

From: "Singh, Sandra" <Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca>

To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council"](#)

Date: 10/10/2025 1:48:18 PM

Subject: Memo - Report Back on Funding for Public Safety Programs for Alcohol Consumption Establishments - RTS 18116

Attachments: ACCS - GM - Memo (Council) - Report Back on Funding for Public Safety Programs for Alcohol Consumption Establishments - RTS 18116 (2025-10-10).pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

Attached is a memo from Margaret Wittgens, GM, Arts, Culture & Community Services providing Council with a response to Council Motion F ([RTS 17838](#)) regarding "potential needs for an ongoing increase to City and partner funding for public safety programs for alcohol consumption establishments like "Good Night Out" that do workshops on sexual violence prevention, to ensure that funding remains proportionate to the increased need caused by extended bar service hours starting in the 2026 budget." RTS 18116.

Key information includes:

- The City currently provides core support and project grant funding to Good Night Out (GNO) for related programming.
- Staff, GNO and related organizations will be monitoring the impacts associated with the extended bar service hours.
- If further needs are identified related to the policy change, staff will consider within the context of existing grant programs and may bring forward a recommendation for Council decision accordingly.

If Council requires further information, please feel free to contact margaret.wittgens@vancouver.ca and staff will address through the weekly Council Q&A.

Thank you,
Sandra

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The City of Vancouver acknowledges the unceded homelands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwx̱w̱u817 _wú7mesh (Squamish), and Sel̓ilw̓itulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

MEMORANDUM

October 10, 2025

TO: Mayor & Council

CC: Donny van Dyk, City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Sandra Singh, Deputy City Manager
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Officer, CEC
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Trevor Ford, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Mellisa Morphy, Director of Policy & Deputy Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office

FROM: Margaret Wittgens. General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services

SUBJECT: Report Back on Funding Needs for Public Safety Programs Resulting from Extended Bar Hours

RTS #: 18116

PURPOSE

This memo responds to Council's July 22, 2025 motion ([RTS 17838](#), Motion F) requesting that staff report back on potential funding required for public safety programs for licensed establishments to retain current service levels following the extension of liquor service hours across the city.

BACKGROUND

On July 22, 2025, Council approved policy changes to extend hours of liquor establishments across the city, and asked staff to "report back on potential needs for an ongoing increase to City and partner funding for public safety programs for alcohol consumption establishments like 'Good Night Out' that do workshops on sexual violence

prevention, to ensure that funding remains proportionate to the increased need caused by extended bar service hours starting in the 2026 budget.”

The approved updates to the City’s liquor policies are intended to provide more opportunity and flexibility for businesses, reduce regulatory barriers, support neighbourhood vibrancy and provide more late-night options for dining, hospitality and nightlife. Along with these benefits, the potential accompanying health and safety risks that are associated with increased access to alcohol were considered, such as violence, disorder, and overconsumption, and the impacts on establishments’ staff, patrons and local neighbourhoods.

There are a number of public safety initiatives to support businesses in addressing these concerns and create a safer experience for patrons and staff:

- *Good Night Out (GNO)*: Provides sexual violence prevention workshops for establishments and operates a safety outreach team on Granville St. on weekend nights. GNO also delivers the Last Call Project, a pilot program to address sexual violence and safety for staff and patrons in the hospitality sector.
- *Downtown Ambassador Program*: Led by the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association, this program offers street-level safety presence and assistance, including a “safewalk” service until 10:30pm each night.
- *BarWatch Program*: A voluntary initiative that allows licensed establishments to share information and restrict entry for individuals with documented histories of violence or criminal behavior, including sexual offenses.

The City supports gender safety broadly through its participation in the UN Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces initiative and provides grant funding for services such as the Downtown East Side Women’s Center as well as GNO. More information on the City’s commitments to addressing sexual and gender-based violence is provided in Appendix A.

DISCUSSION

A number of factors directly and indirectly influence public safety and specifically gender-based violence, with respect to access to alcohol in the hospitality industry. In the July 2025 Council report, staff outlined a preliminary impact assessment based on existing data, research, and consultation with community partners. This included noting impacts to community safety and alcohol-related harms and health risks (as described by Vancouver Coastal Health in [Appendix G](#) of the Council Report).

At this point it is difficult to identify the safety programming increases that would be most appropriate in responding to the potential impacts of this policy change. There are a number of unknown factors, such as the potential rate of approved license applications, geographic patterns of uptake, and whether extended hours will increase the overall volume of patrons. Monitoring the impacts of this policy change over time will include reviewing metrics from multiple sources (e.g., City licensing, VPD, community partners, public health and safety surveys).

Current prevention programs, such as those offered by GNO, address this need through sexual violence prevention workshops for the hospitality industry. This programming is already supported through social grants provided by the City (see Appendix B). Staff will continue to engage with GNO and related organizations to monitor need and uptake of programming such as the “Last Call” project and its Street Teams. Should it appear that there is additional need for support for “public safety programs for alcohol consumption establishments like ‘Good Night Out’ that do workshops on sexual violence prevention,” per the Motion, staff will consider potential for such programming within existing grant programs and may bring forward a recommendation for Council decision accordingly.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will:

- Maintain current monitoring of sexual violence prevention program outcomes and service gaps, and related monitoring of uptake of extended hours licenses.
- Review funding needs through the regular grant cycle process as extended hours are implemented.

FINAL REMARKS

Staff will continue to work with Good Night Out to evaluate related resource needs as the policy change is implemented.

If Council requires further information, please feel free to contact me directly at margaret.wittgens@vancouver.ca and we will provide response through the weekly Council Q&A.



Margaret Wittgens, General Manager
Arts, Culture, and Community Services

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Appendix A

City Commitments to Addressing Sexual and Gender Based Violence in Public Spaces

City-led and supported safety initiatives related to alcohol consumption have primarily focused on responding to the high rates of sexual violence and harassment related to nightlife and the hospitality industry. These efforts are part of a broader commitment to addressing gender-based violence in public spaces and contributing to a safe and inclusive nighttime economy. They include:

- Recognizing April 23, 2025, as “Safer Spaces in Hospitality Day.”
- Funding, through [Community Services Grants](#), sexual and gender-based violence service organizations such as Good Night Out, WISH’s MAP Van, Battered Women’s Support Services, and Salal Sexual Violence Support Centre Society.
- Addressing gender-based violence prevention in the Granville Street Plan, including the proposal to support outreach and a gender-based violence drop-in space for survivors and future consideration of a sobering space in the GED.
- Participating in the UN Safe Spaces gender safety initiative arising from the Women’s Equity Strategy.
- [Responding to Council’s 2019 “Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in Vancouver’s Hospitality and Service Industry” Motion](#) through the following actions:
 - convening a working group of industry and union representatives, anti-violence organizations, and the VPD to formulate recommendations;
 - exploring options within municipal, provincial and federal jurisdiction for mandating sexual violence prevention measures (e.g., training, policy and safety audits) in connection with licensing liquor-serving establishments; and,
 - partnering with Good Night Out on the [“Last Call Project,”](#) a voluntary credentialling program for the hospitality industry in Vancouver to address and prevent sexual violence and foster worker and patron safety.

Appendix B

City Supports for Good Night Out (GNO) Programming

GNO Street Outreach Teams

- The Street Teams operated by [Good Night Out](#) (GNO) provide violence prevention and support services from 12 AM to 3:30 AM in the Granville Entertainment District area.
 - Teams liaise directly with licensed establishments to support vulnerable patrons (e.g., business staff can text the team for help).
 - Teams support 200 – 400 people/month; approximately 47-69% of contacts occur before 2 AM.
 - With the extension on liquor service hours, GNO anticipates that the peak periods of public intoxication, conflicts, and safety-related incidents may extend later into the night.
- The City has provided a Core Support Grant to Good Night Out (GNO) since 2020 to support their Street Teams and other programming. Currently, GNO receives a multi-year (3 year) funding grant totalling \$120,000 (2025-2027).

Last Call Project

- Created in response to the 2019 Council Motion ["Ending Sexual Harassment and Violence in Vancouver's Hospitality and Service Industries,"](#) the City partnered with GNO to create the Last Call Project, a pilot program to address sexual violence and safety for both staff and patrons in the hospitality sector.
- Phase 1 (closed fall 2024): The City provided a \$40K grant in 2022 for GNO to develop and provide free training, policy support, and reporting tools. Three hospitality establishments opted into the program and received violence prevention training. Among participants:
 - 70% had witnessed or experienced sexual violence in hospitality spaces;
 - 69% had not taken sexual violence prevention training in the last 3 years;
 - 63% did not know the specifics of their workplace's violence prevention policy;
 - Training demonstrated an increase in participants level of knowledge and comfort with sexual violence prevention.
- Concerns about stigma associated with participation in a sexual violence prevention program were reported by businesses as a barrier to participation in the program.
- Phase 2 (currently open): To encourage greater participation in the program, the City provided a \$50K grant in 2025 for GNO to pivot to a self-directed audit program that recognizes and supports businesses in implementing safety tools for both staff and patrons, including free violence prevention training.
 - 14 businesses have begun participation in the safety audit.
- In GNO's most recent safety survey in the GED, 82% of respondents reported that they would be more likely to recommend and increase their spending at liquor serving establishments where there are visible safety measures.