

City of Edmonton

Community and Public Services Committee

September 30, 2020

Motion: Merits of a 5 year exit strategy on Licensing Body Rub Centres and information on educational campaigns and strategies to reduce demand, such as “john school” among others



A Possible Path Forward: Don't Decide Today

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- **Fall, 2020**: Presentation from Federal Department of Justice lawyers on Human Trafficking, IRPA, PCEPA, & Consent laws;
- **January, 2021**: Presentation on the STOP program; the awareness strategies of EPS and the City (text outreach to buyers); other cities
- **Late Spring, 2021**: Presentation from the Alberta Human Trafficking Taskforce (Motto: “Survivor Focused; Serving Albertans”)
- **Late Spring, 2021**: An analysis of municipal capacity to determine ownership and potential for involvement of criminal organizations.
- **June, 2021**: A Review of how Council Initiatives and City programs align to support individuals who do not want to turn to the sex industry and risks of violence to pay the bills. (**Harm Prevention** to **Hope Creation**)

Break for Municipal Election – Renew and Review – January, 2022.

CEASE Advocacy ~ informed by those who experienced harm and trauma

- Separate licence category for BRCs (2011) different than therapeutic massage
- The Information Course (survey of what women wanted to know; design of course) (2011)
- Involvement of Citizen Services in addition to Business Licencing
- A second Bylaw Officer and a Social Work position; translation for those who don't speak English
- The Taskforce - 2014
- Removal of licence fees for individual applicants; and portable licences so BRC owners couldn't control
- Not using municipal power to fine those who don't have licences
- Not using enforcement threats to "incentivize" people to get licensed; reduction of municipal fines
- Increased accountability for BRC Owners; increased OHS in the facilities
- Signs in rooms so that men would know it's against the law to film, strangle, slap, assault, harass, etc.
- Ways to identify the men so women could report assailants to police
- Harm Reduction and Health Promotion strategies
- Created the "Bad Date Binder, and then created "Safety Alert" – Cluster App
- Concerns about risks for human trafficking; for women with limited options; for those with limited English
- Ensuring that minors are not in licensed facilities – ORIGINAL OBJECTIVE – 1994 and Taskforce
- Municipal capacity to monitor for the involvement of organized criminal elements – ORIGINAL OBJECTIVE

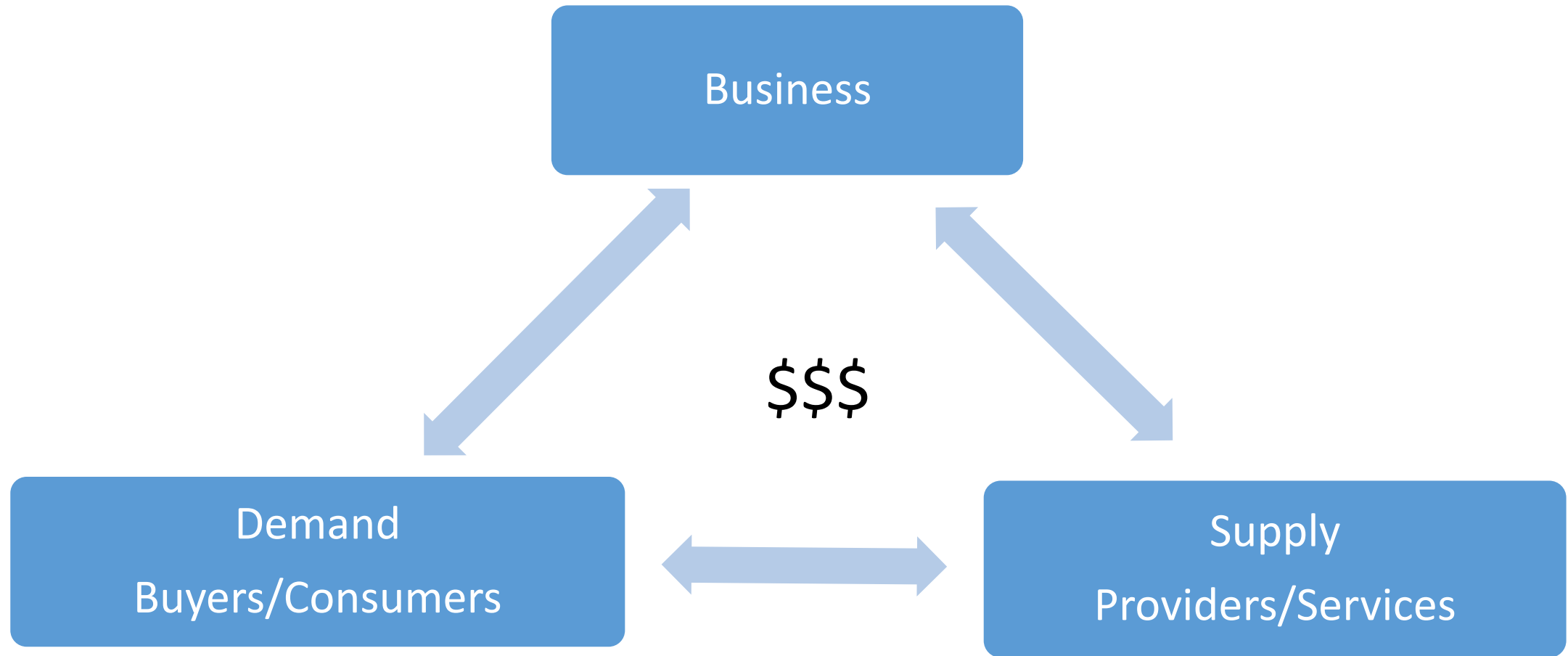
CEASE Surveys and Supports

- 2015: “Too Many Bills-Survey of Income Challenges” (50 respondents in 12 BRCs)
 - 2016: “Safety and Violence Survey” (42 respondents in 10 BRCS)
- *not able to include women whose first language is not English

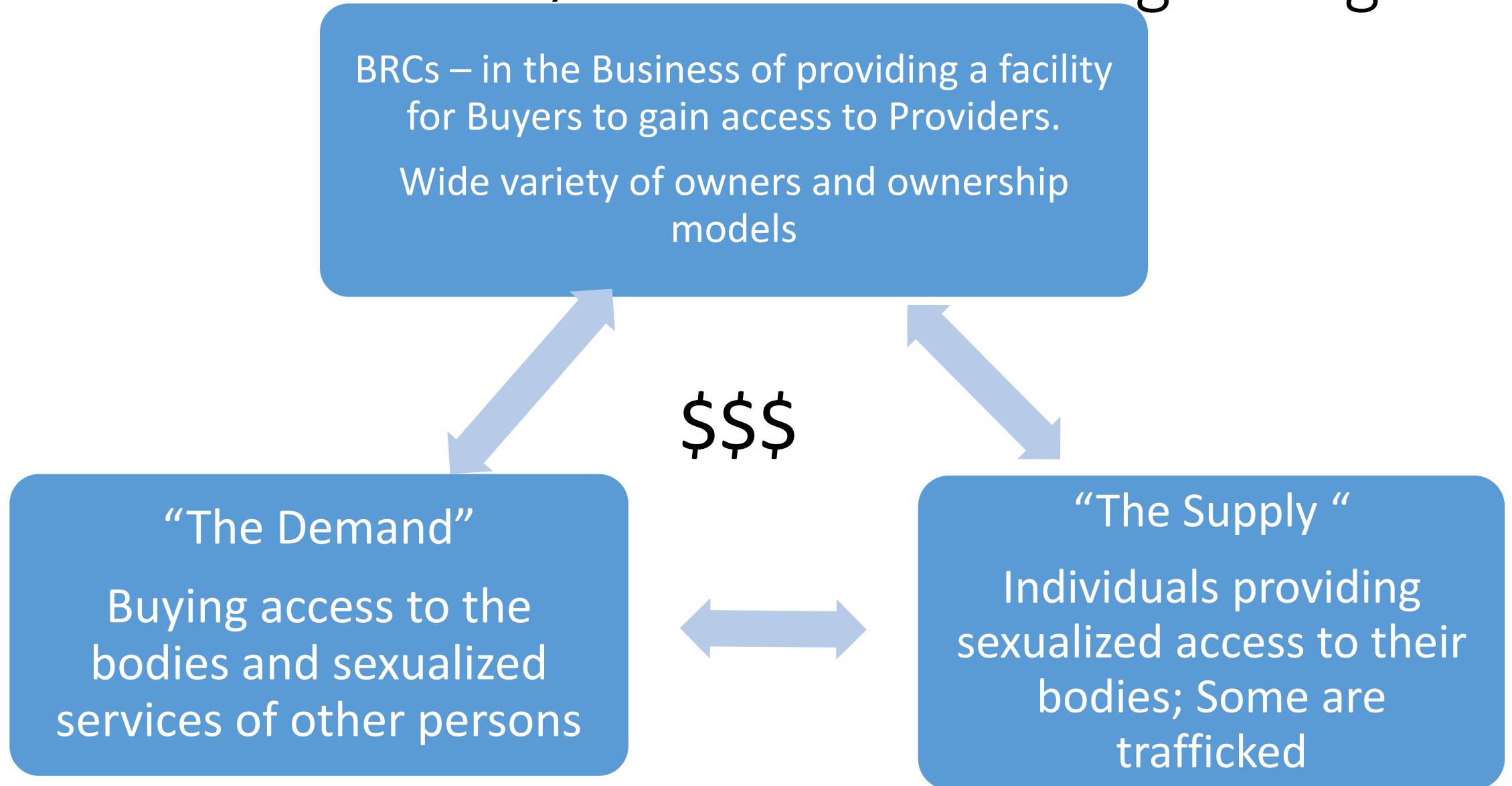
CEASE, with the help of Edmonton Philanthropists and funders, offers:

- Bursaries and career/life coaching
- Financial Literacy and matched savings; tax filing support
- Transitional planning with monetary supports
- Court advocates for those assaulted or trafficked (Provincial funding)

The Business Triangle



The Sex Industry and Sex Trafficking Triangle



The Activity: Sex Work, Sex Trade, Sex Trafficking



5-10% Autonomous
Self-Identified, not
Exploited Sex Workers

Economic Drivers, Vulnerable Circumstances – Sex Trade

Would rather not be selling access to their bodies and sex services but can't see any other ways to pay the bills or create a better economic future for self and family

Human Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation
of Minors and Adults, primarily in the
18 – 35 year old age range

What is the Alignment with other Council Initiatives? Any Mixed Messages?

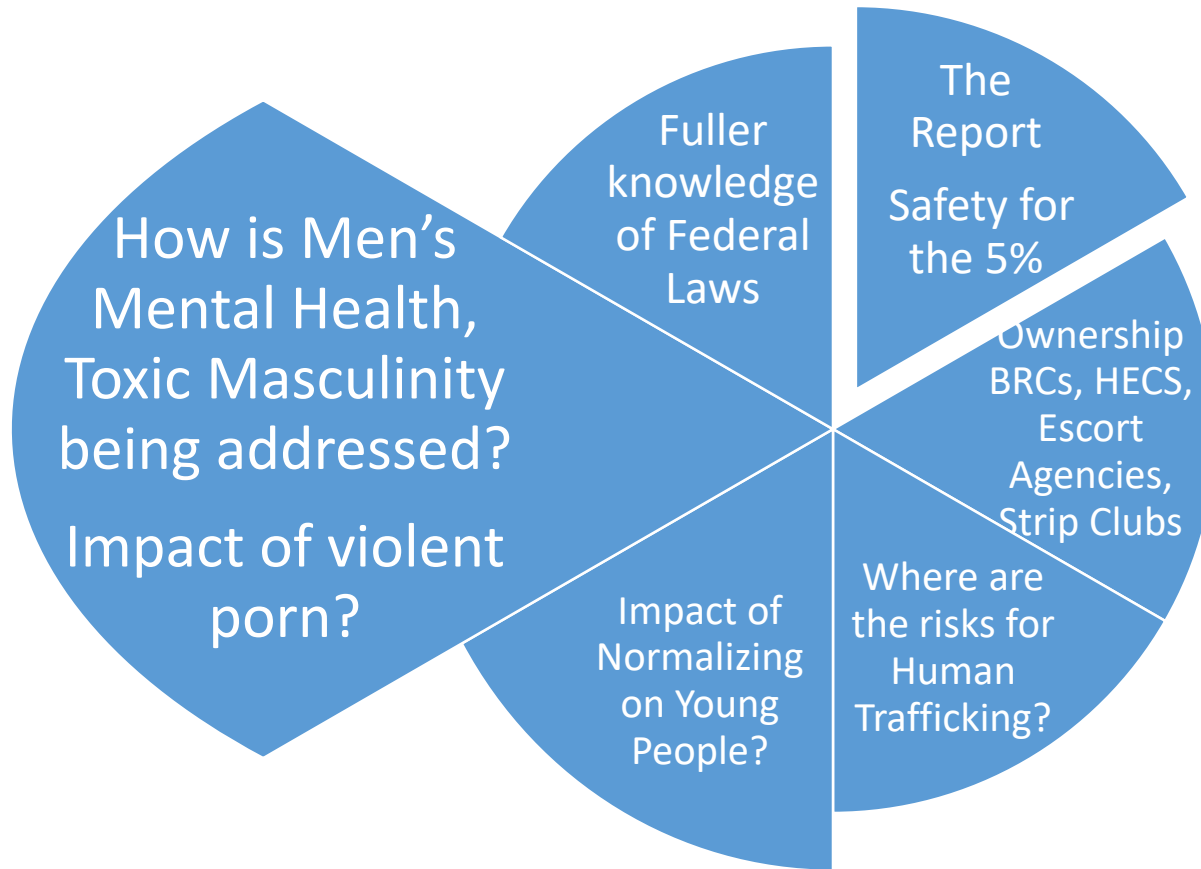
- Women's Initiatives and WAVE
- Edmonton's Poverty Elimination Strategies (EPE)
- Housing (Ending Homelessness, promoting affordable housing)
- Urban Isolation/Mental Health
- Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention:

Outcome #3: Increase engagement of men and boys as allies in ending gender-based violence in our community

RED FLAG: Licensing BRCs sends mixed messages to men: “it’s ok to go to licensed facilities to buy sex services because they are safer and you are not abusing women, but if you cruise the streets or internet looking to buy sex services, you are”.

The Sex Industry is often left out of the Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Violence conversations.

What else do we need to know to make a fulsome decision?



Recommendations for a Three to Five Year Strategy

For Businesses (BRCs), Service Providers (BRPs) and Buyers

YEAR 1 - 2021

YEAR 2 – 2022

YEAR 3 – 2023

Could Achieve Some Goals within 3 years

YEAR 4 – 2024

YEAR 5 - 2025

The Businesses – Body Rub Centres

YEAR 1 (2021)

- a) **STOP**: approving any new BRC Business Licences; **Maintain** existing
- b) **Serve notice** to current BRC businesses not to renew their facility leases beyond 2025; **Keep** high accountability for BRC owners
- c) **Reconvene** a multi-stakeholder group to map out a plan of action to address BRCS where women are living, cooking, and providing sex services. (City Departments + Community + Others)
- d) Work with the Province and law enforcement to find ways to determine ownership and any links to criminal elements, domestic or international
- e) Ensure that existing BRCs comply with all municipal and provincial regulatory bodies: AGLC, OHS, AHS, Employment Standards, others;

The Buyers, the individuals who create the Demand for the Businesses

- Set a 5 year strategy to decrease the # of men buying sex services by X%
- Buyers are driven by their needs/wants/fantasies/addictions

Some reasons some men say they buy sex:

- Personal – loneliness, relationship-issues, depression;
- Societal – anonymous sex, no strings; Gender-based attitudes;
- Sexualized and pornified consumerism: widely available, so why not? Try something new?

60-75% (Seattle study) said they wanted help to stop their sex-buying behaviours.

What more could Edmonton do to help men and to shrink the market?

The Individuals Who Provide The Supply: Female(majority), Male, Gender Diverse

YEAR 1 (2021) – Year 5 (2025)

a) **KEEP CARING**: Do what the City and City Staff do well; Keep providing the Information Course; Link other City Initiatives and programs

b) **KEEP HARM REDUCTION** and **GO BEYOND** to **HARM PREVENTION** and **HOPE CREATION**

c) **STOP NORMALIZING AND SANITIZING**: This is NOT “non-accredited massage”. **STOP** requiring individuals to obtain licenses and security clearances in order to be contractors in existing BRCS.

Be creative in other ways to reach out with resources, information.

Health Enhancement Centres & IMBs

Act Now - Fall 2020:

Create a multi-stakeholder working group to examine illicit massage business practices wherever they occur - HECS ,BRCS, other licensed venues - providing sex services, insurance fraud, false certification for therapeutic massage training, risk of human trafficking, other violations

Third License Category – put this on hold until the City has a better handle on what businesses are being licensed and what services are provided.

Escort Agencies, Exotic Entertainment Agencies

- All things are connected in the Sex Industry
- Know that action in one part (BRCs) affects action in other sectors
- The Businesses in the Sex Industry are profit motivated, so, there will always be new ways for businesses to exploit persons in vulnerable circumstances.

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