Opening Up Community Music Venues in Vancouver

by

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B.A., University of British Columbia, 2005

Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Public Policy

in the

School of Public Policy

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Summer 2017

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Abstract

There is not enough access to safe community music venues in Vancouver. Safety includes architectural, social, substance, and emergency-response dimensions. Access is limited by age restrictions, physical inaccessibility, secrecy, and venue closures (caused by commercial conditions and enforcement of regulations). This study considers eight regulatory and financial support policy options that would address these issues and increase access to safer spaces for non-professional live music performance in Vancouver. The eight options are evaluated using policy analytic and risk management frameworks, producing two initial recommendations for government: fund a discreet venue upgrading initiative and make policy accessible through strategic planning, regulatory clarity, and inclusive policymaking. The research is based on 29 expert interviews with policymakers, community leaders, police, teachers, venue operators, event organizers, musicians, fans, youth, and people with disabilities, as well as case studies of skateboarding policy in Vancouver and music venue policy in Seattle, Oakland, Toronto, and London.

Keywords: music venues; safety; accessibility; public policy; DIY; Vancouver

Even if this was not a law, which it is, I'm afraid I would have a lot of difficulty endorsing an enterprise which is as fraught with genuine peril as I believe this one to be. Besides the liquor and the drugs, which always seem to accompany such an event, the thing that distresses me even more, Ren, is the spiritual corruption that can be involved. These dances and this kind of music can be destructive.

–Rev. Shaw Moore, in the movie *Footloose*, 1984

From the oldest of times, people danced for a number of reasons. They danced in prayer, or so that their crops would be plentiful, or so their hunt would be good. And they danced to stay physically fit and show their community spirit. And they danced to celebrate. And that is the dancing we're talking about.

–Ren McCormick, in the movie *Footloose*, 1984

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List of Acronyms

Term	Meaning
BC	British Columbia
BYOB	Bring your own booze
CAST	Community Arts Stabilization Trust
DIY	Do it yourself
GLA	Greater London Authority
LCLB	Liquor Control and Licensing Branch
MVT	Music Venue Trust
MYTF	Music and Youth Task Force
SEP	Special Event Permit
TDO	Teen Dance Ordinance
TMAC	Toronto Music Advisory Council

Executive Summary

Community music venues are grassroots spaces where non-professional musicians perform. They operate in licensed and permitted establishments like bars, restaurants, and halls, as well as in 'underground' locations like houses, studios, and retail shops. Participation in these venues builds self-confidence and social skills and supports the development of identities, communities, and subcultures. Community music venues also serve as the research and development wing of the music industry and contribute to the overall vibrancy of urban centres.

Vancouver's community music venues are notoriously unstable. Repeated venue closures have led to negative media coverage that adds to the municipality's reputation as 'no fun city.' There is widespread mistrust between the music community and local authorities, and policy reviews at both the municipal and provincial level have produced underwhelming results. Regulations, which were intended to ensure safety, have had the opposite effect as operators of underground venues go to extreme lengths to avoid enforcement.

There is not enough access to safe community music venues in Vancouver. Barriers to access include age restrictions that block minors from attending events in liquor licensed establishments, physical inaccessibility that excludes people with disabilities, secrecy that prevents community outsiders from participating in underground venues, and closures caused by lack of tenure, financial unsustainability, and enforcement. Safety issues include architectural, social, and substance risks as well as an unwillingness to access emergency services.

The objective of this paper is to recommend policy to increase access to safer community music venues in Vancouver with as few negative tradeoffs as possible. Twenty-nine semi-structured interviews with policymakers, police, teachers, community leaders, venue operators, event organizers, musicians, fans, youth, and people with disabilities provided tremendous insight on the status quo and produced a lengthy list of policy ideas. Case studies of music venue policy in Seattle, Oakland, London, and Toronto, as well as skateboarding policy in Vancouver, added additional perspectives and provided evidence of the strengths and weaknesses of various policies.

In this paper, I propose and evaluate eight policy options that would increase access to safer community music venues in Vancouver. Four options involve making changes to regulations and planning processes. These regulatory options are reducing standards, making policy accessible, allowing youth in event-driven establishments, and encouraging temporary licensing. Four additional options involve providing financial support. These financial support options are creating an all-ages venue, harnessing existing public amenities, expanding eligibility for grants, and funding a discreet venue upgrading initiative. The eight options are evaluated against four main criteria (access, safety, government management, and stakeholder acceptance), which each contain a variety of subcriteria. Each policy option's performance against each subcriterion is measured using a seven-point scale based on projected positive and negative changes relative to the status quo. Principles of risk management are integrated into the discussion of three of the options.

After evaluating the tradeoffs involved in each of the eight options, I recommend government focus on two initial priorities. The first, which I call a discreet venue upgrading initiative, involves funding a non-profit or other organization to supply community music venues with equipment, training, and human resources to enhance safety and accessibility while keeping each venue's licensing and permitting status confidential. The second initial priority is making policy accessible, which could be done by clarifying regulations, publishing a strategic plan that recognizes the intrinsic value of grassroots music spaces, and establishing an inclusive policymaking body that gives the music community a voice in decision-making processes. Finally, since each of the other six options considered in this report are also expected to produce positive changes relative to the status quo, I recommend government work with the new inclusive policymaking body to pursue them as subsequent priorities.

Chapter 1.   Introduction

Community music venues are bastions of development. Beyond mere recreational sites for which people are willing to pay, these venues support the development of self-confidence, social networks, career skills, social movements, communities, economies, and culture. Despite these benefits, however, music venues can also cause great harm. In December, 2016, fire killed 36 people during an experimental music concert at an Oakland, California venue called the Ghost Ship (Casey, 2016). Similar tragedies could occur in Vancouver, where hundreds of community music events are held each year[1] and where concert injuries have previously been caused by fire (Adams, 2013), trampling (Wintonyk, 2010), and broken glass (Hughes, 2007). As with other potentially dangerous recreational facilities, regulations are needed to ensure safety in community music venues. In this paper, however, I contend that existing regulations are ineffective, as compliance limits access and is often unfeasible. Consequently, venues are pushed 'underground,' where they clandestinely avoid enforcement, producing several safety and accessibility issues. Operating as businesses, community music venues are also vulnerable to shifting economic and land-use patterns like Vancouver's ongoing densification.

There is not enough access to safe community music venues in Vancouver. Embedded in this statement are two inter-related problems: lack of access and lack of safety. Both are rooted in commercial and regulatory issues. Commercial conditions reduce access to music spaces when potential venue operators cannot afford buildings to work in. High real estate costs cannot be passed along to consumers, as most attendees are youth and artists with limited disposable income. Long-standing venues are bought out by corporate entertainment companies and transformed from community-focused

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[1] By my estimation, Vancouver sees at least 500 community music events each year in compliant venues and another 250 each year in underground spaces, though the clandestine nature of many venues makes them difficult to quantify.

grassroots facilities to consumption spaces for the masses—*Vancouver Magazine* recently described this as "Vancouver's music venue crisis" (Thomson, 2016). Property ownership is far beyond the means of grassroots venue operators, and secure long-term leases are rarely available because landlords expect more lucrative opportunities to arise and wish to maintain the flexibility to pursue them. Some event organizers rent space on a one-night-at-a-time basis, though access to these nightly rental spaces is limited because owners can extract larger payments for other uses like weddings and movie shoots. Others sign tenuous short-term leases and operate as 'do-it-yourself' (DIY) spaces. With the lion's share of their revenue going towards rent, little is left to underwrite attractive wages. Many spaces rely on volunteers, including at the management level, but as core supporters inevitably 'burn out,' venues close. With little access to purpose-built performance space, community music venues often operate in other buildings such as houses, studios, and retail shops. This poses safety risks, as repurposed buildings often lack the exits, sprinklers, fire alarms, and floor strength required to safely host large gatherings. Makeshift venues are also sometimes inaccessible to people with disabilities, as they were not necessarily constructed with accessibility or public assembly in mind.

To promote safety and reduce risk, the City of Vancouver has attempted to regulate live assembly spaces through a variety of bylaws, licences, and permits. The Province of British Columbia (BC) also regulates nightlife through its *Liquor Control and Licensing Act* (S.B.C. 2015, c. 19) and associated policies. While municipal and provincial regulations were well-intentioned, they have had the unintended consequences of reducing access and safety. For instance, liquor laws prevent youth under age 19 from patronizing many liquor-serving venues. In response, one Vancouver teen created a petition to "make every show [open to people of] all ages, you insensitive discriminating fucks" (Fortune, 2016). In addition to limiting youth access, regulations also reduce the number of venues available to everyone, as enforcement has caused several important spaces to close.[2] This inspired the production of *No Fun City* (2011), a documentary film which describes venue operators as "brave" for facing "police raids … and even city hall

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[2] Examples of Vancouver venues that have closed as a result of enforcement in the past decade include the Emergency Room (Birnie, 2009), Goody (Pencz, 2013), Hoko's (Morrow, 2009), the Peanut Gallery (McMahon, 2009), Red Gate (Bula, 2012), the Sweatshop (Birnie, 2009), Wired Monk (Morrow, 2009), and the Zoo Zhop (McCormick & Antrim, 2013).

in order to keep their underground music scene alive." In the words of Caitlin Gilroy of the Safe Amplification Site Society, a Vancouver non-profit dedicated to music for people of all ages, "music is being treated like an illicit activity" (Vitet, 2011). To avoid enforcement, venues employ clandestine practices like hiding addresses in promotional materials and using dark alley entrances instead of more visible front doors. This limits access, as community outsiders are prevented from discovering events. Other secretive tactics like avoiding 911 calls and allowing smoking indoors to prevent crowds from gathering outside pose serious safety risks.

Both the municipal and provincial government have sought to address flaws in existing regulations. The City of Vancouver's (2010) *Live Performance Venue Regulatory Review* identified "contradictory and outdated policies and regulations" (p. 6). While this *Review* did not meet its ambitious objective of enabling "the sustainable creation and operation of live performance venues" (p. 1), it did lead to the development of a new Arts Event Licence that allows events to be held in otherwise unlicensed spaces if they meet basic life safety standards (City of Vancouver, 2015). This was a positive step, but because the Licence allows only three events per month, most underground venues ignore it, preferring to continue operating clandestinely.[3] Provincial liquor laws, which *Rolling Stone* has called "outdated" (Mertens, 2013), received a major policy review in 2013, but four years later, a key recommendation[4] that would permit event-driven establishments to allow access to minors has not yet been implemented (Province of BC, 2017a).

This paper builds on previous municipal and provincial reform efforts by recommending policy changes that would increase access to safer community music venues in Vancouver with as few negative tradeoffs as possible. Chapter 2 reviews academic literature on the benefits of such spaces and key issues they have faced around the world. My methodology for collecting and analyzing primary research is explained in Chapter 3. Key research findings are outlined in Chapter 4, with interview participants and

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[3] Additional limitations that discourage venues from obtaining Arts Event Licences are listed in Table C3 in Appendix C.

[4] The Review recommended the introduction of a new licence class and streamlined application process for facilities that charge a fee for an event and said minors should be permitted to stay for the duration of events (Province of BC, 2014a, p. 36).

questions listed in Appendix A. Case studies of music venue policies in Seattle, Oakland, London, and Toronto are provided in Appendix B, along with a look at Vancouver's treatment of skateboarding, an analogous youthful recreation activity with relevant policy applications for music. Commonalities among multiple cases are discussed at the end of Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, I propose and analyze eight policy options, with additional details for some options included in Appendix C. Chapter 6 describes the results of this analysis, recommending initial and subsequent priorities for policy change that would increase access to safer community music venues in Vancouver. Finally, Chapter 7 notes some of this report's limitations and broader applications.

Chapter 2.   Survey of Literature

Throughout this paper, I use the term 'community music venues' to refer to grassroots spaces where non-professional musicians perform. The venues themselves include bars, restaurants, and halls, which are typically constructed for public assembly by professional developers and engineers, as well as 'underground' spaces like houses, artist studios, warehouses, and retail shops that are often repurposed into music venues without regard for official building standards. Like much of the alternative music world, community venues are strongly associated with the "DIY ethic," as artists and community members develop spaces quickly and on shoestring budgets (Mumford, 2014). Concerts and other events are a major revenue source for these venues, and while performers earn some income as well, it is not their main source of livelihood. Performances are given primarily for recreational and artistic purposes or to build fan bases for eventual transitions to the professional music industry. Audiences mainly consist of community members and other non-professional musicians, creating a network of peers who provide mutual support by attending each others' events. Scholars have assigned many names to such groups, including "worlds" (Finnegan, 1989), "neo-tribes" (Bennett, 1999), "scenes" (Harris, 2000), "lifestyles" (Bennett, 2001), "milieux" (Webb, 2004), and "grassroots" (Music Venue Trust, 2017). In this paper, I follow those who prefer the term "community" because of its "everyday uses" (Harris, 2000, p. 14), its "geographically specific" connotations (Straw, 1991, p. 373) and because it recalls "community arts," a field in which "artists do not make work for the public; the public make work with the artists" (Drury, 1992, p. 100).

The personal and social benefits of community music venues are perhaps best revealed through ethnographic research. In a pair of British studies, Finnegan (1989) and Cohen (1991) find that playing music allows for creative expression and enhances skills, both of the musical variety as well as in associated tasks like event planning and graphic design. Cohen adds that music increases "self-confidence, self-respect, and the respect of others" (p. 82) and finds that people often become more outgoing through being in a band. As music requires collaboration, it also enhances social skills and builds friendships. Finnegan argues that these social benefits peak during public performance, which she calls "the fullest and most appropriate realization of music-making" (p. 156). Cohen agrees, noting the confluence of performers and audiences in a "simultaneous process of

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production and consumption" (p. 94) that creates a "sense of community and solidarity" (p. 96). Chatterton and Hollands (2003) call this "a blurring of the consumer-producer divide" (p. 55; see also Gibson & Homan, 2007; Hollands, 2002; Street, 1993).

Music also helps young people manage adversity. Cohen (1991) sees it as "a means of escape" (p. 3), allowing marginalized youth to set poverty aside and indulge in rock-star fantasies. Bennett (2001) goes further, arguing that music helps young people deal with precarious economic positions through a form of risk management.[5] His examples include rap music that diverted youth from gang violence to the arts (p. 177) and punk that led youth to protest homelessness (p. 174). Finnegan's (1989) research also notes the activist application of music, describing one band whose main purpose was "voicing their political convictions, especially 'peace and feminism'" (p. 111), while an Australian study shows musicians often "enter into broader community activities, including participation in local politics" (Johnson & Homan, 2003, p. 41). Community music venues also help young people grow up. Gallan (2013) calls this "youth transitions to adulthood" and argues that these "physical, social and enabling spaces … continue to hold shared and persistent meanings … even as generations pass and actual participation in them shifts" (p. 557).

Not to be confused with the construction of fraudulent *identification* to abet underage entry into bars (Laughey, 2006), the construction of *identity* is frequently associated with music venues (Bennett, 2001; Gallan, 2013). This makes these spaces particularly important for young people, because while adults typically define their identities through work, youth—lacking established careers for increasingly long periods of time—define their identities through consumption (Bennett, 2001; Chatterton & Hollands, 2003; Hollands, 2002; Stewart, 1990; Thornton, 1995). This consumption need not be material. The goods consumed are often "symbolic" (Bennett, 2001, p. 173), which makes musical events an appropriate choice because "nothing material is 'taken home'— only an experience held subsequently as a set of memories" (Malbon, 1999, p. 22). By

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[5] While principles of risk management will be utilized from a policy perspective in Chapter 5, Bennett (2001) argues that youth intuitively employ similar techniques when they construct lifestyles to help them navigate a dangerous world.

choosing particular musical events to experience, youth establish themselves as belonging to a "cultural narrative" (Frith, 1996, p. 124).

As multitudes of youth adopt similar identities, communities and subcultures emerge. Thus, it is unsurprising that music is featured prominently in the classic sociological literature on subculture. Hall and Jefferson (1976) anthologize this academic movement's early work, and their text reveals the musical nature of the subcultures studied, from "rock-music" (p. 20) to folk (p. 61) to reggae (p. 135) to "black music" (p. 157). Moreover, the early scholarship on subculture seems to have paralleled the dawn of punk, with Hebdige (1979) remarking that "no subculture has sought with more grim determination than the punks to detach itself from the taken-for-granted landscape of normalized forms" (p. 19). Performance venues were important to punk, as "every performance, however apocalyptic, offered palpable evidence that things could change, indeed were changing" (Hebdige, 1979, p. 110). Subcultural theory continued to evolve alongside musical history with Thornton (1995) studying rave parties and electronic dance music, coining the term "club cultures" and noting that "youth subcultures tend to be music subcultures" (p. 19).

Music venues also support the development of ethnocultural communities such as Indigenous groups. Whiteley (2004) argues that "rap has contributed towards a particular sense of identity, fostering indigenous resistance" (p. 8) as well as "personal and group empowerment" (p. 9), and discusses a venue in Cuba that attracted people "who, for the first time, got to see and hear rap in their language, with texts reflecting local realities" (p. 12). Likewise, Mitchell (2003a, 2003b, 2004) and Warren and Evitt (2010) explain how rap supported the development of Indigenous communities in Australia. In Canada, a study by Fox, Riches, and Dubnewick (2011) finds that "Aboriginal hip hop focuses on the reality of reserves [and is] deeply connected to political movements for sovereignty and self-determination" (p. 97). Beat Nation, a website and 2012 Vancouver Art Gallery exhibition, argues that "hip hop is giving youth new tools to rediscover First Nations culture" (Alteen, 2010). Bennett (2001) explains that rap is particularly useful in community development because rappers do not require instruments and can "spontaneously express their views or simply vent frustration regarding issues such as violence, poverty, and unemployment" (p. 177). While contemporary Canadian Indigenous hip hop has transcended the

community level to make waves in the commercial music industry, major stars like A Tribe Called Red continue to recognize the importance of hip hop to local communities by providing youth-oriented workshops and performing free concerts on First Nations reserves (Hudson, 2015).

Although music venues support the development of communities, they need not be inclusive. According to Laughey (2006), many venues are more exclusive than they realize. For example, Thornton's (1995) study of club cultures describes bouncers who "ensure the semi-private nature of these spaces by refusing admission to 'those who don't belong'" (p. 22-24). To gain access, participants must possess what Thornton calls subcultural capital—this could include anything from certain clothing styles to knowledge of a secretive venue's address. Stewart (1990) defends this exclusivity, saying venues "provide a haven of privacy" from parents and other perceived establishment figures (p. 217). While privacy may facilitate community development, it can also exclude community outsiders and undermine any government attempts to support music spaces as public goods. Fox et al. (2011) argue that government involvement "risks changing the very spirit" of local music communities (p. 96), while Baker, Bennett, and Homan (2009) criticize publicly-funded venues as a "cooption of youth cultural practices" geared towards containment (p. 151-159).

While many participants in grassroots music communities mistrust government and mainstream societal institutions, this tension flows the opposite direction as well. Bennett (2001) shows how media reports on youth music of various generations (1950s rock'n'roll, 1970s punk, and 1990s raves) depict youth as deviants, leading to "moral panics" (p. 170; see also Chatterton & Hollands, 2003). Ryan and Fitzpatrick (1996) apply this to the local level, describing a "stressful and contested struggle over identities; who, where and when, one is free to express oneself … [and] what are marginal and central identity formations" (p. 172). They see the struggle as being about "a sense of belonging, of appropriating space for oneself and others, [and] of being 'at home' in the city" (p. 172). Chatterton and Hollands (2003) agree, asking "who gains and who loses, who is guiding urban nightscapes and to what ends, and who, literally, has been invited to the 'party'?" (p. 9). To answer these questions, Talbot (2004, 2006, 2007) chronicles the history of British venue regulations and shows them to have alternated between economic and

"social order" motivations (2006, p. 160; see also Jayne, Holloway & Valentine, 2006). In times when the latter objective ruled, regulations were based on distinctions "between orderly and disorderly premises" (Talbot, 2006, p. 160) or "between 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' cultural forms" (Talbot, 2004, p. 888). Talbot (2006) identifies cases where regulators' perceptions of order and disorder, as well as safety and risk, were heavily influenced by the venue operators' race and class (p. 164-168). Government funding decisions can also be racialized, as Talbot (2007) documents a white-owned business in a black neighbourhood outside London that was repeatedly favoured for municipal funding as part of a "deliberate strategy" to "eradicate black music and spaces" from the area (p. 71).

While racism may be part of the story, Talbot (2007) finds a general prejudice against "subcultural, resistant and unregulated forms" (p. 85), leading to what she calls "subcultural closure" (Talbot, 2006, p. 168). Similarly, Chatterton and Hollands (2002, 2003) find that mainstream venues are proliferating in many cities while residual and alternative venues[6] are "increasingly marginalised to the geographic periphery of the urban core, over-regulated until they simply disappear, transformed by the changing corporate priorities of their owners, or are bought out under the weight of urban renewal and gentrified leisure" (2003, p. 7). Contemporary research often situates these struggles for neighbourhood identity within New Urbanism, a planning movement where downtowns like Vancouver's are "remodelled as places in which to live, work and be entertained" (Chatterton & Hollands, 2002, p. 97; see also Lovatt, 1996; Lovatt & O'Connor, 1995). Ironically, music venues and other outposts of the 'night-time economy' are initially valued in this redevelopment strategy that tends to eventually portend their doom. As Hae (2011) puts it, New York nightlife "contributed as a catalyst for gentrification, only to be inculpated as neighbourhood annoyances when gentry moved into the neighbourhood" (p. 3452-3453). The venues that persist in gentrified areas are "sanitized" (Talbot, 2007, p. 132),

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[6] Chatterton and Hollands (2002) classify night-time entertainment venues into three types: mainstream venues are "well-recognised commercially provided bars, pubs and nightclubs" that are profit-oriented and owned by large corporations; residual spaces are community-oriented "traditional pubs, ale houses and market taverns"; and, alternative spaces are locally-owned and creatively-oriented "nightlife spaces which cater for more specific and specialist youth cultures and tastes, and are primarily organised around identities" (p. 99). To integrate this terminology with my own, community music venues can exist in both residual and alternative spaces but tend not to operate in mainstream venues.

remaining only as "a simulacrum of the neighbourhood's subcultural history" (Hae, 2011, p. 3451; see also Chatterton & Hollands, 2003). In the literature, this line of reasoning is often framed as a rejection of the "creative city" approach to planning popularized by Florida (2002). Hae (2011) argues that while "creative city" policies attempt to lure creative people with "vibrant nightlife" and "interesting and 'authentic' sub-cultural spaces" (p. 3450), they "can ironically turn destructive towards creative sub-cultural formations" (p. 3451) by catalyzing gentrification processes.

The City of Vancouver's (2008) Culture Plan is titled "Creative City" and follows many of Florida's ideas. In line with Hae's (2011) study, it is perhaps unsurprising that access to community music venues in Vancouver is limited. The Vancouver Culture Plan expires in 2018, however, and its replacement could bring opportunities for change. As an alternative to 'creative city,' two of the community-members I interviewed mentioned Jacobs' (1961) view that "old ideas can sometimes use new buildings [but] new ideas must use old buildings" (p. 188). Pragmatically speaking, and narrowing in on the objective of this paper, Street (1993) identifies four policy instruments that municipal decision-makers use to affect the consumption of live music: regulations (licensing, hours, noise control, capacity, and enforcement), finance (policies affecting market prices and rents), cultural policy (funding for particular events), and industrial/economic policy (economic development support in cultural industries). In this paper, I disregard Street's finance idea, as such tactics go beyond music venues to affect the local economy broadly. Furthermore, I combine Street's cultural and industrial/economic policy categories, as both involve directly supporting music spaces. The result is two main policy instruments to consider for Vancouver: regulations and financial support. Both are revisited throughout this report.

Chapter 3.   Methodology

The objective of this paper is to recommend policy to increase access to safer community music venues in Vancouver with as few negative tradeoffs as possible. To accomplish that goal, I required a deeper understanding of the status quo, the variables that could be affected by its change, the preferences of key stakeholders, and policies that have been implemented elsewhere. This paper utilizes two qualitative research methods: semi-structured expert interviews and case studies. As many community music venues operate underground, useful quantitative data are unavailable.

Interview research offered greater potential for in-depth discussion than would have been possible with other feasible methods such as surveys or focus groups. While truly representative sampling would have been difficult with any methodology, my decision to use expert interviews allowed for the intentional recruitment of participants with a diverse set of perspectives through purposeful sampling. I interviewed policymakers, community leaders, law enforcement personnel, teachers, venue operators, event organizers, musicians, and fans. Three interviewees were underage youth and two were people with physical disabilities. Twenty-nine interviews were conducted in total, with an average length of 68 minutes. Interviews were held in a variety of locations, and some were conducted by phone. Each was recorded for note-taking purposes. My experience as a long-standing member of the Vancouver music community was beneficial in recruitment, as I interviewed several venue operators and event organizers who are not named publicly and would have been difficult for an outsider to reach. I also sought interviews with representatives of relevant government agencies and experts who had made relevant statements via mainstream and social media. A discussion of interview results makes up the bulk of Chapter 4, and lists of interview participants and questions are provided in Appendix A.

To gain a greater understanding of policies that have succeeded and failed elsewhere, I also conducted case studies by reviewing media reports and policy documents from specific areas. Four case studies examined cities (Seattle, Oakland, London, and Toronto) that have introduced innovative policies on community music venues, and one case study looked at Vancouver's treatment of skateboarding, an

analogous youthful recreation activity with relevant policy applications for music. Summaries of each case study are given in Appendix B, and commonalities among multiple cases are discussed at the end of Chapter 4.

Upon completion of my interviews and case studies, I defined eight distinct policy options and analyzed them using the criteria and measures approach to policy analysis, also known as multi-criteria tradeoff analysis. For three of the options, this analysis is supplemented with principles of risk management as outlined by the Province of BC's (2012) *Risk Management Guideline*. The options are described and analyzed in Chapter 5, and the recommendations that result from this work are outlined in Chapter 6.

Chapter 4.   Results

4.1. Benefits

My interviewees generally confirmed the social and personal benefits of community music venues described in the literature. Several recalled making friends at concerts, and one said his social life revolves around music spaces. Others noted how performance has helped them build confidence and manage stress, anxiety, and depression. Thor Kuhlmann, a City of Vancouver planner, compared music venues to public libraries, as both have self-improvement functions.

Local venues also generate supplemental income for non-professional performers, though a greater long-run impact may be their role as breeding grounds for artistic development. Jim Carrico of Red Gate called them "the research and development component of the culture industry" and said Vancouver's most successful and important artists all started out in community venues. Others said community music spaces enrich Vancouver and fulfill a need for youthful resistance against the increasingly sanitized night-time entertainment infrastructure described in the literature.

4.2. Access

As noted in Chapter 1, the lack of access to community music venues in Vancouver is rooted in commercial and regulatory issues. Figure 1 maps the determinants of four major barriers to access: age restrictions, physical inaccessibility, venue closures, and secrecy. My interviewees shared insights on each of these barriers.
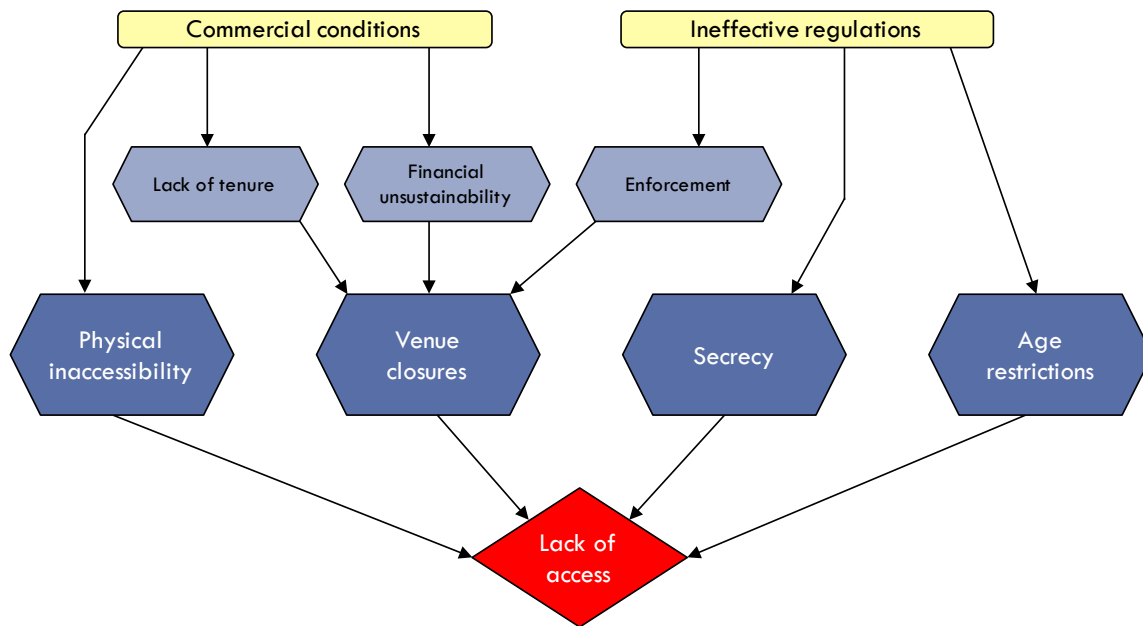
Figure 1:   Four barriers to access and their determinants

4.2.1.   Age Restrictions

I interviewed three members of the local music community who are under age 19 and thus barred from many liquor-serving venues. For Zoe Fortune, author of the petition mentioned in Chapter 1, the matter is simple: she does not understand why she cannot attend concerts if she refrains from drinking. Several older interviewees recalled having similar feelings in their youth, and the teachers I interviewed said age restrictions prevent their students from attending live events. Mathieu Youdan, creator of the event promotion website More Fun City, described the "prime" ages of concert attendees as 16-35, which means age restrictions prevent people from attending shows during three of their twenty prime musical years (fifteen percent).

Age restrictions can prevent access even when they are not legally required. The operator of one unlicensed venue that allows attendees to bring their own alcohol said they disallow minors because they cannot prevent underage drinking and fear the consequences of a teen injury. Heidi Holland of the Safe Amplification Site Society has attempted to organize all-ages events in Vancouver but has struggled to find space, as the idea of youth attendees makes "a million red flags go off" in venue operators' minds, including concerns over liability and the loss of income that results from reduced alcohol

sales. Matilda Cormier, a 17-year-old event promoter who has organized several all-ages concerts in Vancouver, added that social factors also produce age inaccessibility as many adults do not want teenagers nearby and vice-versa.

4.2.2. Physical Accessibility

I interviewed two members of the Vancouver music community who use wheelchairs for mobility. They described several oft-inaccessible venue features such as washrooms, stages, seating areas, dance floors, and entries/exits with stairs. Both said these issues are not unique to music venues, but are prevalent in such spaces as many operate in old buildings that were designed according to building codes with less stringent accessibility requirements than today's standards. While these two individuals said they can attend inaccessible spaces by requesting help from friends or venue staff (e.g. lifting their wheelchairs up stairs), they felt other people with disabilities would be unable to do so, particularly those who use heavy power-wheelchairs, those who are shy, and those who are averse to relying on others. Some people with disabilities may also avoid concerts due to unique safety concerns. One of my interviewees reported having his wheelchair damaged during raucous dance sessions, while the other suspected he would be the last one evacuated in an emergency.

The venue operators I interviewed expressed a desire to make their spaces more accessible but said they often cannot afford the equipment and renovations required to do so. My interviewees with disabilities agreed that venue operators are generally well-intentioned, but they also said many forget about physical accessibility and make bad decisions like purchasing high bar-stool seating instead of chairs at wheelchair height. The City of Vancouver's Liquor Licence Coordinator, Lucia Cumerlato, described physical accessibility standards as the most significant barrier preventing underground venues from obtaining licences and permits. This perception of accessibility as 'red tape' suggests people with disabilities could be an unfortunate casualty of regulatory reform.

4.2.3. Venue Closures

A consensus emerged among my interviewees that community music venues in Vancouver are short-lived. This does not necessarily mean too few venues overall, as some informants said new spaces emerge at the same rate others close. Nevertheless, venue closures are a barrier to access because one cannot access a venue that has been permanently closed. Many of my interviewees felt upset over venue closures, as attachments to beloved spaces form over time and are not easily transferred to new locations. Nomadic cultural infrastructure is also inefficient, as each new space requires renovations, equipment, and time to spread awareness through word of mouth.

In Vancouver's high-priced real estate market, purchasing venue space is virtually impossible for grassroots community members and long-term leases are often unattainable. Tenuous short-term rental agreements leave music venues vulnerable to Vancouver's shifting land use patterns. The venue operators I interviewed were keenly aware of their city's ongoing densification and gentrification,[7] and most were resigned to their spaces inevitably being replaced by condominiums.

Community music venues also close due to financially unsustainable business models. While operators rent space on an ongoing basis, events are mostly held on weekend evenings, leaving performance spaces underproductive throughout the week. With most event income going towards rent, little is left for wages. Many venues rely on volunteers and crowd-sourced fundraising initiatives. Often it is the operators themselves who contribute the most, which they see as a charitable public service. This altruism is finite, however, and as core supporters 'burn out,' venues close.

Venues cannot pass along costs to consumers. According to Mathieu Youdan, a web developer who tracked local concerts for years on his More Fun City website, audiences today are unwilling to pay more than $10 for local shows because free or by-donation events are frequently offered in underground spaces. The operators of

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[7] In addition to expressing fears that their spaces would fall victim to gentrification and ongoing residential development, several of the venue operators I interviewed also felt remorse over contributing to "first wave" gentrification. As they are artists who move into more affordable neighbourhoods like the Downtown Eastside, they make these areas safer and more interesting for future gentrifiers.

underground spaces have devised strategies to overcome challenging commercial conditions and offer low prices, though these strategies often involve violating laws and regulations. Venues save money by operating in houses, studios, and retail shops instead of purpose-built assembly space, but this contravenes rules on zoning, property use, and capacity, as well as building and fire codes. Venues generate revenue through alcohol sales, but operators feel they cannot obtain the licences necessary to do so legally. And, venue operators sublet space to community members to live, work, or rehearse in, but this defies the terms of business licences and also contravenes zoning and property use rules. These issues are exacerbated by ambiguous and unclear writing in the bylaws themselves, which one venue operator described as "anti-citizen language" (see Table C2 in Appendix C for examples).

While violating regulations may help venues overcome financial difficulties, it also invites closure through enforcement by the City's Building Inspectors and Property Use Inspectors, the Vancouver Police Department, Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services, and/or the BC Liquor Control and Licensing Branch. Figure 2 shows the typical enforcement model. The policymakers and enforcement personnel I interviewed said their primary motivation is safety, but because it is difficult to identify hidden risks prior to an emergency, enforcement is often triggered by unrelated factors such as neighbours' complaints. Temporary licences like the municipal Arts Event Licence and provincial Special Event Permit (to sell alcohol) also trigger enforcement, as police and other enforcement agents are consulted on their issuance.

During inspections, officers identify regulatory violations and demand structural and/or operational changes. Several venue operators called these "moving targets," as inspectors frequently raise issues that previous inspections ignored. Some opined that enforcement is motivated not just by safety, but by other issues like noise or even redevelopment plans. Nevertheless, if inspectors cite imminent life safety risks, they may post an "unfit to occupy" notice, preventing future events from occurring until upgrades are completed. Sometimes venue operators can complete the necessary modifications independently, but if more expensive renovations are required, meetings are called to discuss next steps with venue operators, inspectors, landlords, and representatives of Cultural Services, a municipal department mandated to support the development of

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cultural spaces (City of Vancouver, 2017e). The City focuses on securing the upgrades and modifications it feels are necessary (i.e. the "upgrades / modifications" node in Figure 2), but if funding for this work is not found, the operator may quit (perhaps to open a new underground venue elsewhere in Vancouver), or the landlord may evict the tenant, sell the building, or not renew a lease.
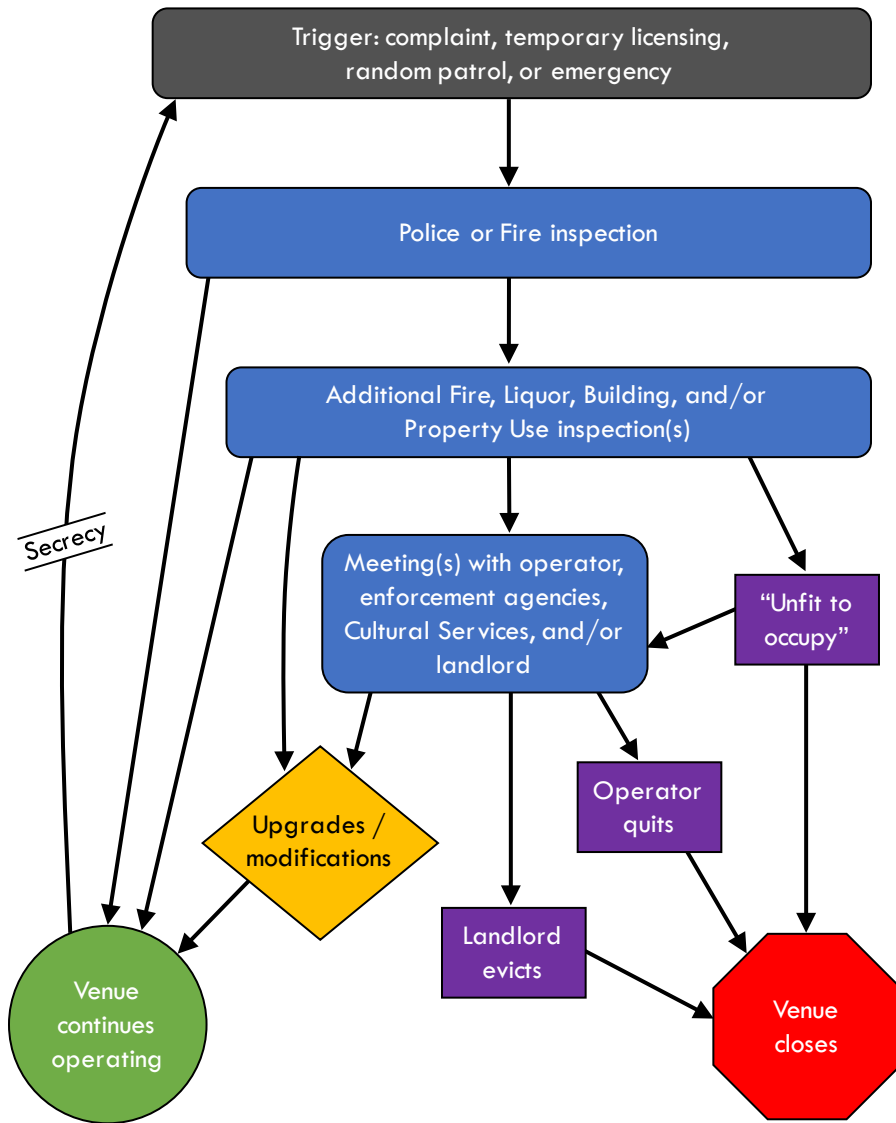
Figure 2:   Enforcement of Vancouver live assembly regulations

4.2.4. Secrecy

Venue operators attempt to avoid enforcement by preventing its triggers. As shown in Figure 2, they employ secrecy to break the leftmost arrow. Fearing online surveillance, some venues withhold addresses from promotional materials (such as the poster in Figure 3, which suggests music fans ask a "local freak" for the venue's address). Others use alley entrances instead of front doors to reduce the likelihood of crowds being seen from passing patrol cars. While many of the established community members I interviewed felt secrecy does not limit access, others disagreed, saying the clandestine nature of underground venues prevents youth, newcomers, shy people, and community outsiders from attending. Some of the musicians I interviewed added that secrecy makes it difficult to organize events in venues they lack relationships with, leaving them to perform for the same crowds repeatedly instead of reaching new audiences. Unlike typical business-people, underground venue operators do not mind that potential customers are excluded. Popularity is seen as the harbinger of a venue's demise, as it brings outsiders who are unaware of community norms and more likely to attract enforcement attention. While it repels outsiders, secrecy may also attract community insiders, as it reinforces the subversive feeling that many find appealing.

Figure 3: **Ask local freak for address (Kearley, 2016)**

4.3. Safety

In addition to the four barriers to access described above, my interview research added complexity to the concept of safety. Four distinct dimensions of safety emerged, which I call architectural safety, substance safety, social safety, and emergency services. Community music venues present risks to all four dimensions of safety, and the determinants of these risks are mapped in Figure 4.
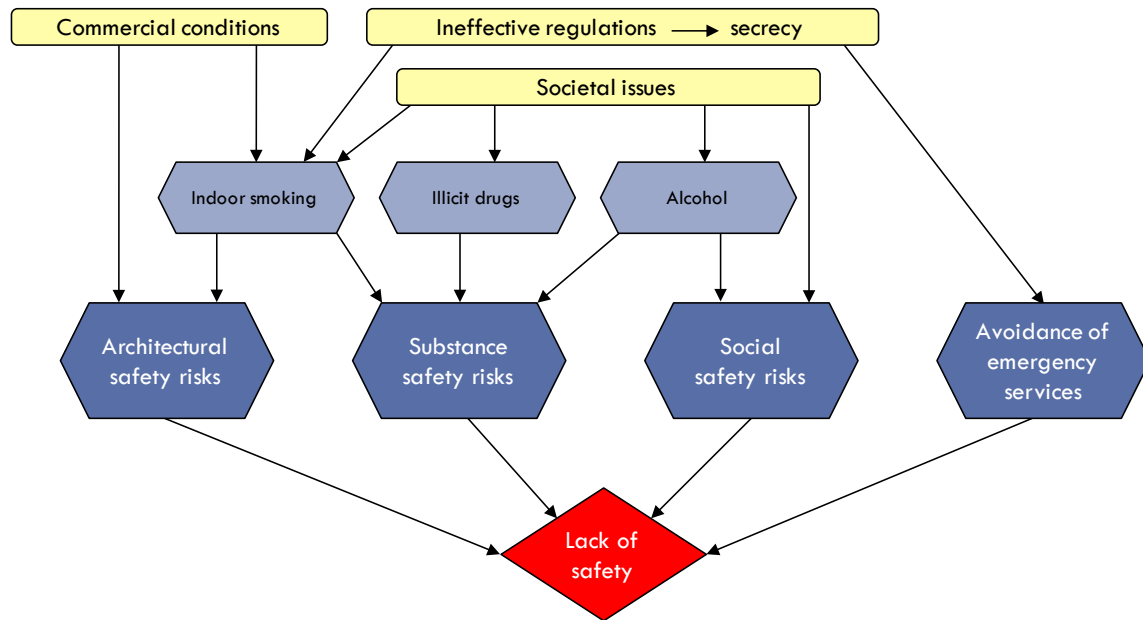
Figure 4:   Four safety risks and their determinants

4.3.1.   Architectural Safety

When asked about safety, some interviewees immediately thought of major architectural risks like fire, floor collapse, and blocked exits. Policymakers tended to see safety as architectural and were particularly interested in capacity, exiting, stairs, and fire suppression. This explains their push for building upgrades during enforcement (i.e. the "upgrades / modifications" node in Figure 2). Interviewees described a spectrum of architectural safety in Vancouver's music spaces, with venues ranging from "death traps" to some that seem completely safe. Several venue operators confessed to having been unconcerned about architectural safety in the past, but reported increasing interest since the 2016 Oakland fire. For example, one purchased numerous fire extinguishers and

another hired a private company to perform a fire safety audit. While such measures may increase architectural safety substantially at a relatively low cost, larger modifications are unaffordable and neither operators nor landlords are motivated to upgrade buildings that are slated for eventual redevelopment.

4.3.2. Social Safety

In contrast with architectural conceptions, some informants felt safety means preventing violence, rape, and harassment while ensuring people feel comfortable expressing their identities. These 'social safety' concerns are very important to the music community. One venue operator said they ensure there are women musicians performing at every show, while another said they exclusively hire women-identified and transgendered security guards. Other venues post signs warning of zero tolerance for racism or "macho bullshit" (Shout Back! Festival, 2014) while others ensure the availability of gender-neutral washrooms. Social safety is also supported by secrecy, as community insiders learn progressive norms while potentially-violent outsiders are excluded.

Social safety issues are rarely raised during enforcement, and some of the policymakers I interviewed said social safety is only an official priority when children are likely to be present. Others cited social safety as a reason to regulate alcohol consumption, noting that intoxication increases the risk of violence. Beyond official policymakers, a grassroots organization called Good Night Out offers social safety training and audits and issues certifications to venues that pass (Good Night Out, 2017). Good Night Out representatives told me they are currently seeking funding to expand programming.

4.3.3. Substance Safety

Another safety concern discussed by my interviewees involves substance misuse. While this is a broad societal problem, the festive nature of many community music events leads to unique risks. Three types of substances are commonplace in the local music community, and each is dealt with differently.

- **Alcohol**: Alcohol is popular in community music venues, and most informants lauded its social and income-generating benefits, though a few also recalled seeing

dangerously intoxicated individuals. Alcohol misuse is a major concern for policymakers, and many existing regulations are intended to prevent it.

- **Cigarettes**: Some venue operators allow indoor smoking in order to prevent the assembly of outdoor crowds whose noise would attract unwanted attention from neighbours and police. In addition, venue operators who sublet space to community members to live, work, or rehearse in feel they cannot prevent paying sub-tenants from smoking in their own spaces. Cigarettes are a fire hazard and second-hand smoke inhalation is a serious health risk.

- **Illicit drugs**: Drug use in community music venues varies among different audiences and musical genres. While many interviewees reported seeing very little drug consumption, others commented that drugs are part of culture and not necessarily problematic. Many cited concerns over fentanyl, and several venue operators mentioned having naloxone kits on-site with staff trained in their use. Good Night Out has organized drug safety tents at BC music festivals. The municipal staff I interviewed did not mention any efforts to promote drug safety in music venues, though some cited drugs as a reason to limit youth access to such spaces.

4.3.4. Emergency Services

To explore the impacts of enforcement and secrecy on safety, I asked venue operators how they would respond to a participant suffering an unexpected health emergency such as a stroke. While most indicated they would call 911 without hesitation, two said they would carry the casualty outdoors and call 911 from the street in order to keep their venue undiscovered by law enforcement. Delaying urgently needed healthcare and dragging ailing people outdoors produces obvious safety risks that would likely make emergencies worse. I mentioned this to Alex Clarke, the Vancouver Police Department's Liquor Coordinator, and she described widespread mistrust between grassroots music communities and law enforcement.

4.4. Other Considerations

Besides the components of access and safety described above, my interviews included discussion of three other variables that may be affected by policy change intended to increase access to safer community music venues: underage drinking, neighbourhood impacts, and competitor lobbying.

4.4.1.   Underage Drinking

Alcohol consumption is strongly associated with live music, and since this paper considers increasing youth access to music spaces, caution is required to avoid enabling underage drinking. I asked teenage interviewees how their friends obtain alcohol and was told that youth rarely purchase drinks from bars. Instead, teen drinkers plan ahead and acquire store-bought alcohol through older friends or black-market sources. They then 'bring their own booze' (BYOB) when they attend local concerts. While BYOB violates the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act* (S.B.C. 2015, c. 19, s. 73), several venue operators described taking a relaxed attitude toward it, as they are uncomfortable with surveillance, and BYOB increases the appeal and affordability of events. Since identification is only checked at the bar in such spaces, minors can easily consume alcohol brought in from outside. This suggests increasing youth access to venues that strictly prohibit BYOB will not increase underage drinking, whereas pushing young music fans into BYOB-tolerant underground venues may increase it. Alcohol-free venues are unlikely to reduce underage drinking, as organizers of alcohol-free concerts described seeing many attendees (including teens) drinking outdoors before and during dry events.

4.4.2.   Impacts on Neighbours

Negative neighbourhood impacts such as noise, litter, graffiti, and public urination are associated with live music events, or more specifically, with crowds that linger outside. Venue operators understand the importance of happy neighbours, as complaints trigger enforcement. Allowing BYOB and indoor smoking reduces outdoor crowds, and most of the venue operators I interviewed felt the complaints that do occasionally arise are easily resolvable. Alex Clarke of the Vancouver Police Department said noise is a low priority for

police, who are much more concerned with promoting safety than quiet. Ironically, complaints-based enforcement is producing the opposite result, as pressure to avoid complaints reduces neighbourhood impacts but creates unsafe conditions inside venues (e.g. second-hand smoke). If policy changes were to boost access and safety by reducing the need for secrecy, negative neighbourhood impacts could increase, exacerbated by Vancouver's continuing densification.

4.4.3. Competitor Lobbying

In addition to neighbours, several interviewees said bar owners complain about underground venues, and in the late 2000s especially, they were quite successful at lobbying the City to aggressively enforce regulations. These stakeholders' main concern is competition, as they feel it is unfair to compete with rule breakers.[8] While bar owners oppose underground venues for violating regulations, they also oppose regulatory reforms that would help bring these spaces into compliance. When I asked policymakers about potentially increasing the number of events allowed under the City's Arts Event Licence,[9] several said this would be unfair to existing businesses that spent large sums of money meeting the City's high standards for holding unlimited events. Thor Kuhlmann, a City of Vancouver planner who has worked extensively on liquor and event regulations, said these stakeholders "yell at" him, and he does "have some sympathy for them."

The underground venue operators I interviewed also expressed frustration over competition, but for them, the competition is over licences rather than audiences.

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[8] Most of my interviewees did not see underground venues as competing with bars, as they target different audiences. One interviewee compared the situation to competition between restaurants and food trucks.

[9] As noted in Chapter 1, the City of Vancouver's Arts Event Licence allows otherwise unlicensed spaces to host three events per month if they meet basic life safety standards. While this bypasses the City's more stringent requirements for hosting unlimited events, most underground venues do not participate because they host more than three events per month and fear that licensing some events will lead to enforcement on other nights (see Table C3 in Appendix C for additional limitations that discourage venues from obtaining Arts Event Licences).

Vancouver has a moratorium on new liquor-primary[10] licences in several parts of downtown including the Downtown Eastside, Vancouver's poorest neighbourhood and the home of many underground venues (City of Vancouver, 2017f). Existing licensed establishments can be bought and sold, but the cap on liquor-primary licences adds to already high purchase prices. Several interviewees complained that two large companies—Blueprint and the Donnelly Group—have purchased many downtown licensed establishments, contributing to the gentrification and sanitization of nightlife described in the literature. Operators of grassroots art spaces in the area believe they cannot obtain liquor licences, so if they wish to sell alcohol, they must do so illegally or through temporary Special Event Permits.[11]

4.5. Solutions

I asked each interviewee what government should do to increase access to safer community music venues in Vancouver. I received a variety of responses, which I categorize into regulatory approaches and financial supports.

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[10] The Province of BC issues two main classes of permanent liquor licences for on-site alcohol consumption. Food-primary licences are for establishments that primarily focus on food service (i.e. restaurants), and liquor-primary licences are for establishments that primarily focus on alcohol service (i.e. bars, pubs, nightclubs, etc.; *Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation*, B.C. Reg. 241/2016). While the Province issues these liquor licences, the municipal government must also approve of any new licensed establishments in Vancouver. Since 1990, the City has disallowed new liquor-primary establishment seats in the Downtown Eastside, though they do make occasional exceptions for event-driven live performance venues (City of Vancouver, 2017f). A recent municipal liquor policy review recommended continuing this approach (City of Vancouver, 2017f). The Downtown Eastside is defined broadly and encompasses neighbourhoods like Gastown and Chinatown (City of Vancouver, 2017f). Parts of the Granville Entertainment District, another downtown neighbourhood, have had similar moratoriums in recent years (City of Vancouver, 2017f).

[11] Special Event Permits allow alcohol to be sold and consumed in venues that lack permanent liquor licences, provided hosts pay an application fee and complete the online Serving It Right alcohol safety training program (Province of BC, 2017c). Event organizers can obtain no more than three Special Event Permits per month to a maximum of 24 per year (Province of BC, 2017c). Additional details on the limitations of Special Event Permits are provided in Table C3 in Appendix C.

4.5.1. Regulatory Approaches

As status quo regulations currently drive venues underground and cause them to close, I asked interviewees how they should change. The vast majority felt policymakers are too risk-averse, and Vancouver's standards, which planner Thor Kuhlmann called "some of the highest safety standards in the world," are too difficult to comply with. One interviewee who has developed several cultural spaces in Vancouver described venues that required millions of dollars to meet code and contrasted these with other spaces that cost $30,000-$50,000 to ensure basic life safety. If regulations were reduced to the latter level, underground venue operators would be compelled to conduct life-saving upgrades in order to secure venue-saving licences and permits. Granting underground venues a realistic path to legitimacy would also reduce the need for secrecy, as permitted venues would have less reason to fear enforcement.

In contrast, two interviewees said standards should actually be increased in particular areas. Ashtyn Bevan and Stacey Forrester from Good Night Out argued for increased regulation of social safety, citing the Province of BC's (2014b) *Major Planned Events Guidelines*[12] as a useful starting point. And, one of the wheelchair users I interviewed suggested higher accessibility standards such as requiring a percentage of venue space to have wheelchair-friendly seating.

Several interviewees felt regulations could be used to protect community music venues against redevelopment. One popular idea was to establish cultural nightlife districts where events would be allowed and community venues would be protected through zoning and neighbourhood plans. Perhaps using tools like heritage status or community amenity contributions, the City could require developers to replace any cultural spaces they remove in these areas. While some interviewees cautioned against over-concentrating and recommended appeasing neighbours by requiring distance between venues, others said the musical nature of nightlife districts would be well-publicized, and people with an aversion to noise would not choose to reside in those locations.

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[12] This document is geared toward major outdoor festivals rather than community music venues, though it does contain useful information on planning and risk management for event organizers and municipalities. The *Guidelines* are non-binding and provided for information only.

Eliminating age restrictions was a major topic in my interviews and most people felt youth should be allowed to attend concerts inside licensed venues. Alex Clarke, the Vancouver Police Department's Liquor Coordinator, said event-driven venues cause few problems as most attendees focus on performances rather than alcohol consumption. She suggested licensing venues that are only open for events differently from spaces that are consistently open for alcohol service. The teens I interviewed would be thrilled to attend event-driven establishments and would readily accept continued age restrictions in alcohol-focused non-event spaces. Some interviewees opposed allowing youth into event-driven establishments because monitoring underage drinking would be difficult in dimly lit environments and because youth could encounter sexual predators. The teenagers I interviewed shared the latter concern and suggested they be required to wear visual markers such as fluorescent wristbands to make them easily identifiable to staff and other attendees.

Finally, many interviewees suggested policies that would build trust and improve relationships between the state and music community. Some called for the appointment of a 'night mayor,' an ombudsperson position established by dozens of municipal governments around the world to improve relations between the night-time entertainment sector, governments, and citizens (Van Den Brink, 2016; see also London case study). Others suggested community consultation meetings or including grassroots music communities in municipal planning processes. Others still looked at the regulations themselves and suggested creating new classes of licences and permits to regularize the activities typically done at community music venues, or at least clarifying existing rules so that venues know what they can and cannot do (see Table C2 in Appendix C for a list of regulations that require clarification). This could lead to more consistent enforcement and would reduce the perception of moving targets in inspections. Some interviewees recommended making enforcement more gradual, with inspectors prioritizing a hierarchy of short-term, medium-term, and long-term building upgrades rather than demanding all improvements immediately. More generally, inspectors could abandon the complaints-based approach and show a consistent, genuine interest in safety rather than relying on

irritated neighbours to raise alarms. Finally, a variation of "sanctuary city" rules[13] could be introduced to encourage venues to call 911 without fear of enforcement.

4.5.2.   Financial Support

In addition to regulatory reform, many interviewees suggested government directly support community music venues. Planner Thor Kuhlmann preferred this approach, calling it "the right thing for us to do," as it would address the commercial issues that regulatory reforms cannot resolve. One popular financial support idea was transforming vacant publicly owned buildings into community music venues by renting them to venue operators for nominal prices. Several cited Seattle's Vera Project as a highly successful precedent for this approach (see Seattle case study). City-owned buildings do periodically come available in Vancouver, as interviewees from Red Gate and Girls Rock Camp both described attempts at applying for municipal space, while another interviewee—Irwin Oostindie—operated a short-lived community music venue in the City-owned Woodwards building as part of a mixed-use art space called W2 (see Section 4.6.1 for more information about W2).

As an alternative to transforming vacant publicly-owned buildings, some interviewees suggested opening up existing amenities such as community centres, schools, and libraries for after-hours use as community music venues. While some such spaces are currently rentable at night, event organizer Matilda Cormier said their cost is too high to be useful for grassroots music events. Former venue operator David Mattatall expressed frustration about this, asking "what the fuck happened to community centres? Why have they all abandoned us? Community centres have turned their back on artistic community." Mattatall suggested the City recognize that community music events fit these spaces' recreational and self-improvement mandates. Others added that flat rental fees

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[13] Vancouver currently has an "access without fear" policy that allows people to access municipal services without disclosing their immigration status (Robinson, 2016). This could serve as a precedent for allowing venues to access emergency services without disclosing permitting and licensing statuses.

should be eliminated, with facilities instead taking a share of event income as was done at South Arm Community Centre in nearby Richmond, BC, from 2007 to 2013.[14]

Instead of supplying space, some interviewees suggested government provide funding to support venues that operate in the private market. While relevant government grants do exist (e.g. Creative BC's [2016] BC Music Fund and the City of Vancouver's [2017c, 2017d] Critical Assistance Grant and Cultural Infrastructure Grant), most interviewees complained of overly restrictive eligibility requirements and said grants are exclusively awarded to established professional organizations rather than the grassroots community groups that are pushed underground due to lack of funds. These interviewees recommended expanding eligibility requirements for existing grant programs, increasing their funding levels, and awarding grants to less-established community organizations. Alternatively, one interviewee suggested creating an endowment fund or trust similar to London's Music Venue Trust (see London case study).

Finally, instead of granting general operating funds, several interviewees suggested government offer specific 'harm reduction' funding earmarked toward increasing safety and physical accessibility in existing venues. In addition to cash, government could provide portable and easily installable equipment like emergency lights, fire extinguishers, naloxone kits, exit push-bars, and wheelchair lifts, as well as first aid training and even crews of workers. Alex Clarke of the Vancouver Police Department liked this approach and compared it to the City giving away free salt during winter. Thor Kuhlmann at the City of Vancouver also liked the idea and suggested the City fund a non-profit to supply equipment and support, as this would reduce the likelihood of venues avoiding the program out of mistrust. Organizations like Good Night Out have been seeking government funding to increase social and substance safety, and with enough assistance, their mandate could potentially expand to promote architectural safety as well.

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[14] I interviewed Devalin Galloway, who organized dozens of concerts at Richmond's South Arm Community Centre. Their shows usually featured four performers and cost $5 to attend; the community centre and each performer received one dollar from every audience member. According to Galloway, these events were not connected to any public policy decision but simply arose because the individual youth coordinator at that community centre thought it was a good idea and was willing to support it. When that youth coordinator retired, the concerts were discontinued.

4.6. Discussion of Case Studies

Appendix B summarizes four case studies of cities (Seattle, Oakland, London, and Toronto) that have introduced innovative policies on community music venues, and one case study of Vancouver's policies on skateboarding, an analogous youthful activity that could serve as a precedent for music-related policy change. This section discusses ideas that are common among multiple cases and contrasts them with Vancouver's status quo policies on community music venues.

4.6.1. Publicly Funded Venues (Seattle, Vancouver)

In two of the cases considered in this report, municipal governments directly support community venues by supplying money and space. Several of my interviewees lauded Seattle's Vera Project, an all-ages music venue and educational space that operates in the City-owned Seattle Center complex and receives 12.5% of its funding from the City (Vera Project, 2017). In Vancouver, the municipal government has financed and constructed eight public skateboard parks on City-owned land. These include China Creek Park, which was one of the first public skateboard parks in the world when it was built in 1979 (Kronbauer, 2012; Luxton & Associates, 2008), and seven other skateboard parks that were developed in the 2000s and 2010s.

After the Safe Amplification Site Society (2014) organized a letter-writing campaign requesting municipal funding for an all-ages music venue, the City of Vancouver's 2015-2018 Capital Plan recognized that 600+ people "highlighted the need for a 200-seat venue for youth music performance" but did not set aside any funding for such a project (City of Vancouver, 2014, p. 7). Vancouver did have a publicly funded community music venue from 2010-2012 as part of the W2 project in the City-owned Woodwards building. While the City supported the construction of this space, W2's former Executive Director Irwin Oostindie told me W2 was charged a strata fee that was very difficult for them to pay. He also described tensions over programming and aesthetics. For instance, W2 was told not to host more than two live events per month, which left their performance space grossly underused. Oostindie said W2 closed because they were "evicted, for political reasons" by "a mafia of stakeholders" including the City of Vancouver.

4.6.2. Inclusive Policymaking (London, Seattle, Toronto, Vancouver)

In four of the five cases considered in this report, governments include community voices in decision-making processes. London has *three* inclusive policymaking bodies. A Night Czar, similar to the night mayors appointed in cities around the world (Van Den Brink, 2016), consults with "businesses, night-time workers, members of the public and residents" to "ensure London thrives as a 24-hour city" (Greater London Authority [GLA], 2016). The Night Czar is supported by the Night Time Commission, a consultation forum that makes recommendations to enable growth in the night-time economy (Mayor of London, 2016). Concurrent with these, the London Music Board, which includes members of "the music industry, music education sector, community music sector, local authorities, the GLA and tourism bodies," works to "protect grassroots music venues and support London's grassroots music scene" (GLA, 2017). Seattle took a narrower approach with its ad hoc Music and Youth Task Force, established in 1998 for the specific purpose of advising on revisions to the widely-hated Teen Dance Ordinance (Licata, 1998). Comprised of "promoters, club owners, music activists, and members of local government" (Liao, 1999), this Task Force fulfilled its mandate and also secured $25,000 in seed funding to establish the Vera Project before disbanding in 2001 (Curtis, 2010, p. 236-239). Toronto's Music Advisory Council (TMAC) is much more industry-focused than either London's or Seattle's inclusive policymaking bodies, though community members have been welcomed to speak at TMAC meetings to advocate for policy changes relevant to grassroots spaces (e.g. TMAC, 2017).

Vancouver has thus far not seen the need for an inclusive policymaking body specifically focused on music or the night-time economy. Vancouver does, however, have an Arts and Culture Policy Council, established in 2012 to provide advice "on civic programs relating to arts and culture" (City of Vancouver, 2012). The Council aims for diversity and a broad representation of artistic disciplines (City of Vancouver, 2017a). At the provincial level, Creative BC also includes all creative sectors rather than specifically focusing on music or the night-time economy (Creative BC, 2017). None of the community members I interviewed mentioned either group as a means of potentially influencing public policy decisions. Vancouver does not have an inclusive policymaking body for skateboarding either, though policymakers do frequently consult the non-profit Vancouver

Skateboard Coalition to gather advice and share information (Vancouver Skateboard Coalition, 2017).

4.6.3. Strategic Planning (Vancouver, Oakland, Toronto)

In three of the cases studied in this report, governments have published official statements that recognize the value and importance of music or grassroots community spaces. The *Skateboard Strategy for Vancouver* was introduced as a way of "ensuring that youth have 'a place' in the city" (Vancouver Parks & Recreation, 2005, p. 1), and policymakers from that era spoke about the importance of skateboarding to youth culture and the need to address it proactively rather than through bylaw enforcement (Kissinger, 2004). In Oakland, one month after the Ghost Ship fire killed 36 people, Mayor Libby Schaff tried to apply similar ideas to unpermitted warehouse spaces, declaring them to be "valuable to the community" (Schaaf, 2017, p. 1). In an ambitious executive order that has proven difficult to implement,[15] Schaff (2017) directed staff to protect "cultural community assets" (p. 1) and "generally work in the spirit of cooperation" (p. 2). In Toronto, the importance of the music industry is expressed in the Toronto Music Strategy, a planning document that declares Toronto to be a "music city" (TMAC, 2016).

While music is barely mentioned in it, Vancouver does have a Culture Plan (City of Vancouver, 2008). As discussed in Chapter 2 of this report, the Culture Plan is strongly linked to Florida's (2002) "creative city" approach, which Hae (2011) connects to gentrification and the inevitable closure of the very same creative spaces that are ostensibly valued. Vancouver's Culture Plan expires in 2018, and its replacement could be an opportunity to more clearly express the intrinsic value of grassroots music spaces.

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[15] As Baldassari (2017b) points out, City of Oakland staff appear to be ignoring Schaff's (2017) order for a cooperative approach and are instead "doing just the opposite" by continuing with "heavy handed" enforcement. In addition, landlords appear to be complicating Schaff's proposed new relationship between the City and arts community, as many would rather evict tenants than negotiate with artists and bureaucrats over building upgrades and changes in use (Baldassari, 2016; Baldassari, 2017b).

4.6.4.   Protecting Existing Venues (London, Vancouver, Toronto)

Three cases studied in this report feature efforts to protect existing venues. In London, the *Localism Act 2011* prevents registered "assets of community value" from being sold "without first giving community groups the right to bid for them, in order to use them for community benefit" (Music Venues Taskforce, 2015, p. 25). According to the Mayor of London (2016), an increasing number of grassroots music venues are registering under this *Act*. In Vancouver, skateboarders fought a 2006 redevelopment proposal that would have closed the historic China Creek skateboard park, and with area residents as their allies, they convinced the Vancouver Park Board to cancel the project (Vancouver Park Board Planning Committee, 2006). Furthermore, in 2010, the City of Vancouver recognized Leeside Skateboard Park, which skateboarders had built years earlier in an abandoned transit tunnel without government permission, as an official Vancouver skateboard park (Kronbauer, 2012). Key stakeholders described the City as taking a hands-off approach to Leeside, respecting the grassroots-driven DIY nature of the space (Lzapg, 2012). This is remarkable considering the site lacks the insurance that protects other local skateboard parks (Lzapg, 2012).

In 2013, Vancouver used heritage laws to protect the Waldorf, a community music venue that was purchased by developers who planned to cease venue operations (Hansen, 2013). While heritage status conserved the Waldorf's 'bricks and mortar,' it could not protect the activities that took place inside, as the venue's renowned creative team departed and did not return (Mack, 2013). In February, 2017, the City of Toronto bestowed heritage status on a beloved community music venue called the Silver Dollar Room to protect it from a proposed redevelopment (Rayner, 2017). As with the Waldorf in Vancouver, the Silver Dollar Room's heritage designation protects its 'bricks and mortar' but does not affect its owners' decisions on how to use the space. Stakeholders fear the Silver Dollar Room's owners will decide not to use it for live music (Atkinson, 2017).

Chapter 5.   Options and Analysis

Based on my literature review, interview research, and case studies, I developed eight policy options to increase access to safer community music venues in Vancouver. These options, which are listed in Figure 5, include four regulatory approaches and four financial supports. The eight options are not mutually exclusive and could be implemented in any combination. Continuing the status quo is not considered as an option because the goal of this report is to *increase* access to safer community music venues in Vancouver.

Regulatory Approaches	Financial Supports
Reduce Standards	Create an All-Ages Venue
Make Policy Accessible	Harness Existing Public Amenities
Allow Youth in Event-Driven Establishments	Expand Eligibility for Grants
Encourage Temporary Licensing	Fund a Discreet Venue Upgrading Initiative
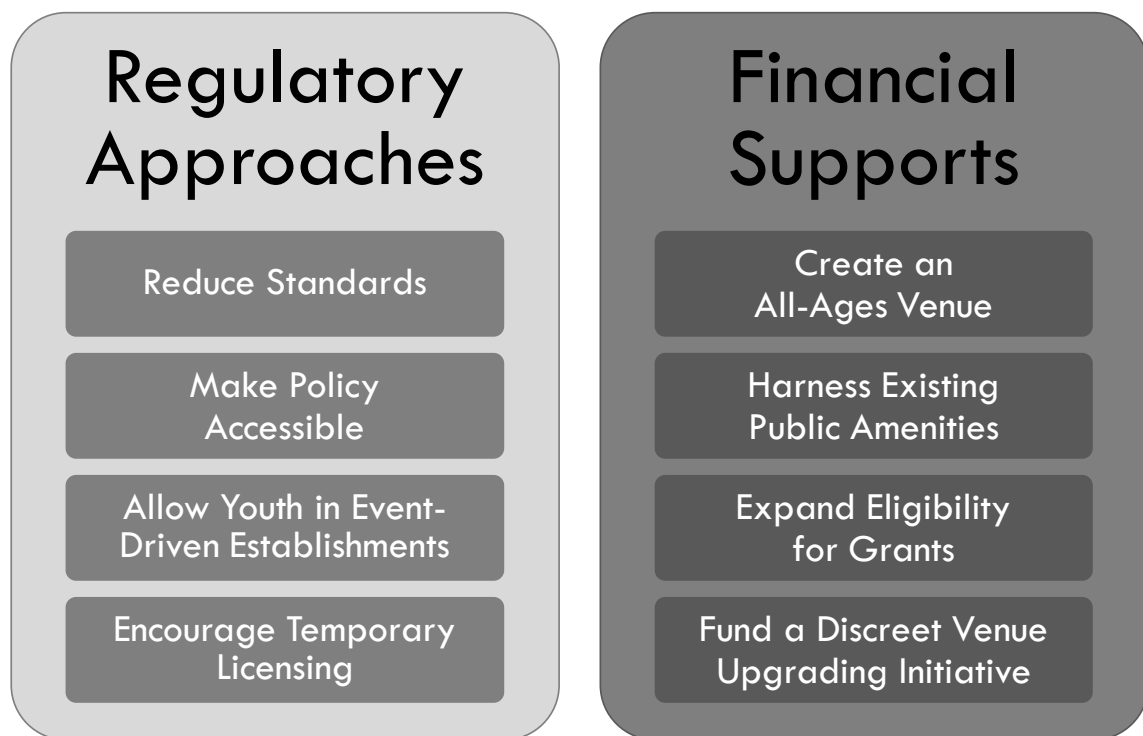
Figure 5.   Policy options to increase access to safer community music venues in Vancouver

To determine which options should be pursued and with what priority, I evaluate them against a range of criteria based on societal and government management objectives. For this analysis, I employ four main criteria (access, safety, government management, and stakeholder acceptance), each of which contain unique subcriteria as listed in Table 1. Each policy option's performance against each subcriterion is measured relative to the status quo using the seven-point scale detailed in Table 2. Projected improvements over the status quo are awarded positive scores, and expected detrimental

tradeoffs are given negative scores. If the status quo was included as an option, it would, by definition, receive scores of zero for all subcriteria. As noted in Chapter 3, the

Table 1: Criteria for assessment

Criteria			Definition
Access	Financial sustainability		venues' ability to make ends meet
	Tenure	refers	venues' resilience against redevelopment pressures
	Regulatory sustainability		venues' resilience against enforcement of regulations
	Physical accessibility	to	venues' accessibility to people with disabilities
	Age accessibility		venues' accessibility to youth under age 19
	Secrecy	the	venue operators' perceived need to operate secretly
Safety	Emergency response		venue operators' willingness to call 911
	Cigarette safety	effect	venue operators' decisions to allow indoor smoking
	Architectural safety		venues' architectural safety
	Alcohol safety	policy	venues' alcohol safety
	Drug safety		venues' drug safety
	Social safety	has	venues' social safety
Government management	Cost		government budgets
	Implementation ease	on	ease of implementation
	Public acceptance		the public's opinion of government
Stakeholder acceptance	Neighbourhood impacts	→	venues' neighbours
	Compliant venues		the opinion of compliant venue operators
	Participation		the music community's participation in the policy

Table 2: Measures

+3	=	substantial positive change relative to the status quo
+2	=	moderate positive change relative to the status quo
+1	=	slight positive change relative to the status quo
0	=	no difference compared to the status quo
-1	=	slight negative change relative to the status quo
-2	=	moderate negative change relative to the status quo
-3	=	substantial negative change relative to the status quo

underground nature of many community music venues means useful quantitative data are unavailable. Measurements are based on the extensive qualitative research conducted for this study, including lessons learned from cities that have implemented similar policies in the past.

For each of the eight policy options under consideration, I begin with an explanation. For three of the options, my explanation includes principles of risk management as described by the Province of BC's (2012) *Risk Management Guideline*. Explanations are followed by a discussion of each option's strengths and weaknesses, with scores inserted into the discussion in brackets. These scores are then tallied in policy analytic matrices following consideration of the four regulatory and four financial support options. For simplicity, the tallies are unweighted in this report, but if decision-makers wish to revisit my analysis, weight could be assigned to specific subcriteria based on the priorities of the time.

5.1. Regulatory Options

The first set of policies considered in this report involve municipal and provincial regulations, planning, and enforcement.

5.1.1. Reduce Standards

The first option calls on the City of Vancouver to overhaul its performance space regulations to reduce architectural safety, noise, and licensing standards in order to encourage compliance. While reducing safety standards to increase safety is counter-intuitive, it is consistent with risk analytic principles outlined in the Province of BC's (2012) *Risk Management Guideline.* This *Guideline* describes a framework where the likelihood and consequences of a risk are charted on vertical and horizontal axes as shown in Figure 6. The *Guideline* recommends determining one's tolerance for risk, as exemplified by the "limit of acceptable risk" curve in the Figure. The area below this curve and to its left represents acceptable risk levels, and the area above and to its right represents unacceptable risk levels. Vancouver music venues currently occupy two locations in this Figure. Venues that comply with "some of the highest safety standards in the world" reduce the likelihood of disaster through structural features like concrete floors and reduce the

consequences of disaster through equipment such as sprinklers. These venues are well below[16] the limit of acceptable risk and are represented by the square in Figure 6. Underground venues may not be as well-equipped, bringing greater likelihood and consequences of disaster; these venues are beyond the limit of acceptable risk and are represented by the triangle in Figure 6. The objective of reducing architectural safety standards as a policy option is to bring all venues within the limit of acceptable risk, as shown by the circle in Figure 6. While this would increase risk in compliant venues, the new risk level would still be acceptable, and the risk in underground venues would be reduced to an acceptable level as well.

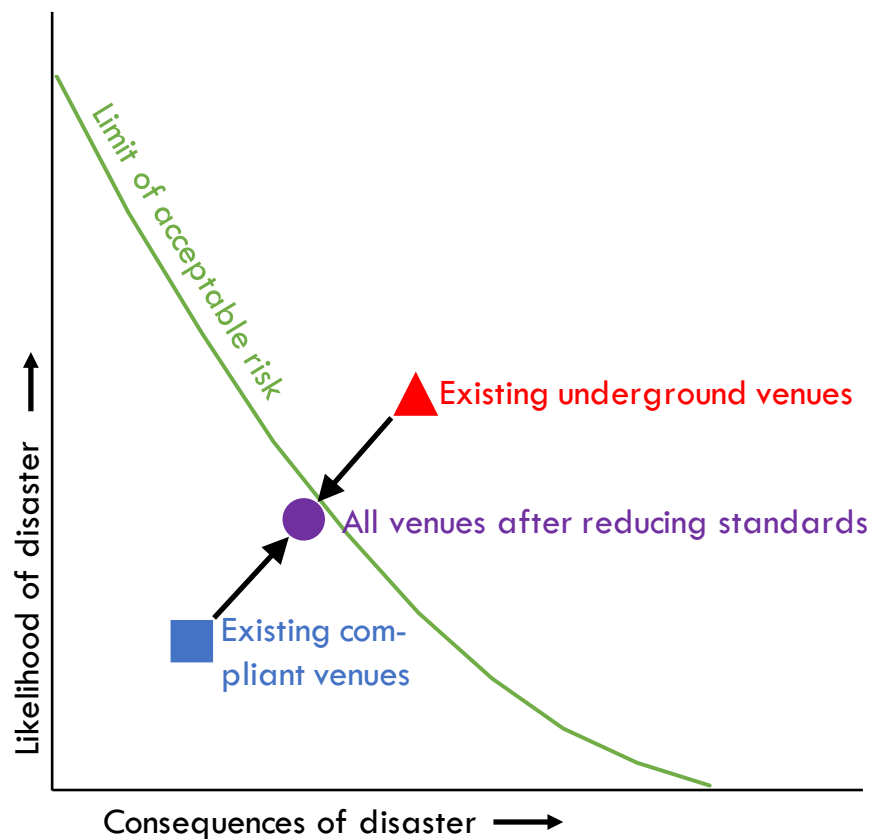**Figure 6:**   **Reducing safety standards as a risk management approach**

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[16] My claim that existing compliant venues are well below the limit of acceptable risk is supported by planner Thor Kuhlmann's characterization of status quo regulations as "some of the highest safety standards in the world." There is no reason to believe that Vancouver, culturally, is one of the most risk averse societies in the world.

The following are examples of actions that could be taken as part of a reduction of standards—additional details for each are provided in Table C1 in Appendix C.

- The City could reduce standards for assembly spaces in the *Vancouver Building Bylaw* and *Vancouver Fire Bylaw* to approximate the levels set for such spaces in the *British Columbia Building Code* and *British Columbia Fire Code*;

- The City could allow buildings that change use or undergo renovations to continue operating under the version of the *Building Bylaw* that guided their initial construction;

- The City could increase the decibel limits imposed by the *Noise Control By-law*;

- The City could grant halls and other short-term rental spaces ongoing approval to host events rather than requiring each individual event organizer to obtain their own licences; and,

- The City could reduce standards for cabarets and class 2 restaurants.

Many Vancouver venue operators are exhausted from surreptitiously avoiding enforcement and risking personal harm and would gladly perform life safety upgrades they can afford in exchange for permits and licences that guarantee regulatory sustainability [this policy scores +2 for regulatory sustainability]. This would increase architectural safety [+1 for architectural safety] and physical accessibility [+1 for physical accessibility], as participating venues would become compliant with modest standards instead of ignoring the more stringent status quo requirements. Compliance would eliminate the need for secrecy in participating venues [+1 for secrecy], which, in turn, would increase operators' willingness to call 911 in an emergency [+1 for emergency response] and decrease the need for indoor smoking [+1 for cigarette safety], as they would no longer fear enforcement. Operators of existing compliant venues would strongly support this option [+3 for compliant venues], as reducing standards would bring increased occupancy loads and lower renovation costs. Financial sustainability would not be affected overall, however, as venues that save money on renovations would be offset by other venues that

spend money on renovations they would have otherwise not pursued [score of 0 for financial sustainability].

The success of this option relies on underground venues complying with reduced safety standards more than they comply with status quo regulations. Not all venues would participate, however. As one interviewee noted, cities with lower standards still have underground venues [+1 for participation, as only some venues would participate in the policy]. Furthermore, while this option involves little cost to government [0 for cost], it scores worse on other government management subcriteria. Implementation would be tricky: if standards are reduced too much, all venues would become unacceptably risky, but if standards are reduced too little, compliance would remain difficult for underground spaces [-2 for implementation ease]. Reducing safety standards would also require numerous bylaw amendments, raising the spectre of public opposition, particularly since the policy's counter-intuitive rationale could be difficult to communicate [-2 for public acceptance]. This would be exacerbated by the negative neighbourhood impacts that follow from reduced secrecy, as newly permitted venues would feel less pressure to avoid upsetting nearby residents [-1 for neighbourhood impacts].

5.1.2. Make Policy Accessible

Rather than changing regulations substantively, a second option would see the City of Vancouver and Province of BC make relevant policies and policymaking processes accessible to the grassroots music community. This option includes three components:

- **Strategic planning:** The City of Vancouver and Province of BC could recognize the intrinsic value of the local music community and explain how they plan to support it (see Oakland, Toronto, and Vancouver case studies for precedents).

- **Clarify regulations:** The City of Vancouver and Province of BC could clarify existing regulations that affect community music venues. Table C2 in Appendix C lists several examples of regulations that require clarification. Issues include inconsistent and undefined terminology, unnecessary references to drugs, sexist language, faulty numbering, contradictory and unnecessary age restrictions, and inaccessible documents.

- **Inclusive policymaking**: The City of Vancouver and Province of BC could invite the music community to participate in decision-making and planning processes, including discussion of potential regulatory reforms, through the establishment of an inclusive policymaking body. This could take the form of a night mayor (see London case study), a youth music task force (see Seattle case study) or a grassroots music venue taskforce (see London case study), but should be more narrowly focused than the existing Arts and Culture Policy Council (City of Vancouver, 2017a) or Creative BC (2017).

As with reducing standards, accessible policy is consistent with risk management principles. The Province of BC (2012) recommends "communication and consultation with internal and external stakeholders" (p. 8) and says "the assessment of risk is proactive and inclusive and involves those who understand the risks and are best able to manage them" (p. 8). This supports the establishment of inclusive policymaking bodies that invite community voices to participate in decision-making processes [+2 for participation]. While the inclusion of those voices could lead to better future policy, clarifying current rules would immediately support regulatory sustainability [+1], as venue operators would increase their understanding about what is and is not permitted. A strategic plan that affirms the importance of the music community would lessen the need to hide from authorities, and this reduced secrecy [+2] would mean less indoor smoking [+2] and more willingness to access emergency services [+2]. While a reduction in secrecy may negatively impact neighbours, a new collaborative relationship with police could mitigate that impact [0] and also create opportunities to enhance social [+1], alcohol [+1], and drug [+1] safety through the sharing of best-practices. Clarifying regulations could also improve architectural safety [+1], as venue operators would clearly understand what municipal and provincial experts consider safe and would no longer discredit building inspectors as imposing moving targets. Finally, this option would be accepted by the public [+2], as inclusion and positive relationships are an easy sell and increased regulatory clarity could benefit other sectors as well.

Bar owners, who have been successful lobbyists in the past, would generally prefer the City enforce[17] existing regulations rather than build relationships with rule breakers. These stakeholders would likely oppose an accessible policy campaign that focuses on the grassroots music community [-1 for compliant venues], and could attempt to dominate any inclusive policymaking initiatives, perhaps leading to a consultative body like Toronto's, which is more focused on industry than on community or the underground (see Toronto case study). Another downside is cost [-1], as supporting and staffing an inclusive policymaking body would incur some government staffing expenses. It could also create implementation problems [-1] if the City does not agree with the inclusive policymaking body's recommendations. Furthermore, clarifying regulations could be difficult to implement [an additional -1 for implementation], as multiple bylaws would require amendments, and coordination from multiple departments would be needed.

5.1.3.   Allow Youth in Event-Driven Establishments

A third regulatory option involves the Province of BC and City of Vancouver allowing underage youth inside event-driven establishments while issuing fines and suspending the licences of venues that facilitate underage drinking. The provincial Liquor Control and Licensing Branch (LCLB) traditionally bars minors from entering establishments with liquor-primary licences,[18] but the new *Liquor Control and Licensing*

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[17] Strict enforcement of current regulations is not considered as an option in this report, as it would not increase access to safer community music venues. At best, it would decrease access to unsafe community music venues, but even that is unlikely, as previous enforcement efforts have simply driven venues further underground.

[18] There are at least three exceptions to the usual age restrictions for liquor-primary establishments. First, venues can 'delicense,' which means temporarily ceasing alcohol sales in order to let minors attend specific events. Delicensing was banned in 2012, but after advocacy work by the Safe Amplification Site Society and others (Marchand, 2013), this decision was reversed in 2014 (Province of BC, 2014c). While suspending alcohol sales means less potential income, one liquor-primary establishment in Vancouver recently began using delicensing to host occasional all-ages concerts (Fortune Sound Club, 2017). Second, the Province of BC (2017b) allows minors into concert halls and live theatres during events. While a "concert hall" must have at least 1500 seats (*Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation*, B.C. Reg. 241/2016, s. 177(2)(d)), "theatre" is not defined and has previously been used to allow youth inside community music venues like the Rio Theatre as well as larger establishments like the Vogue. Third, the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act* (S.B.C. 2015, c. 19, s. 1) differentiates between a "service area," where alcohol is sold and consumed, and a larger "establishment," which also includes staff-only areas, storage closets, and other alcohol-free spaces. In our interview, I

Act (S.B.C. 2015, c. 19) grants the LCLB considerable discretion to impose unique terms and conditions including allowing individual venues to permit underage youth on their premises (s. 15.2.b, 26.2.b, 31.2.b, 78.2, 79.1). According to the Province of BC's (2017b) Liquor-Primary Handbook, minors should be allowed in "event-driven facilities" without parents or guardians, with no time restrictions, and without the need for special applications to the LCLB, as long as the events in question are not liquor-focused (p. 8). This Handbook lists "community halls" as an example of an event-driven facility, but the LCLB could easily interpret this regulation to allow minors inside any establishment that is only open for cultural events. Alternatively, the Province of BC could implement a key recommendation of its (2014a) Liquor Policy Review and create a new class of permanent liquor licence that welcomes youth for events.[19]

While age restrictions are generally the purview of the Province, the City of Vancouver must approve any liquor-primary licence applications or amendments, giving them veto power over provincial decisions to allow youth in event-driven establishments. In addition, the City imposes its own age restrictions on some types of spaces. Recalling Seattle's draconian Teen Dance Ordinance (see Seattle case study), Vancouver's *License By-law* sets out bizarre and contradictory age restrictions[20] for teenage discotheques that could be reformed as part of an effort to allow youth in event-driven establishments. The City of Vancouver also regulates the age of participants in cabarets. While the City does not impose age restrictions on cabarets that serve alcohol (City of Vancouver, 2000a), admittance to "cabarets not licensed to serve alcohol (aka non-alcoholic dance halls)" is limited to those age 19 or older (City of Vancouver, 2000b). Ironically, if the Province

asked LCLB staff if an "establishment" could include an area for minors that is physically separated from a "service area" where only adults are permitted. They said they had never seen this done, but agreed that it would be legal as long as minors can enter and exit the establishment and washrooms without passing through the age-restricted service area.

[19] The Review recommended the introduction of a new licence class and streamlined application process for facilities that charge a fee for an event and said minors should be permitted to stay for the duration of events (Province of BC, 2014a, p. 36). As of Summer, 2017, this has yet to be implemented (Province of BC, 2017a).

[20] Section 2 of the *License By-law* says teenage discotheques are "exclusively" for people age 13-18. Section 13.3(3) of the same *By-law* says "no person under the age of fifteen years … shall enter a teenage discotheque," except for Saturday afternoons, when the venues can be "exclusively for persons who are under fifteen years of age."

continues to reform its age restrictions for event-driven liquor-primary establishments, youth could be welcomed in cabarets that serve alcohol but banned from cabarets that do not. This situation clearly calls for reform.

The primary objective of allowing youth inside event-driven establishments is increasing age accessibility [+3], as it would significantly boost the number of aboveboard venues where underage youth are allowed.[21] While it would not address issues in underground spaces, it would draw youth out of such locations by providing safer and more accessible alternatives, thus reducing the number of people affected by secrecy [+1], hesitancy to access emergency services [+1], indoor smoking [+1], and architectural safety risks [+1]. Policymakers have been reluctant to allow youth in liquor-serving establishments because they fear increasing youth exposure to alcohol could increase underage drinking. However, youth are currently allowed in establishments such as restaurants and stadiums, where alcohol is sold but is not the primary purpose of the business. This option would extend that rationale to a wider variety of non-alcohol-focused establishments. My interviewees believed this would not increase underage drinking, as youth rarely purchase alcohol at event locations. By providing teenage music fans alternatives to BYOB-tolerant underground venues, this policy could even decrease underage drinking, though additional research is required to determine the likelihood of that being the case [0 for alcohol safety]. Finally, existing venues would likely support this policy [+1 for compliant venues], as allowing minors would be optional, giving management the flexibility to pursue increased audience size but fewer drink sales per attendee if they choose to allow youth or maintain the status quo if they do not.

One downside to this option is only some venues would participate [+1]. Many liquor-serving establishments would likely prefer the comfort of the status quo over risking decreased alcohol sales or lawsuits about intoxicated children. Implementing this option could also be difficult [-1], as coordination would be required from the City and Province as well as other agencies like the Vancouver Police Department and health authorities.

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[21] Examples of Vancouver community music venues with liquor-primary licences that are only open for events include the Biltmore Cabaret, Rickshaw Theatre, Fortune Sound Club, Fox Cabaret, Cobalt Cabaret, and Media Club.

Public acceptance could also be an obstacle [-1], and strong communications would be required to ensure people do not misinterpret the policy as letting children into bars.

5.1.4.   Encourage Temporary Licensing

The last regulatory approach considered in this report would see the City of Vancouver and Province of BC reform their temporary licensing protocols to encourage participation and compliance. The City's Arts Event Licence, developed in 2013 in an attempt to address many of the issues explored in this report, allows venues that lack permanent permits and licences to host occasional events if they meet basic life safety standards (City of Vancouver, 2015). While this was certainly a positive step, there are a number of limitations to the Licence that discourage venues from participating. These limitations include a maximum of three Licences per month, stringent flooring requirements, mandatory wheelchair access, limited locations, and minimal sound amplification (City of Vancouver, 2015; see Table C3 in Appendix C for further details). Each of these stipulations are sensible, but taken together, they produce a fairly restrictive licence that most community music venues ignore. In order to encourage participation and compliance, the City of Vancouver could increase the number of Arts Event Licences that can be obtained each month and relax the requirements for obtaining these Licences.

In addition to the City's Arts Event Licence, the Province of BC also issues temporary permits that allow event organizers to sell alcohol in spaces that lack permanent liquor licences. Formerly known as Special Occasion Licences, Special Event Permits (SEPs) were overhauled in 2016 (Province of BC, 2016, 2017c), and while many improvements were made as part of this change, two significant barriers to participation remain: event organizers can only obtain three permits per month (maximum 24 per year), and small community gatherings that accept only cash at the door are charged more for permits than large events that sell tickets in advance (*Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation*, B.C. Reg. 241/2016; Province of BC, 2017c; see Table C3 in Appendix C for further details). In order to encourage more event organizers to obtain SEPs instead of selling alcohol illegally, the Province could increase the number of SEPs allowed each month and base permit costs on event size rather than ticketing systems.

If temporary licences were to become an attractive and realistic option for community music venues, participation would be high [+2], as many venues would accept modest licensing requirements in exchange for the security of having official permission to operate. This would substantially increase regulatory sustainability [+3], as any venue that is threatened by enforcement could save themselves through temporary licensing. This security would drastically reduce the need for secrecy [+3], thereby increasing willingness to access emergency services [+3] and decreasing the need for indoor smoking [+3]. Architectural safety would increase slightly [+1], as venues would be required to conduct modest safety upgrades in order to obtain temporary licences, and alcohol safety would be enhanced as well [+2], as servers are required to complete the online Serving It Right training program in order to obtain SEPs.

As discussed in Chapter 4, existing compliant venues strongly oppose expansion of temporary licensing protocols [-3] because they see themselves as competing with underground venues and resent the City for allowing their competitors to take regulatory shortcuts. Encouraging temporary licensing would also produce negative neighbourhood impacts [-3], as a large decrease in secrecy would mean much less pressure to avoid complaints. These two factors would likely combine to create substantial public opposition [-3], as many Vancouverites would prefer underground venues obtain the same permanent licences and permits as existing compliant venues. Finally, implementing this policy could be difficult [-1], as a delicate balance would be required to encourage participation while still pushing for venue operators to increase architectural safety.

5.1.5.   Summary of Analysis of Regulatory Options

My evaluation of regulatory approaches is summarized in Table 3. As the Table shows, making policy accessible scores best overall and is the only regulatory approach likely to affect all aspects of safety, though some of these impacts are minor. None of the options considered here perform worse than the status quo on any aspect of safety or accessibility. No regulatory options address financial sustainability or tenure, but all four would improve secrecy, emergency response, cigarette safety, and architectural safety. From a government management perspective, regulatory approaches are inexpensive but tricky to implement. Public acceptance, approval of existing compliant venues, and

impacts on venue neighbours vary among the options, and decision-makers may wish to consider the political ramifications of pleasing or upsetting each of these stakeholders.

Table 3:   Policy analysis matrix for assessment of regulatory options

		Reduce Standards	Make Policy Accessible	Allow Youth in Event-Driven Establish-ments	Encourage Temporary Licensing
Access	Financial sustainability	0	0	0	0
	Tenure	0	0	0	0
	Regulatory sustainability	+2	+1	0	+3
	Physical accessibility	+1	0	0	0
	Age accessibility	0	0	+3	0
	Secrecy	+1	+2	+1	+3
Safety	Emergency response	+1	+2	+1	+3
	Cigarette safety	+1	+2	+1	+3
	Architectural safety	+1	+1	+1	+1
	Alcohol safety	0	+1	0	+2
	Drug safety	0	+1	0	0
	Social safety	0	+1	0	0
Government management	Cost	0	-1	0	0
	Implementation ease	-2	-2	-1	-1
	Public acceptance	-2	+2	-1	-3
Stakeholder acceptance	Neighbourhood impacts	-1	0	0	-3
	Compliant venues	+3	-1	+1	-3
	Participation	+1	+2	+1	+2
	TOTAL:	+6	+11	+7	+7

5.2. Financial Support Options

The second category of policies considered in this report calls on government to directly support community music venues.

5.2.1. Create an All-Ages Venue

The first financial support option examined here would see the City of Vancouver (or any other level of government) create an all-ages community music venue in an available publicly-owned property and partner with a local venue operator to run the facility at nominal cost. Like Vancouver's nine public skateboard parks (see Vancouver case study), this option involves providing public space for a positive recreational activity that can be harmful when done in inappropriate locations. I asked Vancouver planner Thor Kuhlmann about this idea, and he said, "the City's land holdings, while vast, rarely include vacant performance venue space in suitable locations." This would not be a problem for the local music community, which is accustomed to holding concerts in unorthodox spaces like parking lots (Garcia, 2014), skateboard ramps (Varty, 2014), and barges (Koch, 2013). A bigger issue is that upgrades would be required for the City to meet its own regulations. However, experiencing these regulations from a venue's perspective could guide reform efforts, as policymakers would realize which standards are overly burdensome.

Creating an all-ages venue would increase age accessibility [+2]; while only one venue would be created, it could be a flagship amenity for local youth similar to Seattle's renowned Vera Project (see Seattle case study). It would be architecturally safe [+1], physically accessible [+1], financially sustainable [+1], and non-secretive [+1], and would comply with all applicable regulations [+1 for regulatory sustainability]. As a dedicated publicly-owned space, this venue would also be sheltered from redevelopment pressures, making it the only option in this entire report to contribute to tenure [+1]. Creating an all-ages venue would likely be well received by the public [+2], as parents would appreciate a safe and accessible youth recreation space, and assuming a wise choice of location, it would not impact neighbours [0]. Finally, if the City's experience meeting its own regulations were indeed to inspire reform efforts, creating an all-ages venue could increase regulatory sustainability [an additional +1 for regulatory sustainability] for all venues.

The major downside to this approach is cost [-3], as upgrades would be expensive and the City (or other level of government) would be required to sacrifice a property that could generate rental income or be used for other priorities. Another potential downside is participation. For community music venues to be cherished, and for the social benefits

they produce to be fully realized, community members must have control over operations. Disagreements with policymakers over aesthetics, scheduling, and alcohol could reduce the number of people participating in the venue [only +1 for participation] or risk what Baker et al. (2009) call the "cooption of youth cultural practices" (p. 151). Conversely, government must trust the venue operator's decisions, which was challenging with past projects like W2, whose operators were told to host no more than two events per month. Finding the right operator and managing relationships with them could make implementation tricky [-1]. Existing venues might object to government becoming a perceived competitor [-1], though this opposition could be minimized by emphasizing the space's focus on youth recreation.

5.2.2. Harness Existing Public Amenities

Rather than creating a new public amenity, the second financial support option considered here would harness existing facilities by eliminating flat rental fees for after-hours concerts in community centres, schools, and libraries, with government agencies instead taking a share of event revenues. This would shift financial risk from event organizers to the state, which would be called upon to accept budgetary losses as an investment toward fulfilling mandates for providing recreational opportunities and supporting public improvement.

Like creating an all-ages venue, harnessing existing public amenities does not address underground spaces but instead provides safe [+1 for each of architectural safety, cigarette safety, and emergency response] and accessible [+1 for each of secrecy, physical accessibility, and regulatory sustainability] alternatives. These venues would become a natural place for youth to participate in the music community [+2 for age accessibility], and if they are kept alcohol and drug free, they would likely be well-received by the public [+2] as parents would appreciate the availability of safe night-time recreational activities for youth. And, as with creating an all-ages venue, opening up existing public amenities could inspire regulatory reform as the City would experience the burden of licensing rules for individual events firsthand [an additional +1 for regulatory sustainability]. This option's chief advantage over developing a new venue is cost [only a -1], as it utilizes facilities that are already earmarked for public use but are often under-

used at night. The only expenses required would be human resources for monitoring, maintenance, and lockup, and some of these costs would be covered by the venue's share of event revenues.

While this policy would be relatively inexpensive, it would be difficult to implement [-3], as schools, community centres, and libraries are not controlled by City Council, but by the Vancouver School Board, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, and Vancouver Public Library as well as the managers of each individual facility. Key stakeholders may also be underwhelmed by this option. As public amenities would continue to be used for other purposes in the daytime, the music community would not feel ownership of the space and may not feel free to 'be themselves.' This tension could manifest in disagreements over aesthetics, as décor must remain suitable for daytime users, and scheduling, as municipal staff would require firm ending times for events. If facility management are unhappy, they could easily stop hosting concerts, meaning the venues would not be well tenured [0]. Furthermore, if alcohol is not allowed, some community members would avoid the venues [only a +1 for participation] while others would drink outdoors.[22] This would negatively impact neighbours [-3], particularly because schools, libraries, and community centres are often located in residential areas. Finally, as with creating an all-ages venue, existing compliant venues might oppose this option because they could see it as government becoming a competitor [-1].

5.2.3. Expand Eligibility for Grants

A third financial support option involves money instead of space: the City of Vancouver could overhaul existing grant programs to expand eligibility and increase participation from community music venues. Presently, the City of Vancouver's (2017c, 2017d) Critical Assistance Grant and Cultural Infrastructure Grant require applicants to be registered non-profit societies, co-operatives, or charities that own their spaces or have minimum ten year leases. Very few community music venues meet these criteria. A

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[22] This was what occurred at Richmond's South Arm Community Centre, where alcohol was strictly forbidden. Many adults avoided the concerts, preferring to see live music closer to downtown instead. Of those people who did attend, some consumed alcohol in parked cars or at a nearby park before and during concerts.

precedent for broader eligibility requirements is the BC Music Fund's provincially sponsored live music program, which accepts applications from businesses and only requires grantees to have two years' experience in the field (Creative BC, 2016). If the City broadened its eligibility requirements to a similar level and awarded grants to grassroots community music venues, existing budgetary allocations could help increase access to safer community music venues.

This policy scores better than any other option on financial sustainability [+2], as it would directly fund the operation of community music venues. It could also assist with a variety of other expenses including physical accessibility [+1] and architectural safety [+1] upgrades. The public is unlikely to oppose widening grant eligibility [+1], and existing compliant venues would also appreciate a chance to compete for grant funding (though a few already can, and these might resent the added competition) [+1 for compliant venues]. Finally, assuming the total amount of grant funding available remains unchanged, the policy would involve no new cost to government [0].

As with the other financial support options covered thus far, participation is a downside to expanding eligibility for grants [only a +1]: as long as venues remain underground, they are unlikely to apply for funding, particularly since the grantor in this case is the same government that enforces regulations. Furthermore, widened eligibility to apply for a static pool of money would increase competition for grants, and many worthy projects would be rejected. Moreover, for the venues that do receive funding, grants can be distracting. Several interviewees described "serial" participants in the "grant mill" who focus more on obtaining grants than on operating their spaces. From a government perspective, expanding eligibility would be burdensome to implement [-1], as additional effort would be required to evaluate a greater number of applications. Furthermore, as the policy does not address tenure [0], there is a chance that taxpayer dollars would be wasted if grants are awarded to venues that close shortly after receiving funds.

5.2.4.   Fund a Discreet Venue Upgrading Initiative

The final financial support option considered here would see the City of Vancouver (or any other level of government) fund a non-profit or other organization to discreetly

upgrade safety and accessibility in community music venues. The successful proponent would receive public funding to provide venues with training (on how to promote different types of safety and accessibility), equipment (e.g. fire extinguishers, emergency lights, push-bars for doors, naloxone kits, and wheelchair lifts) and human resources (engineering and trades), while keeping their licensing and permitting statuses confidential.
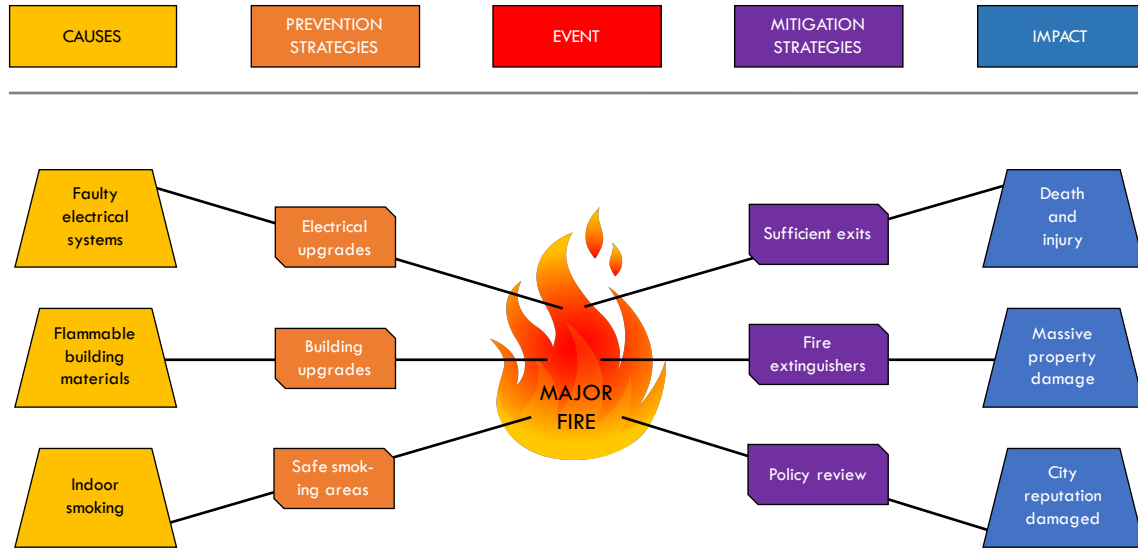
Figure 7: **A 'bowtie model' for the risk of fire in a community music venue**

As with reducing standards and making policy accessible, a venue upgrading initiative is consistent with the Province of BC's (2012) *Risk Management Guideline.* This *Guideline* uses a "bowtie" model to disentangle risk into causes, event, and impacts, and to conceptualize how risk can be prevented and mitigated (p. 12). Figure 7 uses a bowtie model to visualize the risk of a major fire like the one that occurred in Oakland in 2016. As the Figure suggests, the risk of fire can be prevented with electrical and building upgrades, and mitigated by exits and fire extinguishers. Status quo policy uses licensing and regulations to compel venue operators to pay for these things, but often they focus instead on avoiding enforcement. A discreet venue upgrading initiative takes a more straight-forward approach by directly providing the equipment and upgrades needed to prevent and mitigate architectural safety risks.

A discreet venue upgrading initiative would substantially improve architectural safety [+3] and physical accessibility [+3], as it would directly supply venues with the

equipment needed to meet those objectives. It would also support social safety [+2], drug safety [+2], and cigarette safety [+1], as each of these would be included in the training program. A discreet venue upgrading initiative would increase financial sustainability [+1], as venues would save money on equipment they might have otherwise purchased independently, and it would support regulatory sustainability [+1], as building upgrades would help venues comply with safety standards. Having a discreet and trusted non-profit run the initiative instead of a government agency would increase participation substantially [+3], as venues would be able to access the program without fear of enforcement. Finally, a discreet venue upgrading initiative should be well-received by the public [+1], which has previously accepted harm reduction policies on more controversial activities like drugs and sex work.

One significant downside to this option is cost [-3], as substantial funding would be required to make a major impact on a large number of venues. A discreet venue upgrading initiative would be easily scalable, however, and government could start with a modest level of funding and increase it or decrease it if results warrant. Implementation is another potential barrier [-1], as it would be crucial to partner with a highly competent organization that both the City and music community trusts. Finally, operators of compliant venues would strongly object [-3] to underground venues receiving free equipment and upgrades that they have to pay for in their own spaces. With effective communications, however, the public could accept this inequity as necessary for harm reduction, just as they eventually accepted needle exchange programs for drug users while others must purchase syringes.

5.2.5.   Summary of Analysis of Financial Support Options

My evaluation of financial support options is summarized in Table 4. As with the regulatory approaches considered above, none of these options perform worse than the status quo on any aspect of safety or accessibility. Unlike regulatory approaches, all four financial support options improve financial sustainability and physical accessibility. Funding a discreet venue upgrading initiative scores best overall and is especially strong on the various aspects of safety considered in this report. From a government management perspective, each option poses implementation problems, and most are also

costly. As with the regulatory approaches considered above, public acceptance, approval of existing compliant venues, and impacts on neighbours vary. Again, decision-makers may wish to consider the political ramifications of pleasing or upsetting each of these stakeholders.

Table 4:   Policy analysis matrix for assessment of financial support options

		Create an All-Ages Venue	Harness Existing Public Amenities	Expand Eligibility for Grants	Fund a Discreet Venue Upgrading Initiative
Access	Financial sustainability	+1	+1	+2	+1
	Tenure	+1	0	0	0
	Regulatory sustainability	+2	+2	0	+1
	Physical accessibility	+1	+1	+1	+3
	Age accessibility	+2	+2	0	0
	Secrecy	+1	+1	0	0
Safety	Emergency response	+1	+1	0	0
	Cigarette safety	+1	+1	0	+1
	Architectural safety	+1	+1	+1	+3
	Alcohol safety	0	0	0	+2
	Drug safety	0	0	0	+2
	Social safety	0	0	0	+2
Government management	Cost	-3	-1	0	-3
	Implementation ease	-1	-3	-1	-1
	Public acceptance	+2	+2	+1	+1
Stakeholder acceptance	Neighbourhood impacts	0	-3	0	0
	Compliant venues	-1	-1	+1	-3
	Participation	+1	+1	+1	+3
	TOTAL:	+9	+5	+6	+12

Chapter 6.   Recommendations

Each of the courses of action considered in this report would be improvements over the status quo. The options are not mutually exclusive, and many of the experts I interviewed would support the implementation of all eight. In recognition of the limited political impetus to deal with access to safer community music venues, however, I recommend government focus on two initial priorities: fund a discreet venue upgrading initiative and make policy accessible. These actions should be followed by additional efforts to increase youth access and improve regulations.

Initial priority #1: Fund a discreet venue upgrading initiative

When I asked policymakers what motivates the regulation of community music venues, their unanimous answer was safety, with some also adding that physical accessibility is an important component of the *Building Bylaw*. This system is failing, however, as the music community sees compliance as impossible and suspects that enforcement is in fact motivated by other concerns such as noise and redevelopment plans. Consequently, venue operators focus less on building upgrades than on avoiding authorities, and this further reduces safety and access. If government wishes to show that it genuinely cares about safety and accessibility, it could directly support those priorities by funding a venue upgrading initiative that provides venues with relevant equipment, training, and human resources. Having a third party organization that is trusted by the music community deliver the initiative would encourage participation from venues that lack permits and licenses, as bylaw violations and other regulatory infractions would be kept confidential. In this way, a discreet venue upgrading initiative would reach the venues that currently face the greatest safety risks.

To avoid public opposition to this policy, including from existing compliant venues who may be upset that their perceived competitors would be receiving free equipment, effective communication would be critical. Government may wish to frame the initiative using a harm reduction lens. As the public has supported harm reduction initiatives for activities like drugs and sex work, which are more controversial than community music venues, they would likely also support efforts to keep musicians and artists safe.

Unlike Oakland, whose music community spearheaded at least two crowdfunded venue upgrading initiatives in the wake of the Ghost Ship fire (see Oakland case study), Vancouver's music community does not currently have any organizations focused on architectural safety and physical accessibility. Vancouver does, however, have a chapter of Good Night Out, an international non-profit focused on social and substance safety. There are also private companies like Vancouver Fire & Security (2017) who perform architectural safety upgrades as a business. If the City or Province were to announce funding and launch a call for proposals for a discreet venue upgrading initiative, new community organizations and partnerships capable of delivering the initiative would likely emerge. Alternatively, government could seek out potential partners and work with them to develop the project privately.

Initial priority #2: Make policy accessible

Concurrent with funding a discreet venue upgrading initiative, the City and Province should strive to make policy accessible. This would build trust and establish positive relationships with the music community, thereby reducing secrecy, indoor smoking, and the avoidance of emergency services. It would also enable the sharing of information between community members and policymakers, which would improve alcohol, drug, and social safety while also allowing unique expertise to help guide future government decisions.

An accessible policy campaign could begin with a strategic planning document that recognizes the intrinsic value of the local music community and shows that government genuinely cares about safety and access. The City of Vancouver's (2008) Culture Plan expires in 2018, and its replacement would be an excellent opportunity for such a statement. Another option would be to draft a stand-alone document, perhaps similar to the *Skateboard Strategy for Vancouver*, which was introduced in 2005 as a way of "ensuring that youth have 'a place' in the city" (Vancouver Parks & Recreation, 2005, p. 1; see also Vancouver case study). Whatever form it takes, government must ensure it has buy-in from all relevant departments to diligently follow through on the plan and avoid repeating the failure of Oakland Mayor Libby Schaff's (2017) executive order for a

cooperative approach, which has largely been ignored by municipal inspectors (Baldassari, 2017b; see also Oakland case study).

Making policy accessible would require the clarification of ambiguous and contradictory regulations such as those described in Table C2 in Appendix C. This would help venues understand which activities are permitted, reducing their tendency to avoid all authorities at all times. The City of Vancouver's (2017f) Liquor Policy Review recommended a similar approach, calling on the City to "consolidate all liquor policies into a comprehensive, consistent and clear resource available online," "review and amend existing liquor policies to ensure that they are current and understandable by a broad audience of users," and "update the website and any City of Vancouver materials with simplified information" (p. 37). The Province of BC's (2014a) Liquor Policy Review also recommended a review of regulations "to ensure transparency and an effective regulatory system" (p. 25). These recommendations should be implemented for all venue-related regulations.

Finally, making policy accessible would mean allowing music community voices to influence decision-making processes. Inclusive policymaking bodies that have succeeded in other cities include night mayors (Van Den Brink, 2016; see also London case study), a grassroots music venues taskforce (see London case study), and a music and youth task force (see Seattle case study). The City of Vancouver currently has an Arts and Culture Policy Council, but this does not focus on the music community—it strives for "broad representation of artistic disciplines and practices" (City of Vancouver, 2017a). The Province currently has Creative BC (2017), but this is also very broad and tends to focus on creative industries rather than grassroots communities.

Subsequent priorities

One important population that would not be directly affected by either of the initial priorities recommended above is underage youth. Increasing age accessibility should be an urgent focus for the new inclusive policymaking body that is established as part of making policy accessible. This body could lobby for funding to create an all-ages venue, as Seattle's Music and Youth Task Force did in 2000, leading to the creation of the widely respected Vera Project (see Seattle case study). The inclusive policymaking body could

also lobby municipal agencies like the Vancouver School Board, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, and Vancouver Public Library to lower rental costs for after-hours use of existing public amenities. And, the inclusive policymaking body could use their expertise to guide regulatory reforms that would allow youth into event-driven liquor serving establishments.

The trust and positive relationships that are established by making policy accessible will be short-lived if beloved community music venues remain illegal. Thus, in the long-run, it is essential that opportunities be found to legalize spaces that currently operate underground. While a discreet venue upgrading initiative would help some venues meet existing requirements, full compliance will remain out of reach for many in the absence of regulatory reform. Inclusive policymaking bodies should work with other municipal and provincial agencies to expand opportunities for temporary licensing and to consider reducing standards for permanent licences and permits. Finally, once venues have official permission to operate and no longer fear authorities, the eligibility requirements for municipal grant programs should be expanded to enable greater music community participation.

Chapter 7.   Further Considerations

7.1. Limitations

While this report is sufficiently thorough, it has four limitations that others may wish to take into account:

- **Bias:** I have been an active musician in Vancouver since 2001. I also co-founded the non-profit Safe Amplification Site Society and served on its board from 2009-2014. While these experiences enabled me to access interview participants that other researchers may have struggled to reach, it is possible that they also shaped the way I understood these interviewees or affected their choices of what to say.

- **Location and genre:** While I use the term "Vancouver music community" throughout this report, most of my interviewees are specifically based out of East Vancouver and tend to participate in indie, punk, hip hop, and electronic genres. It is possible that I would have obtained different results had I included more participants from different neighbourhoods and genres.

- **Timing:** This report was researched and written between October, 2016 and August, 2017. Several key developments transpired during that time, including the Oakland Ghost Ship fire in December, 2016, the introduction of BC's new *Liquor Control and Licensing Act* (S.B.C. 2015, c. 19) in January, 2017, and the release of the City of Vancouver's (2017f) Liquor Policy Review in June, 2017. The recency of these events likely affected my interview research, both because they were on my interviewees' minds and because interviewees had not had sufficient time to become familiar with new policies.

- **Scope:** The policy options considered in this report are specific to community music venues. Other policy areas such as transit service, street safety, and housing affordability certainly affect access to safer community music venues but are ignored here.

7.2. Final Thoughts

For this project I decided to focus on Vancouver because of its challenging real estate market, its ease of access for research, and the recent interest shown in liquor and arts event policy by its municipal and provincial governments. Lack of access to safe community music venues is a problem in many Western cities, however, and during my research I did not come across any jurisdictions that are completely successful. Just as this report was informed by case studies of community music venue policies in Seattle, Oakland, London, and Toronto, as well as skateboarding policy in Vancouver, the information contained herein could be applied elsewhere. Even beyond music, this project is pertinent to other areas of tension between DIY actors and official policymakers. Whether it is skateboarders building their own facilities at Leeside (see Vancouver case study), seniors building makeshift stairs in Toronto (Lagerquist, 2017), or millions of Airbnb and Uber participants around the world, people are 'doing it themselves' at a pace that often leaves regulators struggling to keep up. This paper suggests inclusive policymaking and a discreet venue upgrading initiative as two possible solutions to this tension, but these are likely just two of many ideas to be tested around the world in the coming years.

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Appendix A.   Interview Details

Table A1 lists the people who participated in interviews as part of this study. At their request, five interviewees have been kept anonymous.

Table A1: List of interviewees

Name	Role(s)	Organization
Anonymous	Venue operator, musician, fan	Anonymous
Anonymous	Venue operator, musician, fan	Anonymous
Anonymous	Venue operator	Anonymous
Anonymous	Venue operator	Anonymous
Anonymous	Musician, person with disability	Anonymous
Jonelle Aspa	Community leader	Girls Rock Camp Vancouver
Suzanne Bell, Theresa Killoran, & Chandra Morrison	Policymakers	Province of BC Liquor Control and Licensing Branch
Ashtyn Bevan & Stacey Forrester	Community leaders	Good Night Out
Jim Carrico (two interviews)	Venue operator	Red Gate
Alex Clarke	Police	Vancouver Police Department
Matilda Cormier	Event organizer, youth	Trash City Productions
Lucia Cumerlato	Policymaker	City of Vancouver
Zoe Fortune	Community leader, fan, youth	
Devalin Galloway	Event organizer	South Arm Community Centre
Heidi Holland	Event organizer	Safe Amplification Site Society
Thor Kuhlmann	Policymaker	City of Vancouver
Elliot Langford & Kevin Romain	Venue operators, musicians, fans	Thor's Palace
Corine Lea	Venue operator	Rio Theatre
Isaiah Lehtinen	Musician, fan, youth	Various
David Mattatall	Venue operator, musician, fan	Zoo Zhop
Alexander McKechnie	Teacher, musician	Vancouver School Board
Trevor Mills	Teacher, musician, fan	Vancouver School Board
Irwin Oostindie	Venue operator	W2
JP Perron	Fan, person with disability	
Mark Pickersgill	Community leader	University of British Columbia
Ashley Pitre	Musician, fan	Various
John Teti	Community leader	Barwatch
Matthew Youdan	Community leader, fan	More Fun City

Table A2 lists some of the questions that were posed to interview participants. In practice, questions were delivered in a conversational manner and did not conform to the exact wording stated in the Table. When responses were particularly insightful, I asked follow-up questions and allowed for discussion to flow naturally, as per the semi-structured interview methodology. I also asked each participant unique questions specific to their individual backgrounds and experiences.

Table A2: Interview guide

Question	Participants who were asked
What is your role / background? What sorts of venues do you attend?	All
What are the benefits of community music events/venues? Why do you participate?	Venue operators, event organizers, musicians, fans, community leaders, teachers
What level of diversity have you observed at community music events? (prompt for racial, gender, and age diversity)	Venue operators, event organizers, musicians, fans, community leaders
What prevents people from attending community music venues?	Community leaders, teachers, fans, musicians
What physical accessibility issues have you experienced at community music venues?	People with disabilities
How do you balance secrecy and promotions? Is secrecy a barrier to access?	Venue operators, event organizers, musicians, fans, youth
How do you manage/define safety? What safety issues have you observed?	All
What substance use have you observed at community music events? (prompt for alcohol, drugs, and smoking)	Venue operators, event organizers, musicians, fans, community leaders

How do you manage BYOB and underage drinking?	Venue operators, event organizers
How can youth and alcohol safely co-exist?	Policymakers, police, venue operators, teachers, community leaders, youth
Describe your relationship with your venue's neighbours?	Venue operators
Could you describe the budgetary challenges you've faced?	Venue operators, event organizers
Can you describe any experiences you have had with enforcement and/or licensing/permitting?	Venue operators, event organizers, musicians
What prevents venues from obtaining the licences they require?	Policymakers, police
Who enforces regulations on community music venues and why?	Policymakers, police
How have recent policy changes impacted you? (prompt for Arts Event Licence and provincial liquor policy review)	Policymakers, police, venue operators
How do you feel when community music venues close down?	Venue operators, event organizers, musicians, fans, community leaders
What should government do to increase access to safer community music venues in Vancouver?	All
Is there anything you would like to add?	All

Appendix B.   Case Studies

Seattle Case Study

Introduction

   After alleged criminal activity at a community music venue called the Monastery, the City of Seattle imposed heavy restrictions on youth music events in 1985 (Licata, 2000). Known as the Teen Dance Ordinance (TDO), these restrictions included convoluted age requirements[23] and imposed prohibitive policing and insurance costs for local concerts (Curtis, 2010, p. 233-234). The rules were "much-hated" (Liao, 1999; Modie, 2002) and frequently described as "draconian" (Curtis, 2010, p. 233; McGehee, 2015), "oppressive" (ChrisB, 2005; Montgomery, 2011), and resembling the movie "Footloose" (Brunner, 2002; Curtis, 2010, p. 233). Musicians said the policy "drove things into more underground spaces, like house parties" (Yarm, 2011, p. 64), but those underground spaces "would be shut down quick" (Soulsby, 2015, p. 36). Several advocacy groups sprang up to fight the TDO, including one led by Nirvana bassist Krist Novoselic (Curtis, 2010, p. 234). Many touring musicians avoided Seattle during this time, as they preferred playing to all-ages audiences (Curtis, 2010, p. 234). This was likely embarrassing to Seattle's municipal government, as grunge had brought the city to the forefront of the American music industry in the 1990s.

Policy

- **Inclusive policymaking:** In 1998, the City of Seattle launched a Music and Youth Task Force (MYTF) to advise its Mayor and Council on options for reforming the TDO (Licata, 1998). This Task Force was "an eclectic group comprised of promoters, club owners, music activists, and members of local government" (Liao, 1999). The City took this Task Force seriously, contributing significant staff hours (MYTF, 2000, p. 2) and adopting its recommendation to replace the TDO with an All Ages Dance Ordinance, a law so accepting of all-ages music that it is now considered "irrelevant— largely ignored and rarely enforced" (Chan, 2006).

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[23] Seattle City Councilmember Nick Licata (2000) summarized the TDO's age restrictions as follows: "if those under 18 are admitted to a dance, then only those ages 15-20 can enter. Those under 15 can be admitted with a parent or legal guardian; those 21 and over can enter only if accompanying a youth under age 18."

- **Publicly funded venues:** In addition to replacing the TDO, the MYTF requested municipal funding to develop an all-ages venue (Curtis, 2010, p. 236-239; MYTF, 2000, p. 1). The City agreed, committing $25,000 in the 2001 municipal budget "to support a pilot program to establish an all-ages music and arts venue" (City of Seattle, 2001). This served as "seed money" for what eventually became the Vera Project (Curtis, 2010, p. 239), a renowned all-ages venue that continues to thrive today, operating in the City-owned Seattle Center complex and receiving 12.5% of its funding from the City (Vera Project, 2017).

- **Allow youth in event-driven establishments:** Washington State liquor laws do not prevent minors from attending all licensed establishments. Instead, the *Alcoholic Beverage Control* (R.C.W., 2007) grants the Liquor Control Board power "to classify … portions of licensed premises as off-limits to persons under the age of twenty-one" (s. 66.44.310). In practice, bar venues that have an audience area physically separated from liquor service areas are permitted to allow minors into that space to enjoy live events. Several of Seattle's bars frequently host all-ages concerts (e.g. Crocodile Café, 2017; Neumos, 2017).

Application

- **Inclusive policymaking:** In 2012, Vancouver established an Arts and Culture Policy Council to provide advice "on civic programs relating to arts and culture" (City of Vancouver, 2012). The Council aims for diversity and broad representation of artistic disciplines (City of Vancouver, 2017a). Vancouver has, thus far, not seen the need to establish a committee specifically focused on youth and/or music (see Section 5.1.2).

- **Publicly funded venues:** After the Safe Amplification Site Society (2014) organized a letter-writing campaign requesting municipal funding for an all-ages music venue, the City of Vancouver's 2015-2018 Capital Plan recognized that 600+ people "highlighted the need for a 200-seat venue for youth music performance" but did not set aside any funding for such a project (City of Vancouver, 2014, p. 7). Vancouver did have a publicly funded community music venue from 2010-2012 as part of the W2 project in the City-owned Woodwards building, but this was doomed by an unaffordable strata fee and disagreements with the City and other stakeholders over programming and aesthetics (see Sections 4.6.1 and 5.2.1).

- **Allow youth in event-driven establishments:** BC's new *Liquor Control and Licensing Act* (S.B.C. 2015, c. 19), which came into force in January, 2017, resembles Washington's *Alcoholic Beverage Control* in that it grants discretionary power to regulators to determine which areas of which licensed venues can and cannot allow minors (s. 15.2.b, 26.2.b, 31.2.b, 78.2, 79.1). Criteria for using this discretionary power are thus far unclear, but if the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch were to begin using its discretion to increase youth access to event-driven establishments (see Section 5.1.3), Vancouver's bars could begin hosting all-ages events as bars in Seattle do.

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Oakland Case Study

Introduction

Like many post industrial American cities, Oakland's built landscape features many warehouses that are no longer required by industry. Artists and other cultural producers have found opportunity in these spaces, developing unpermitted housing, studios, and community music venues at a more affordable cost than with purpose-built spaces. As the Bay Area economy continued to evolve in the early 21st century, many of Oakland's warehouse spaces faced intense economic pressure as rising land values spurred landlords to increase rents, sell, and/or redevelop their properties. By 2016, many warehouse venues had closed, including culturally-important spaces like LoBot Gallery (Voynovskaya, 2016).

The gradual decline of DIY space in Oakland was disrupted in December, 2016, when a horrific fire at a warehouse venue called the Ghost Ship killed 36 people during an experimental music concert (Casey, 2016). Reports described extreme safety risks, including exposed electrical wires and stairs made of wooden pallets. Several publications called the venue a "death trap"[24] (e.g. McLaughlin, 2016; Wallace-Wells, 2016). By Summer, 2017, charges had been pressed and multiple lawsuits filed (Elias, 2017).

Policy

- **Grants:** Four days after the Ghost Ship fire, Oakland's Mayor, Libby Schaaf, announced $1.7 million in funding for a non-profit real estate organization called the Community Arts Stabilization Trust (CAST) to "provide technical and financial assistance to arts and cultural organizations that are seeking real estate expertise and funding for their space needs" (Kenneth Rainin Foundation, 2016).

- **Strategic planning:** One month after the fire, Mayor Schaaf (2017) issued an executive order affirming that "unpermitted spaces that operate safely and responsibly are valuable to the community" (p. 1). The order directed staff to work on legalizing non-conforming spaces, redesigning the Special Event Permits system to encourage compliance, and clarifying the rights and duties of tenants, landlords, and others in

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[24] In contrast, several other publications (e.g. Mozingo, St. John, & Karlamangla, 2016; Rolling Stone, 2016) described the Ghost Ship as a "safe space," highlighting the differences between architectural and social safety discussed in Chapter 4.

non-conforming spaces. It ordered staff to protect "cultural community assets" (p. 1) and "generally work in the spirit of cooperation" (p. 2).

- **Enforcement:** Immediately after the fire, the number of public complaints against underground venues spiked, and inspectors responded by increasing enforcement (Baldassari & Gafni, 2016; Swan, 2016). This continued after Mayor Schaaf's (2017) order for a cooperative approach, with Baldassari (2017b) reporting that Oakland's inspectors were "doing just the opposite" by continuing with "heavy-handed" enforcement. The Oakland Police Department also directed officers to report any unpermitted special events or parties that they notice (Baldassari, 2017a).

- **Discreet venue upgrading initiatives:** At the community level, several grassroots organizations emerged after the fire to support venues with architectural safety upgrades. Safer DIY Spaces (2017) collects donations and redistributes them to DIY venues for "core life-safety improvements" while assuring "complete anonymity." As of April, 2017, they had consulted 40 Bay Area venues. We the Artists of the Bay Area (2017) works with City officials to ensure safe, long-term spaces. In January, 2017, they gave away dozens of free fire extinguishers and smoke alarms (Musiker, 2017).

Application

- **Grants:** Oakland's CAST grants have narrow eligibility requirements that resemble Vancouver's municipal grant programs (see Section 5.2.3), as only Section 501(c)(3) corporations are eligible to apply (CAST, 2017). The recipients announced as of Summer, 2017 do not appear related to warehouse spaces (CAST, 2017).

- **Strategic planning:** If Vancouver were to pursue a new strategic direction for community music venues, which this paper recommends as part of making policy accessible (see Section 5.1.2), it may wish to consider two key lessons from Oakland. First, Oakland's plan has proven difficult to implement, as City staff are ignoring Mayor Schaff's (2017) order for a cooperative approach (Baldassari, 2017b). Second, landlords have proven to be an unwilling participant in inclusive policymaking, as they often would rather evict tenants than negotiate with artists and City bureaucrats over upgrades and changes in use (Baldassari, 2016; Baldassari, 2017b).

- **Enforcement:** Enforcement in both Oakland and Vancouver is complaints-based, with intensity that varies over time. Several of my interviewees said enforcement in Vancouver spiked in the late 2000s, leading up to the 2010 Olympics. Oakland appears to be experiencing a similar spike in enforcement in 2016-2017.

- **Discreet venue upgrading initiatives:** Good Night Out is roughly analogous to Oakland's Safer DIY Spaces and We the Artists of the Bay Area, though it focuses on social and substance safety more than architectural safety. There are also businesses like Vancouver Fire & Security (2017) who perform architectural safety upgrades and training for a fee. While Oakland's initiatives are crowdfunded, this paper recommends government fund a similar project in Vancouver (see Section 5.2.4).

London Case Study

Introduction

      As in Vancouver and elsewhere, many of Britain's biggest musical stars began their careers performing in tiny community music venues, affectionately known as "the toilet circuit" after one space that was formerly a public washroom (Lamacq, 2016). In the early 2010s, economic and regulatory pressures caused many of these venues to close, with major publications like *The Guardian* (Harris, 2013) and *BBC* (Grant, 2012) lamenting their loss. In the music community, outrage over venue closures led to the rise of several advocacy groups including Music Venue Trust (MVT). Established as a registered charity in 2014, MVT set out "to protect the UK live music network by securing the long-term future of iconic grassroots music venues" (MVT, 2017). MVT declared a Venues Day in 2014 and shortly thereafter published a research paper that makes the economic case for the protection of grassroots spaces (MVT, 2015b). Major stars like Sir Paul McCartney got on board, and in 2015, London Mayor Boris Johnson announced the establishment of a Music Venues Taskforce with MVT CEO Mark Davyd serving as Chair (MVT, 2015a). Eight months later, this Taskforce published a detailed policy paper with six key recommendations for London (Music Venues Taskforce, 2015).

Policy

- **Inclusive policymaking—grassroots music venues:** One of the Music Venues Taskforce's (2015) recommendations was to create a Music Development Board to support the development of grassroots music venues in London. This recommendation was fulfilled in April, 2016 with the establishment of the London Music Board to "protect grassroots music venues and support London's grassroots music scene" (Greater London Authority [GLA], 2017). It is described as "an influential coalition of the music industry, music education sector, community music sector, local authorities, the GLA and tourism bodies" (GLA, 2017).

- **Inclusive policymaking—night-time economy:** Another of the Music Venues Taskforce's (2015) recommendations was to establish a night mayor to "champion the night-time economy," convene stakeholders, and advise on nuisance reduction strategies (p. 29). London fulfilled this recommendation by creating a Night Czar mandated to "champion London's nightlife" and "ensure London thrives as a 24-hour city," with Amy Lamé appointed to the position in 2016 (GLA, 2016). London also created a Night Time Commission to act as a consultation forum and make

recommendations that enable growth in the night-time economy (Mayor of London, 2016).

- **Protecting existing venues:** The Music Venues Taskforce (2015) recommended grassroots music venues register as "assets of community value" under the *Localism Act 2011*, as this would prevent them from being sold "without first giving community groups the right to bid for them, in order to use them for community benefit" (p. 25). According to the Mayor of London (2016), an increasing number of grassroots music venues have been registering as assets of community value in recent years.

- **Neighbourhood impacts:** Another recommendation of the Music Venues Taskforce (2015) was to adopt the "agent of change principle" regarding noise complaints. According to this principle, if a music venue is established near pre-existing residences, the venue is responsible for eliminating or mitigating noise impacts, but if a residential development is established near a pre-existing music venue, then the residential developer is responsible for the noise impacts. London's mayor has pledged to incorporate agent of change into the next London Plan and has already laid the legal groundwork for doing so (Mayor of London, 2016).

Application

- **Inclusive policymaking—grassroots music venues:** As noted above, Vancouver's Arts and Culture Policy Council is much broader than just the music community. The London Music Board is squarely focused on grassroots music venues. This paper recommends establishing a similar inclusive policymaking body (see Section 5.1.2).

- **Inclusive policymaking—night-time economy:** Vancouver has shown surprisingly little interest in the night-time economy. Establishing inclusive policymaking bodies like London's Night Czar or Night Time Commission would help make policy accessible (see Section 5.1.2) and could also help reduce Vancouver's 'no fun city' reputation and resolve some of the "problems" plaguing its downtown Granville Entertainment District (City of Vancouver, 2017f, p. 19).

- **Protecting existing venues:** The United Kingdom's protection of "assets of community value" through the *Localism Act 2011* is perhaps analogous to the City of Vancouver's (2017b) community amenity contributions or (2017g) heritage laws, though instead of providing new amenities or protecting existing sites, the United Kingdom simply ensures community members can bid to purchase important properties. Very few members of the Vancouver music community are likely to be able to make competitive bids for building ownership.

- **Neighbourhood impacts:** In 2009, noise complaints from new residential developments threatened the existence of the Cobalt, a long-standing Vancouver community music venue (Greer, 2009). If Vancouver had adopted the agent of change principle as London now intends to do, the responsibility for these noise impacts would have rested with the residential developer instead of the venue.

Toronto Case Study

Introduction

Music Canada is a non-profit trade organization representing major record labels in Canada (Music Canada, 2017a). It is naturally interested in publicizing the Canadian music industry's positive economic impact, and according to their research, most of this impact occurs in the greater Toronto area (Henderson, 2012). In 2012, Music Canada released a study comparing the music industry's economic impact in Toronto and Austin, Texas, the self-proclaimed "live music capital of the world" (Titan Music Group, 2012). The study found that despite being three times larger and having "possibly more music assets," Toronto's music industry produces an economic impact one-third the size of Austin's, a situation that the study proposes remedying (Music Canada, 2017b; Titan Music Group, 2012). Toronto's municipal government announced its support in 2013, creating a Music Advisory Council and Music Sector Development Office, both of which were recommended by Music Canada (Titan Music Group, 2012).

Contrasting sharply with the City of Toronto's interest in supporting the music *industry*, Toronto's grassroots music *community* is currently experiencing a crisis of venue closures similar to what Vancouver dealt with circa 2009. According to Gillis (2017), seven Toronto venues closed in the first two months of 2017 alone. CBC Arts (2017) connected these closures to the Oakland Ghost Ship fire, declaring that "DIY art spaces are under siege and we need to do everything we can to protect them."

Policy

- **Inclusive policymaking:** In 2014, the City of Toronto appointed a Music Sector Development Officer, who is one of 36 members of the Toronto Music Advisory Council (TMAC). TMAC, which also includes 26 "music industry stakeholders," is intended to be "a forum for the exchange of ideas, input and advice on the challenges and opportunities for the city's music industry" (City of Toronto, 2017b). As Rancic (2017) points out, TMAC has little power beyond making recommendations and typically passes every motion put forward by any of its members. TMAC has lofty policy ambitions; at one 2017 meeting alone, it proposed a live music venue registry, the removal of floor space restrictions, extended alcohol hours, a re-evaluation of Employment Lands zoning, a Noise Bylaw review, an agent of change principle, expanded heritage protections, tax breaks for music venues, a task force on venue

closures, a music tourism strategy, and support for special events (TMAC, 2017). It is not clear whether any of these policies will be pursued.

- **Strategic planning:** In April, 2016, Toronto City Council adopted the Toronto Music Strategy, which TMAC (2016) had proposed two months earlier "to maximize the tremendous potential of Toronto's music sector" (p. 5). The Strategy is clearly aspirational, outlining policies the City of Toronto "can" and "should" adopt rather than committing to any firm implementation plans. It is a useful guide, however, and its goal of recognizing Toronto as a "music city" demonstrates the value the municipal government places on music.

- **Protecting existing venues:** Toronto's heritage policy allows for the protection of listed heritage properties, with decisions on what to protect based on architecture, history, and neighbourhood context (City of Toronto, 2017a). In February, 2017, Toronto bestowed heritage status on an important community music venue called the Silver Dollar Room to protect it from a proposed student housing development (Rayner, 2017). While this heritage designation protects the Silver Dollar Room's 'bricks and mortar,' it does not impose decisions on how to use the space. Stakeholders fear the venue's owners will decide not to use it for live music (Atkinson, 2017).

Application

- **Inclusive policymaking:** Toronto's Music Sector Development Officer and TMAC are clearly focused on the music industry, with members representing multinational corporations like Sony and Ticketmaster (City of Toronto, 2017b). The music industry is much less prominent in Vancouver, and it would be difficult to populate a 'Vancouver Music Advisory Council' with industry representatives. At the provincial level, Creative BC bears some resemblance to Toronto's industry-focused inclusive policymaking bodies, though it includes all creative sectors rather than specifically focusing on music (see Section 5.1.2).

- **Strategic planning:** Because the music industry is much less prominent in Vancouver than in Toronto, it would be difficult for Vancouver to replicate Toronto's claim of being a "music city." Nevertheless, due to the social benefits and problems discussed in this paper, a clear strategic plan for community music venues is warranted as part of making policy accessible (see Section 5.1.2).

- **Protecting existing venues:** Toronto's attempt to protect the Silver Dollar Room using heritage policy was similar to Vancouver's 2013 effort to save the Waldorf (Hansen, 2013). In Vancouver, heritage status protected the Waldorf's bricks and mortar but did not ensure the continuation of its community music programming, as its renowned creative team departed and did not return (Mack, 2013).

Vancouver Skateboarding Case Study

Introduction

Skateboarding is a useful analogy for live music, as both are recreational activities that are popular among youth and capable of producing both benefits and harms. When skateboarding first arrived in Vancouver in the 1970s, participants described it as "really underground," with "ramps that would go up for a couple of weeks before the neighbours complained and had them taken down" (Kissinger, 2004). The City and business owners adopted an adversarial approach, issuing fines, confiscating skateboards, and inventing the "skatestopper" device to make certain locations unskateable (Kissinger, 2004). This approach backfired, as it ended up increasing skateboarding's popularity by adding to its antiestablishment appeal (Zeidler, 2017; Kissinger, 2004).

Policy

- **Strategic planning:** In 2005, the Vancouver Park Board published its *Skateboard Strategy for Vancouver*, a policy document that outlines criteria for developing public skateboard parks (Vancouver Park Board, 2005). The memo that introduced it linked the *Strategy* to "ensuring that youth have 'a place' in the city" (Vancouver Parks & Recreation, 2005, p. 1). Policymakers from that era spoke about the importance of skateboarding to youth culture and recommended addressing it proactively rather than through bylaw enforcement (Kissinger, 2004).

- **Publicly funded venues:** Vancouver has nine public skateboard parks, eight of which were constructed by the municipal government. These include China Creek Park, which was one of the first public skateboard parks in the world when it was established in 1979 (Kronbauer, 2012; Luxton & Associates, 2008), and seven other skateboard parks that were built in the 2000s and 2010s.

- **Harness existing public amenities:** Skateboarding is legal on Vancouver's minor streets and bicycle lanes (*Street and Traffic Bylaw*, s. 77A). Vancouver was one of the first municipalities in the world to allow this (Kissinger, 2004).

- **Protecting existing compliant venues:** In 2006, skateboarders fought a proposed redevelopment that would have closed the historic China Creek skateboard park. Allied with area residents, these skateboarders convinced the Vancouver Park Board to cancel the development plan (Vancouver Park Board Planning Committee, 2006).

- **Protecting existing underground venues:** In 2010, the City of Vancouver recognized Leeside Skateboard Park, built in an abandoned transit tunnel years earlier by

skateboarders without government permission, as an official Vancouver skateboard park (Kronbauer, 2012). In 2012, Leeside was further recognized through its inclusion in the official plan for Hastings Park (Lzapg, 2012). Key stakeholders described the City as taking a hands-off approach to Leeside, respecting the grassroots-driven DIY nature of the space (Lzapg, 2012). This is remarkable considering the site lacks the insurance that protects other local skateboard parks (Lzapg, 2012).

- **Inclusive policymaking:** The City of Vancouver and Vancouver Parks Board frequently consult the Vancouver Skateboard Coalition to gather advice and share information (Vancouver Skateboard Coalition, 2017).

Application

- **Strategic planning:** Vancouver does not have a strategic plan for community music venues, but this report recommends drafting one as part of making policy accessible (see Section 5.1.2). Like skateboarding, community music is strongly linked to youth culture and should be addressed proactively rather than through bylaw enforcement.

- **Publicly funded venues:** Supplying live music venues (see Section 5.2.1) would be more expensive than supplying skateboard parks, as music venues require indoor space, fragile equipment, and human resources for lockup and event scheduling.

- **Harness existing public amenities:** Allowing skateboarding on streets and bicycle lanes is not perfectly analogous to allowing concerts in schools, libraries, and community centres (see Section 5.2.2) because concerts require human resources and exclusive use of space, whereas skateboarders do not require human resources and can share streets and bicycle lanes with other users.

- **Protecting existing compliant venues:** Public outrage and stakeholder lobbying have helped to protect music venues like the Waldorf from redevelopment, but the protection of China Creek Park is an imperfect analogy because parks are publicly-owned whereas music venues are typically leased from private landlords.

- **Protecting existing underground venues:** Just as the City of Vancouver recognized Leeside as an official skateboard park, the City could formally accept Vancouver's underground community music venues by reducing standards or encouraging temporary licensing (see Sections 5.1.1 and 5.1.4). This could be easier with music venues than it was with Leeside, as music venues pay rent whereas Leeside was essentially a squat. On the other hand, landlords are an important stakeholder with regard to music venues, whereas Leeside was situated on publicly-owned property, making it easier to include in area plans.

- **Inclusive policymaking:** While this report recommends regular consultation as part of inclusive policymaking (see Section 5.1.2), the music community lacks a representative body analogous to the Vancouver Skateboard Coalition.

Appendix C.   Suggestions for Implementation

Some of the options discussed in this report could be implemented in a variety of ways. For the sake of brevity, implementation details were withheld from Chapter 5 but are included in the tables below.

The first policy option considered in this report (Section 5.1.1) involves reducing standards. Table C1 lists examples of standards that could be reduced.

Table C1.   Implementation suggestions for the 'reduce standards' option

Issue, Jurisdiction	Explanation
Building Bylaw and *Fire Bylaw*, City of Vancouver	Vancouver is the only municipality in BC with its own *Building* and *Fire Bylaws*; every other municipality uses the *British Columbia Building Code* and *British Columbia Fire Code*. While these documents are extremely technical and complex, the Vancouver *Bylaws* are widely perceived to impose higher standards than the provincial *Codes*. In practice, this means fewer people are permitted inside Vancouver venues than in venues of the same size and with the same number of exits elsewhere in BC. Given there is no architectural safety crisis in the rest of BC, the City of Vancouver could incentivize compliance by reducing its standards for assembly spaces to approximate the levels set out in the provincial *Codes*.
Changes in use, City of Vancouver	The *Vancouver Building Bylaw* has evolved over time, and environmental, accessibility, and seismic requirements have gradually increased. Older buildings were constructed according to older versions of the *Bylaw*, and are permitted to continue operating under the old rules until they undergo major renovations or changes in use. Many community music venues *do* change the ways old buildings are used, however, as they repurpose more affordable spaces that were not originally designed for public assembly. These changes in use trigger the need for new permits, which are issued under today's more

	stringent *Building Bylaw*. Compliance requires upgrades that can cost millions of dollars. Many venue operators ignore these rules and keep their unofficial changes of use hidden from enforcement personnel, but this produces negative safety and accessibility impacts. To encourage compliance, the City could reduce its standards for older buildings that undergo changes in use, perhaps by allowing them to continue operating under the version of the *Building Bylaw* that guided their original construction.
Exhibition licences, City of Vancouver	While short-term rental spaces like halls and community centres require their own permits and licences, the Vancouver *License By-law* also requires individual event organizers to obtain "exhibition" business licences to organize concerts. Applying for these licences imposes administrative burden, and for events with under 500 seats, they cost $139 per day if for-profit or $38 per day if non-profit (*License By-law*, Schedule A, p. iv). For events with fewer than 200 seats, the City of Vancouver could stop requiring event organizers to obtain licences, particularly since the venues being utilized for these events already require their own licences and permits, thus allowing the City to regulate them for safety.
Noise Control By-law, City of Vancouver	Vancouver's *Noise Control By-law* forbids the production of continuous sound above 70db (when measured from the street) before 10pm, with the limit dropping to 65db after 10pm. In 'quiet zones,' the limits are 55db during the daytime and 45db at night. Industrial Noise Control (2017) estimates the sound of a passenger car to be 77db, "living room music" to be 76db, vacuum cleaners to be 70db, and conversation in a restaurant or office to be 60db. Vancouver's noise limits are unreasonable, and many Vancouverites exceed them on a daily basis. While the rules are rarely enforced, they contribute to the perceived criminalization of community music venues. To encourage compliance

	and add meaning to the *Noise Control By-law*, each of its decibel limits could be increased substantially.
Cabaret and Restaurant Guidelines, City of Vancouver	While most businesses in Vancouver are regulated by the *License By-law*, *Zoning and Development Bylaw*, *Building Bylaw*, *Fire Bylaw*, and *Business Premises Regulation of Hours By-law*, cabarets and class 2 restaurants—both of which are permitted to host live performances and audience dancing—are also governed through separate Cabaret and Restaurant Guidelines (City of Vancouver, 2000a). These Guidelines impose a number of special rules on things like air conditioning, parking, and acoustical reports (City of Vancouver, 2000a). The City could encourage the development of cabarets and class 2 restaurants by eliminating the special Guidelines and regulating these businesses in a similar manner to how they regulate other performance spaces.

The second policy option considered in this report (see Section 5.1.2) involves clarifying regulations as part of an effort to make policy accessible. Table C2 lists specific regulations that require clarification.

Table C2. **Implementation suggestions for the 'make policy accessible' option**

Issue, Jurisdiction	Explanation
Inconsistent zoning and licensing terminology, City of Vancouver	Vancouver's *License By-law* and *Zoning and Development Bylaw* use different terminology for what this report calls community music venues. The *License By-law* uses the terms "artist live/work studio," "dance hall," "discotheque–teenage," "late night dance event," "liquor establishment," "neighbourhood theatre," "venue," and "exhibition." The *Zoning and Development Bylaw* uses "artist studio–class B," "community centre or neighbourhood house," "hall," "cabaret," and "neighbourhood public house." Both *Bylaws* use "restaurant–class 2," "club," "theatre," and "arts and culture indoor event." Community music venues could be assigned one official label under one bylaw, and a

	completely different label under the other bylaw, or they could be assigned the same label under both. This is unnecessarily complex.
Undefined zoning usages, City of Vancouver	Section 2 of Vancouver's *Zoning and Development Bylaw* is titled "definitions" and lists several usages relevant to community music venues. While "artist studio–class B," "arts and culture indoor event," "club," "theatre," "cabaret" and "restaurant–class 2" are defined, there are blank spaces where definitions for "hall," "community centre or neighbourhood house," and "neighbourhood public house" appear to belong. This makes it impossible to know what activities are permitted with these uses, which makes it difficult for a potential venue operator to know what zones they should search for spaces in (Safe Amplification Site Society, 2013).
Drugs, City of Vancouver	Vancouver's *License By-law* forbids "drugs" in a number of different businesses including dance halls and teenage discotheques but does not define this term. The *Zoning and Development Bylaw* mentions "drugs" as products that are sold in drug stores (s. 2). The federal *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* (S.C. 1996, c. 19) bans specific substances in all of Canada, including in Vancouver's community music venues, while the City of Vancouver has regulated cannabis without it being legal or officially decriminalized (Hager, 2015). Mentioning "drugs" in connection with community music venues is unnecessary and connotes a negative view of the people who participate in such spaces.
Sexist language, City of Vancouver	Vancouver's *License By-law* forbids a person who acts as a "hostess" (female) from dancing with patrons or guests in dance halls, but imposes no such stipulation for 'hosts' (male). While Vancouver's Bylaws are rife with archaic language, this particular example is sexist and should be removed.

Faulty numbering, City of Vancouver	Section 13.2(1) of Vancouver's *License By-law* mentions a "subsection 14 of this section," but no such subsection exists; "14" is likely an error that was intended to be "8." Similarly, the *License By-law*'s definition of "late night dance event permit" (s. 2) mentions a "section 5 of this Bylaw," but section 5 is not relevant; "5" is likely an error that was intended to be "19.2."
Contradictory age restrictions, City of Vancouver	Vancouver's *License By-law* imposes strangely contradictory age restrictions for teenage discotheques. Section 2 says they are "exclusively for patrons of a minimum age of thirteen years and under the age of nineteen years." In section 13.3(3), the *By-law* states "no person under the age of *fifteen* years or over the age of eighteen years shall enter a teenage discotheque" (italics added). Section 13.3(3) goes on to say "between the hours of one o'clock in the afternoon and five o'clock in the afternoon on any Saturday the licensee may open the teenage discotheque *exclusively* for persons who are *under* fifteen years of age" (italics added). Fourteen-year-old disco fans are surely baffled.
Unnecessary age restrictions, City of Vancouver	The City of Vancouver regulates the age of participants in cabarets. While no age restrictions are imposed for cabarets that serve alcohol (City of Vancouver, 2000a), admittance to "cabarets not licensed to serve alcohol (aka non-alcoholic dance halls)" is limited to those age 19 or older (City of Vancouver, 2000b). The City of Vancouver should clarify whether it truly wishes to ban youth from dry establishments while allowing youth in liquor-serving establishments, particularly since the Province of BC may be considering allowing minors in event-driven spaces with liquor-primary licences (see Section 5.1.3).
Inaccessible documents,	The *British Columbia Building Code, British Columbia Fire Code*, and *Vancouver Building Bylaw* are not freely available online. Interested

Issue, Jurisdiction	Explanation
City of Vancouver and Province of BC	readers must visit a library or purchase copies from the Queen's Printer. The complete *Vancouver Fire Bylaw* is also not freely available online. Interested readers must obtain a copy of the *British Columbia Fire Code* and read it in conjunction with a freely available document that contrasts it with the *Vancouver Fire Bylaw*.
Unclear terminology, Province of BC	The Province of BC's (2017b) Liquor-Primary Handbook mentions several types of establishments that could be relevant to community music venues, including live theatres, recreational facilities, and community halls. None of these terms are defined, however, so it is difficult to tell what they mean. In addition, the *Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation* (B.C. Reg. 241/2016) defines "lounge" as an endorsement attached to the licences of manufacturers like breweries and distilleries, but the Province of BC (2017b) uses "lounge" in connection with stadiums, curling rinks, golf courses, bowling alleys, and other types of recreational facilities (p. 7). It is not clear what is meant by the term "lounge" in these contexts.

My examination of the City of Vancouver's Arts Event Licence and the Province of BC's Special Event Permits (SEPs) identified several requirements and limitations that make them unattractive to community music venues. While each of these stipulations may be sensible individually, they combine to make the licences and permits fairly restrictive. As part of an effort to encourage temporary licensing (see Section 5.1.4), the City of Vancouver and Province of BC could address the issues listed in Table C3.

Table C3. Implementation suggestions for the 'encourage temporary licensing' option

Issue, Jurisdiction	Explanation
Number of events, City of Vancouver	Venues cannot obtain more than three Arts Event Licences per month (City of Vancouver, 2015). Many community music venues host events on Friday and Saturday evenings for a total of approximately eight per month. Many of the venue operators I interviewed felt that licensing

Arts Event Licence	some events but not others would simply draw unwanted enforcement attention to the unlicensed events, and for this reason, they avoid the licences altogether.
Flooring, City of Vancouver Arts Event Licence	Arts events must be held "on the ground floor, or in the basement with a fire sprinkler system" and "on a concrete floor supported by solid ground, or a floor that is professionally certified to be structurally safe" (City of Vancouver, 2015). This excludes venues on other storeys and venues with other types of flooring.
Wheelchair access, City of Vancouver Arts Event Licence	Arts events must have at least one wheelchair accessible entrance (City of Vancouver, 2015), which disqualifies venues with stairs unless they also have an elevator or wheelchair lift.
Locations, City of Vancouver Arts Event Licence	Arts events are only permitted in Downtown, Downtown Eastside, False Creek, industrial, historic, or commercial (except C-1 zone) areas (City of Vancouver, 2015). Venue operators are unlikely to be aware of the boundaries of these areas or willing to look them up in the *Zoning and Development Bylaw*.
Amplification, City of Vancouver Arts Event Licence	The City of Vancouver (2015) advises arts event organizers to "minimize sound amplification," but this would unduly limit the creativity of performers. Indeed, sound amplification is often the reason for events.
Number of events, Province of BC Special	Event organizers cannot obtain more than three SEPs per month, to a maximum of 24 per year (Province of BC, 2017c). Some event organizers host more than three events per month, but rather than obtaining permits for some events and not others, they ignore SEPs

Event Permits	altogether and sell alcohol without permission. In order to encourage compliance and participation in the "Serving it Right" alcohol safety training that accompanies permitting, the Province could increase the number of SEPs allowed each month.
Cost / Public vs. Private, Province of BC Special Event Permits	There are two types of SEPs. Private SEPs cost $25 and cover events where all attendees were invited or purchased tickets in advance, and Public SEPs cost $100 and cover events that are open to strangers or where admission is charged at the door (*Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation*, B.C. Reg. 241/2016; Province of BC, 2017c). Most community music venues lack the infrastructure for advance ticket sales and accept only cash at the door. This requires them to obtain the more expensive Public SEPs, despite often being small community-based gatherings. Instead of purchasing $100 permits for each event, many organizers avoid the permits altogether and sell alcohol without permission. To encourage participation in temporary licensing, the Province could base SEP prices on audience size rather than on notions of public vs. private.