- **Identify and facilitate housing options:**

Improve coordination with housing partners to improve the quality and availability of existing services for vulnerable youth and adults.

- **Supported employment:**

Include exiting sex workers within the City's supported employment program

- **Leverage social grants:**

Continue grants supporting sex worker safety and exiting. Leverage additional funds.



Services,  
Supports,  
Exiting

## Strategies Moving Forward: Regulation and Enforcement

- **Strengthen the Business Licensing By-Law**

to better protect the safety and security of sex workers at premises with potential for safety risks, exploitation, or human trafficking.



Regulation  
and  
Enforcement

- **Learn from best practices of other jurisdictions**

to prevent exploitation and negative impacts of sex work on neighbourhoods.



# Strategies Moving Forward: Regulation and Enforcement

City of Vancouver

VPD

- Align inspection and enforcement practices of all City departments and VPD

Develop information materials for individuals, business licensees and neighbourhoods, in multiple languages, on laws, health, safety, community services and exiting.



Regulation  
and  
Enforcement

# Strategies Moving Forward: Regulation and Enforcement

City of Vancouver

VPD (continued)

- Communicate written policies related to:

- Arrests for prostitution offenses
- Monitoring and enforcement of business establishments
- Neighbourhood complaints
- Displacement of sex work from one neighbourhood to another

Regulation  
and  
Enforcement



# Strategies Moving Forward: Leadership and Coordination

## Senior Governments

### Senior Governments to take leadership in coordination and action:

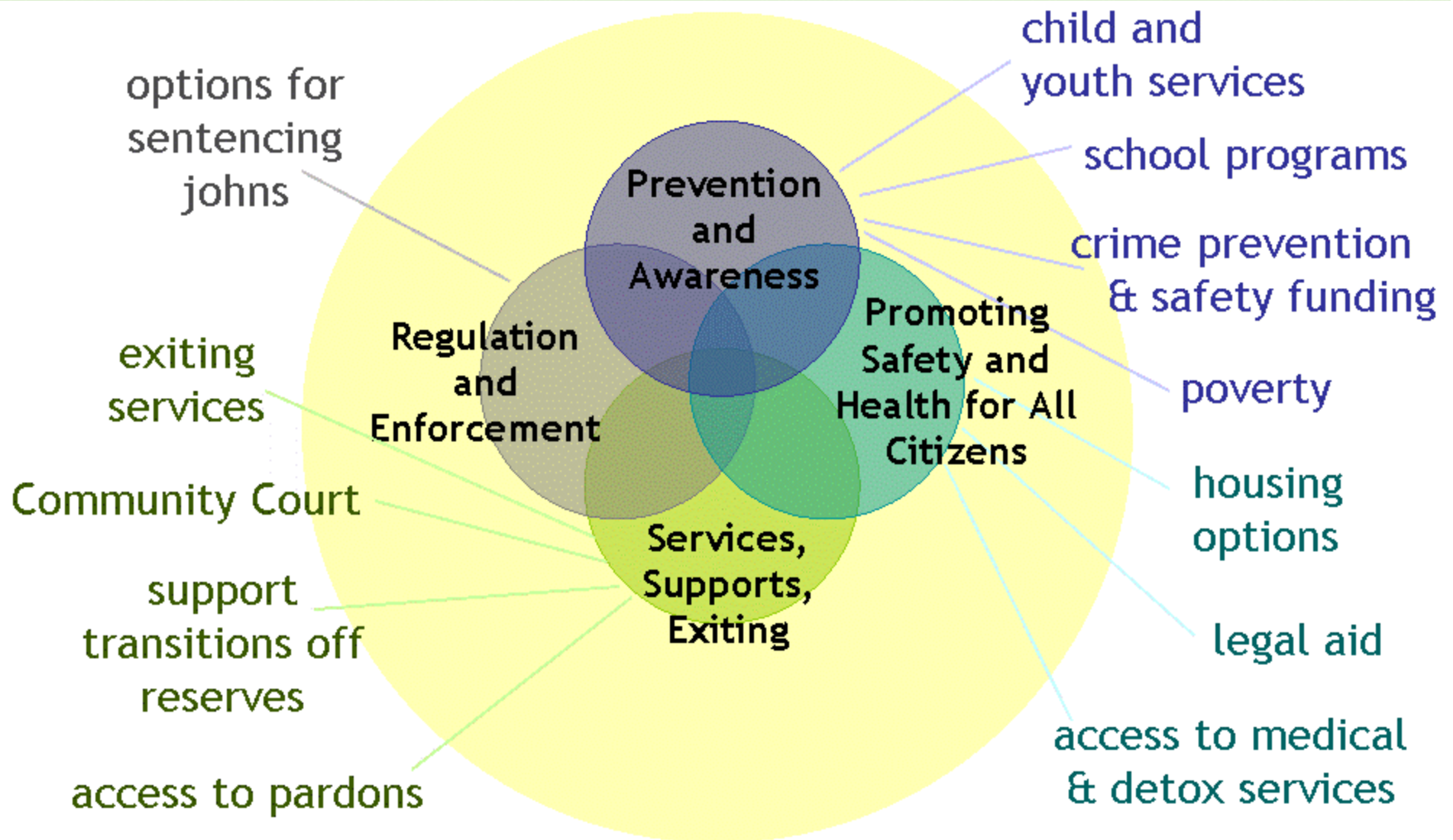
- Through a regional mechanism, in partnership with Metro municipalities, involving community and government stakeholders, to address key prevention, health, safety, support and exiting needs

Key stakeholders include NGO's, equality seeking women's organizations, business, research, and senior governments.

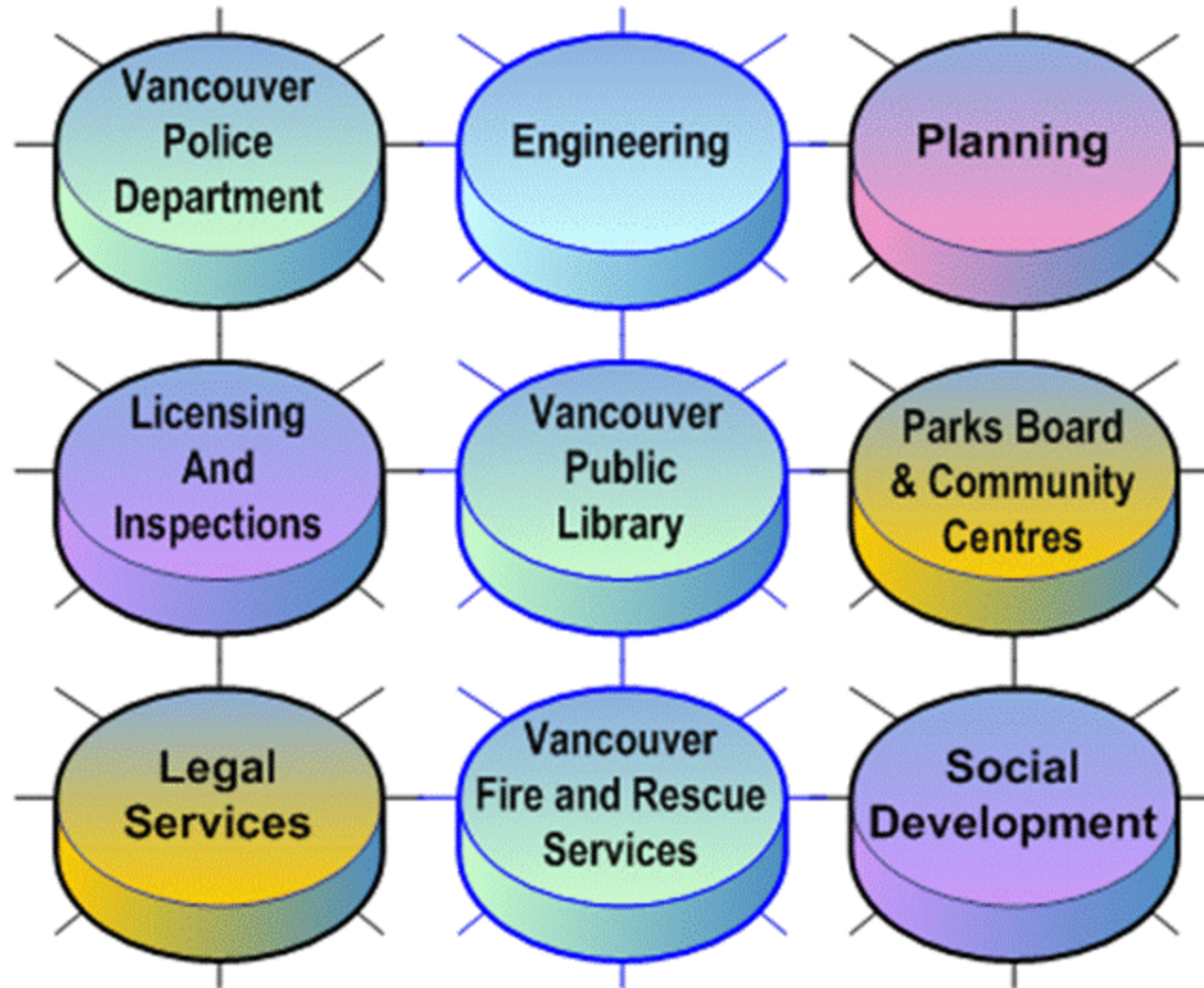


# Strategies Moving Forward

Senior Governments

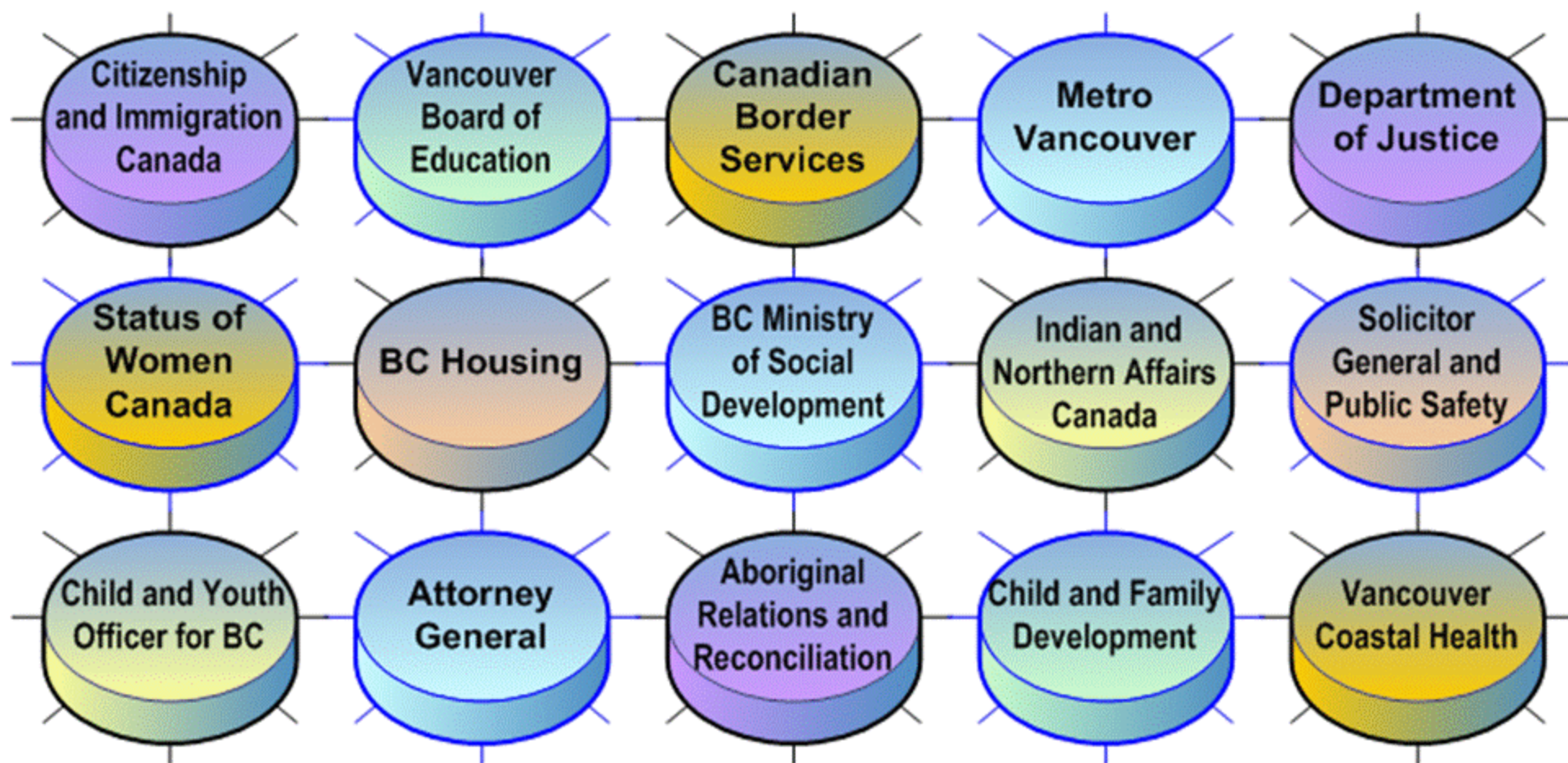


# Strategies Moving Forward - Partnerships: Across the City of Vancouver



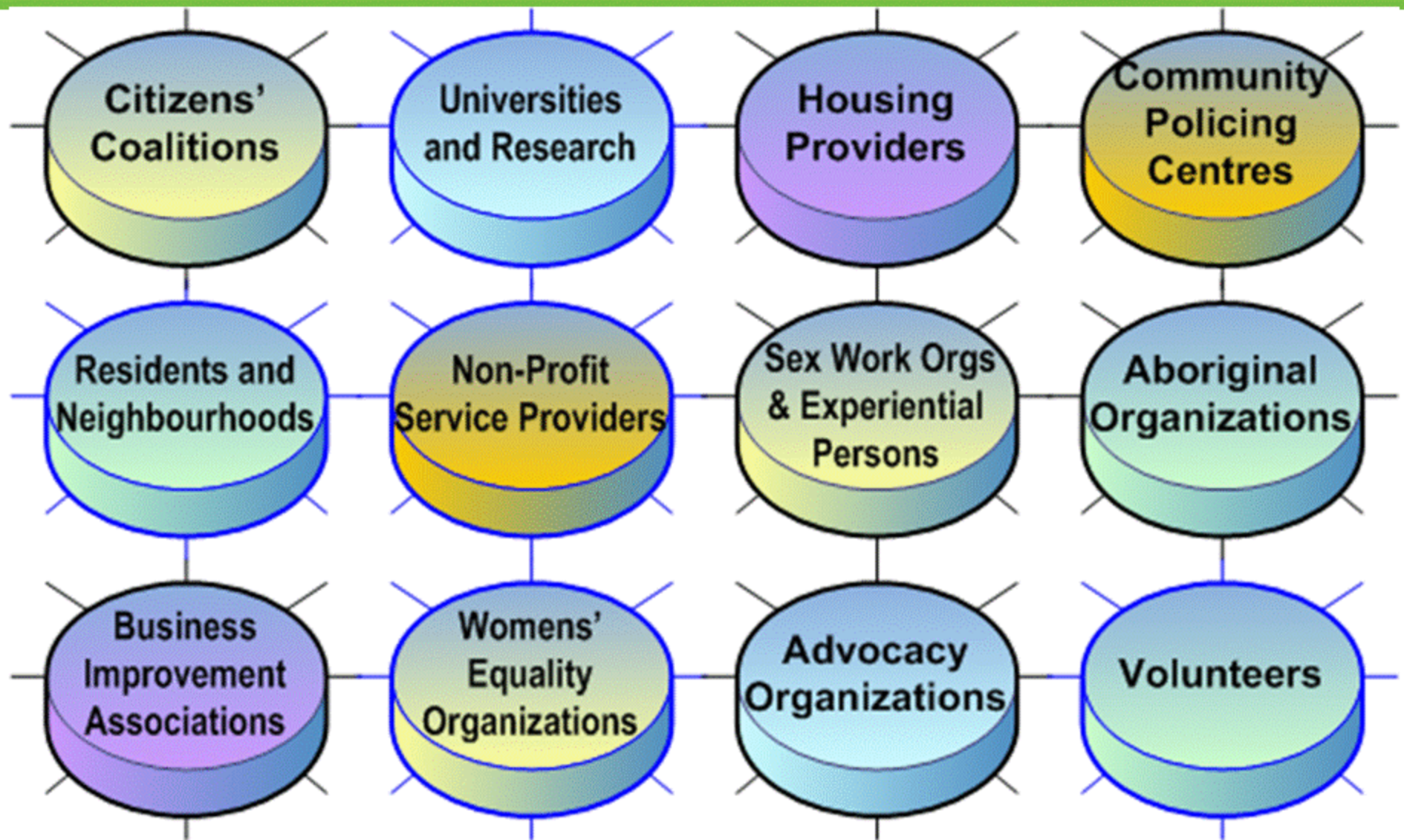


# Strategies Moving Forward - Partnerships: Government Partners





# Strategies Moving Forward - Partnerships: Community Partners



## Recommendation

- A. THAT Council endorse the framework and actions contained in this report providing a comprehensive approach to addressing sexual exploitation and sex work through enhanced prevention, opportunities for exiting, and improved health and safety for all Vancouver citizens and neighbourhoods.
- B. THAT Council direct staff to review license and enforcement policy and report back to Council with recommendations that will enhance prevention, health and safety, mitigate negative neighbourhood impacts, and support responsible business practices.



# Questions and Discussion

