

August 22, 2025

Dear Mayor and Council Members,

Across British Columbia, residents are asking urgent questions about safety—on our streets, in our neighbourhoods, and in our homes. For women, girls, and gender-diverse people, the answer is often clear: **they do not feel safe.**

At Battered Women's Support Services (BWSS), we've launched **#DesignedWithSurvivors**, a province-wide initiative that reframes **gender-based violence (GBV) as a public safety crisis**. This campaign is rooted in one essential question:

What would public safety look like if it were designed with survivors in mind?

As municipal leaders, you shape the environment where safety is experienced—or where it fails. You oversee transit systems, public spaces, housing, policing budgets, and community programs. The decisions you make ripple through every part of daily life, especially for those most at risk.

Too often, GBV is treated as a private issue, disconnected from the public realm. But women and girls are harmed on buses, in parks, at workplaces, and in their homes—homes often located in your jurisdictions, with limited access to shelter, legal protection, or trauma-informed support.

Public safety is local. And local leadership matters.

We are inviting you to:

- Acknowledge gender-based violence as a public safety emergency in your municipality
- Commit to survivor-informed urban planning, policing oversight, and community investment
- Share the #DesignedWithSurvivors message to signal that your city, town, or village is part of the solution

This is not about blame—it is about vision. We believe municipalities can lead the way in building safer, more equitable communities by listening to survivors, investing in prevention, and aligning public safety with care, not control. Already, eight municipalities have stepped forward, and momentum is building with more conversations planned in the weeks ahead.

We would welcome the opportunity to speak with you about how this work could support your public safety, housing, and equity goals. Please reach out if you're open to a conversation.

Safety starts here—and it starts with you.

Warm regards,
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