

IMPROVING THE INTERCOMMUNITY MOBILITY OF FIRST NATION PEOPLES IN CANADA:

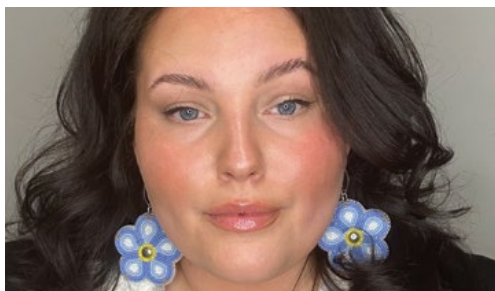
A Response to Call for Justice 4.8



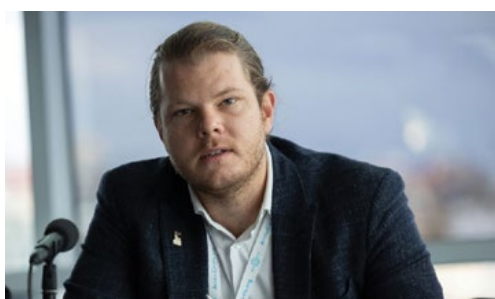


**The report is dedicated to the countless families and kin of
Missing and Murdered First Nations, Inuit, and Métis loved ones.**

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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**We begin by acknowledging every murdered
and missing woman, girl, or 2SLGBTQQIA+ person across Canada.
You are someone's child, sibling, parent, aunty, grandparent, or friend.
You are loved and missed. You matter.**

We acknowledge the many individuals and groups across Canada who are advocating for policy change to prevent our women, girls, and Two Spirit people from going missing or being murdered. We stand in solidarity with you and amplify your message and your voices.

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Thank you to Indspire for funding the inaugural all-Indigenous Action Canada task force, which aims to ensure Indigenous voices are not only heard but included and respected in policymaking.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report addresses the urgent need for comprehensive and sustainable transportation solutions to address the vulnerabilities of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ (IWG2SLGBTQQIA+) in Canada, as highlighted by the Reclaiming Power and Place (RPP) report. Emerging from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), the RPP highlights systemic issues and harms faced by First Nations, Inuit, and Métis (FNIM) communities. In response to Call for Justice 4.8, this report emphasizes the urgent need for safe and sustainable transportation in rural and remote areas. Limited mobility hinders access to essential services, social supports, educational and employment opportunities, and fosters intergenerational poverty.

Recommendations to address these issues are comprehensive and community-led approaches rooted in self-determination. Strategies include community-specific grant funding calls, recognizing mobility as a social determinant of health, and fostering collaboration between various levels of government, Indigenous scholars, and community advocates. Initiatives must be culturally appropriate, safe, and sustainable, and they must empower First Nation (FN) communities and address the root causes of violence experienced within these communities.

This report analyzes the termination of Greyhound bus services in 2021, which compounded existing mobility challenges, leaving Indigenous communities even more vulnerable and exacerbating safety risks faced by IWGLGBTQQIA+. The absence of safe and accessible transportation options heightens economic and social disparities, perpetuating the MMIWG crisis.

Policy recommendations seek to contribute to broader reconciliation efforts, recognizing mobility as a political and unequal issue, and creating a more equitable and inclusive Canadian society.



RECOMMENDATIONS CHART

GOALS	RECOMMENDATIONS	GOVERNMENT OF CANADA	ASSEMBLY FIRST NATIONS (AFN)	FIRST NATIONS GOVERNMENTS	PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENTS	MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS	TRI-AGENCIES	NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF CANADA (NWAC)
Address systemic issues from a lack of transportation	1a. Recognize safe and affordable mobility as a social determinant of health.							
	1b. Significant invest in safe and affordable intercommunity mobility for FN.							
	1c. Establish measurable outcomes and conduct annual reviews to ensure the increase of safe and affordable transportation options.							
	1d. Partner to co-create safe and affordable intercommunity transportation option for their Nations.							
Establish a grant funding call tailored for FN	2a. Provide funding using a gender-based analysis plus approach to ensure that the safety and needs of MMIWG2SLGBTQQIA+ are met.							
	2b. Establish pilot programs with structured processes to encourage collaboration.							
	2c. Develop a pre-qualified contractor list with proven expertise in areas of need identified through consultation with experts and FN leaders.							
Enhance transportation data in FN communities through a genderbased analysis plus approach	3a. FN take the lead in conducting public transportation needs assessments, impact assessments, and establishing Key Performance Indicators.							
	3b. Collaborate on a pilot project, to enhance transportation data in FN communities through a genderbased analysis plus approach							
	3c. Create a long-term grant funding call addressing the unique needs of MMIWG2SLGBTQQIA+ for sustainable transportation.							
	3d. Conduct research to understand the long-term economic effects of new FN public transportation projects, looking beyond rider fare revenue to include tertiary and downstream benefits.							
National awareness campaign to garner broader understanding for the need of safety of MMIWG2SLGBTQQIA+ people	4. The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) initiates a nationwide public awareness campaign. The campaign aims to enhance understanding of the root causes of violence against MMIWG2SLGBTQQIA+.							
Creation of a Annual transportation symposium	5. The creation of a symposium for sharing insights on sustainable transportation. The aim is to establish best practices for transportation policy and infrastructure that prioritize the safety and well being of MMIWG2SLGBTQQIA+.							

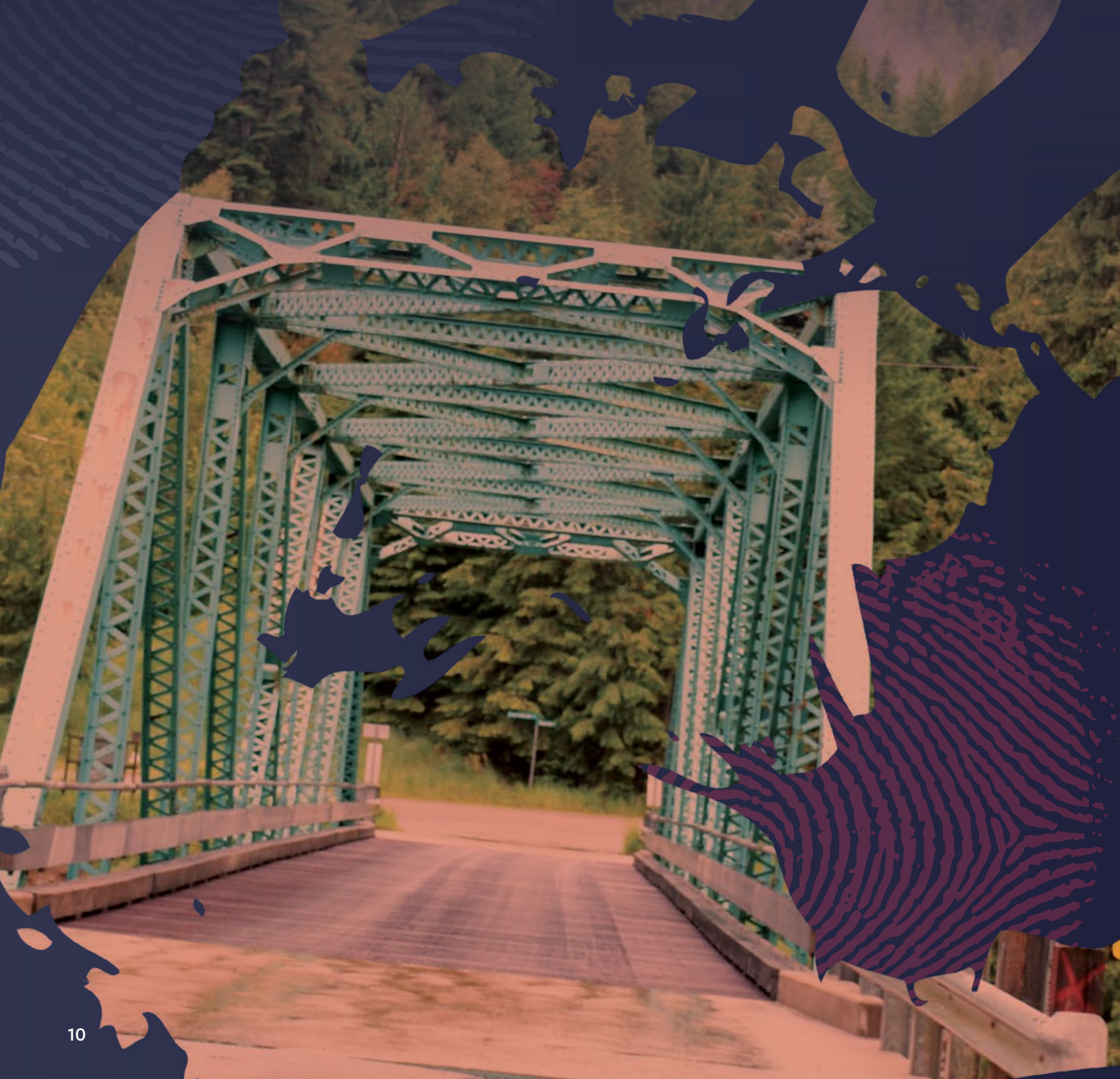
BACKGROUND

As the inaugural all-Indigenous Action Canada task force, we focus on the severe impact of the absence of safe and accessible intercommunity mobility options for First Nations (FN) Peoples in rural and remote reservations nationwide. While recognizing that these challenges extend beyond our target demographic, the lack of such options profoundly affects their well-being. Our policy recommendations, though aimed at FN Peoples, hold the potential to improve the lives of all Canadians in rural and remote areas.





FN PEOPLE AND THE RECLAIMING POWER AND PLACE REPORT



Affordable, accessible transportation that meets the needs of Indigenous people is an important part of reconciliation since a majority of colonial policies were aimed at eliminating Indigenous mobilization.

- Linda Savory Gordon, Mask-wa Transportation Association Inc.

The *Reclaiming Power and Place* (RPP) report, released in 2019,¹ is a pivotal document — conducted by the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, girls and two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, and all other sexual orientations and genders (MMIWG2SLGBTQQIA+). The report sheds light on the pervasive violence and vulnerabilities that disproportionately affect IWG2SLGBTQQIA+. The report provides 231 Calls for Justice needed to redress ongoing colonial violence.

Call for Justice 4.8 emphasizes the immediate need to address limited mobility in rural and remote areas, recognizing its profound impact on the safety of IWG2SLGBTQQIA+. Improving transportation directly enhances community well-being, impacting access to essential services, economic opportunities, social-cultural ties, and educational pursuits. While the report primarily focuses on FN,² findings and recommendations may extend to Inuit and Métis communities.

Call for Justice 4.8

We call upon all governments to ensure that adequate plans and funding are put into place for safe and affordable transit and transportation services and infrastructure for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people living in remote or rural communities. Transportation should be sufficient and readily available to Indigenous communities, and in towns and cities located in all of the provinces and territories in Canada. These plans and funding should take into consideration:

- ways to increase safe public transit;
- ways to address the lack of commercial transit available; and
- special accommodations for fly-in, northern, and remote communities.

Canada and the provinces need to recognize we're losing far too many people because of a lack of transportation options.

- Chief George Arcand, Alexander First Nation

MOBILITY JUSTICE AND FN COMMUNITIES

This report draws on the concept of *Transport Justice*,³ which suggests governments have a responsibility to provide adequate transportation so “all communities have access to a safe, reliable and equitable transportation system that connects them to places, people, and resources they need to thrive.”⁴ From this paradigm, the term mobility was strategically selected to replace the term transportation for the purpose of this policy paper. Mobility describes the “ability to freely move”;⁵ therefore, mobility justice includes a dimension of FN agency or sovereignty, thus countering paternalistic government approaches that are often prescribed to, rather than by, with, and for FN.

The persistent lack of progress in FN mobility reflects broader inaction in addressing interconnected challenges faced by FN communities. This stagnation perpetuates vulnerabilities outlined in the RPP report, hindering positive and sustainable systemic change. The government’s response to the RPP report’s Calls for Justice is slow and lacks comprehensive initiatives for FN transportation challenges.⁶ Despite the introduction of the Rural Transit Solutions Fund providing up to \$5 million,⁷ it falls short of addressing ongoing rural transit needs, especially for FN communities with chronically underfunded infrastructure. It lacks consideration for the distinct needs of MMIWG2SLGBTQIA+.⁴⁵

Geographically isolated FN reserves face economic and infrastructure barriers, making them reliant on nearby towns for essentials. Many reserve roads are made of

gravel or in disrepair due to climate-related disasters.⁸ Consequently, larger vehicles are needed that are better equipped to navigate the terrain on reserve, leading to increased costs and furthering the mobility gap. Forcing community members to walk or ride share, an environmentally friendly mobility solution, poses safety risks for IWG2SLGBTQIA+.

Inadequate transportation extends beyond safety concerns. It perpetuates cycles of poverty, limits access to education and job opportunities, and hinders community development. Prioritizing sustainable mobilization in FN communities can address systemic challenges and contribute to a more equitable and inclusive Canadian society, benefiting all Canadians.

This case study is an example of an innovative service in Powell River, BC.

Zunga Bus An innovative service meeting rider needs that are not being met by traditional transit.⁴¹ Zunga Bus is an app-based, on-demand transportation service operated by the City of Powell River in cooperation with Spare Labs and financially supported by the federal government, offering door-to-door service.⁴² Routes are based on rider requests, pooling riders to maximize efficiency. There are plans to add wheelchair accessibility in a later phase of the pilot program.⁴²

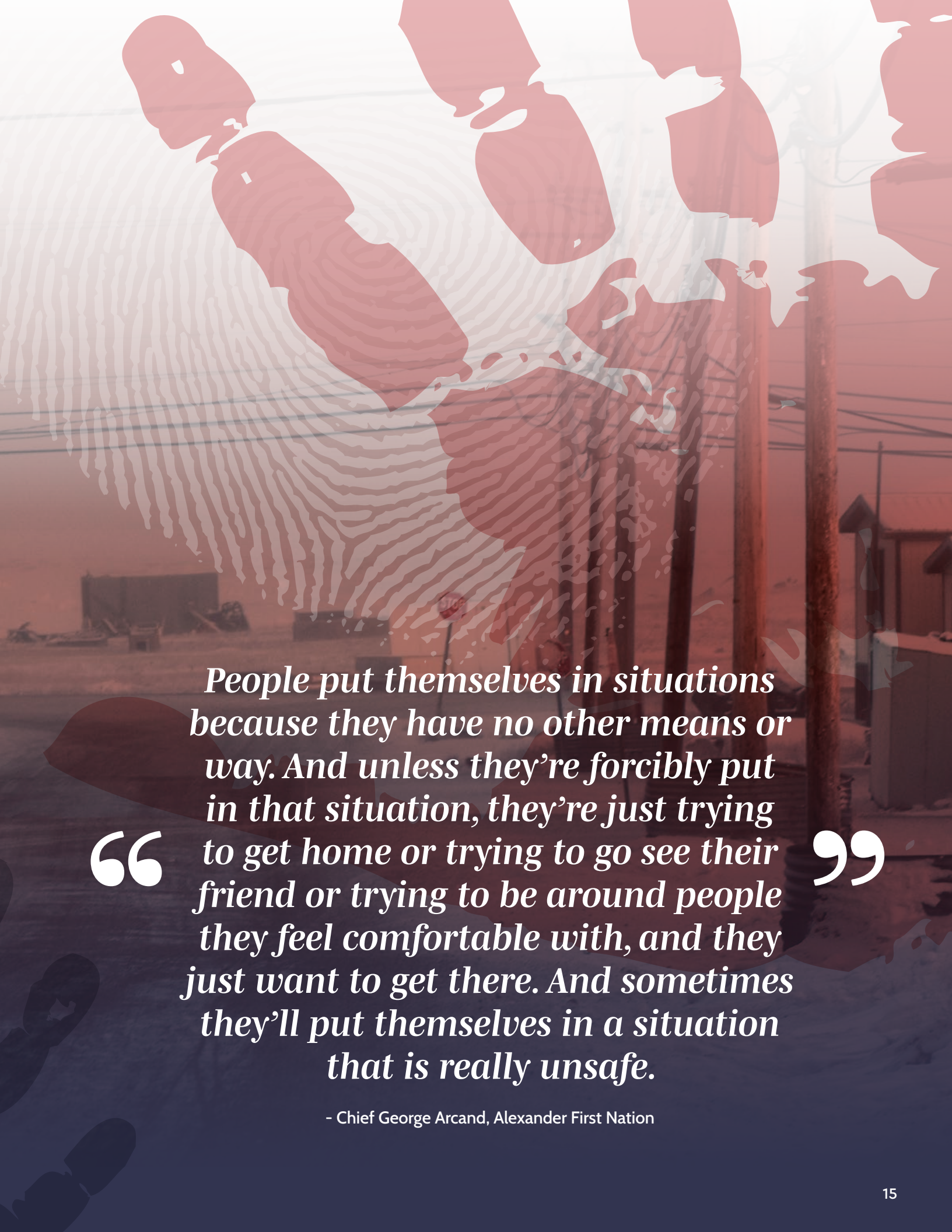




*“In North American culture,
post-contact, so much of it is about
freedom to move...it speaks volumes
to how governments still perceive
Indigenous people that they don't
see us [Indigenous people] as part
of that freedom.”*

- Andrea Reimer, Tawâw Strategies





“ People put themselves in situations because they have no other means or way. And unless they’re forcibly put in that situation, they’re just trying to get home or trying to go see their friend or trying to be around people they feel comfortable with, and they just want to get there. And sometimes they’ll put themselves in a situation that is really unsafe. ”

- Chief George Arcand, Alexander First Nation

COLONIALISM, POLICY, AND MOBILITY



Beadwork and photo by Michif Artist Kiera Kowalski

“The ability for FN people to mobilize freely throughout our ancestral territories is important — and the ability to feel a sense of belonging.”

- Chief George Arcand, Alexander First Nation

Colonization is a structure, not an event. Colonialism continues to affect the lives of FNIM Peoples in Canada. Often seen as historic acts rather than a systemic, ongoing attempt to dispossess Indigenous Peoples from land, culture, and identity through physical and assimilationist means.^{9,10} The operationalization of colonization continues through the application of policy that threatens Indigenous inherent rights and Treaty rights to sovereignty as a means to oppress Indigenous Peoples.

Historical policies, like the Pass System, restricted FNIM mobility, requiring permits from Indian Agents to leave the reserve. This included trips to visit relatives, hunt, and fish, which affected both FN health and food security. The segregation policy impacted FN from participating in economic activities, purchasing goods, and accessing services.¹¹ This historical policy has had detrimental impacts on social attitudes, economic participation, and the sense of belonging for FN people.

While not exhaustive, this provides a glimpse into policies revealing how they intersect with mobility and ongoing violent genocide of IWG2SLGBTQQIA+, creating a state where Indigenous women and girls are twelve times more likely to go missing or be murdered than any other woman in Canada.¹

This case study outlines last-mile transit solutions in California.

Metro Micro Launched by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro) in 2020. Initiated to address the challenges of “last-mile connectivity” in urban areas (the portion of transportation between the bus/train stop and the traveller’s desired destination).⁴³ Through Metro Micro, travellers can plan the remainder of their trip and conveniently hail personalized transit solutions in real-time. Metro Micro emerged as a means to bridge the accessibility gap travellers face using public transportation. LA Metro’s initiative is just one innovative example that has led to a pivotal shift towards inclusive, sustainable transportation solutions.



“Canada has forced people to live on FN reserves with inadequate housing, inadequate water, inadequate funding of all sorts. The schooling is not there. So what did they do in the end? They took away the bus. If we are going to care about other people in this country, why aren’t we looking after them? It’s not us or them — it’s all of us.”

- Terri Sleeva, Advocate



GENDER AND MOBILITY

IWG2SLGBTQQIA+ are prime targets for colonization,¹ involving separation from land, privatization, and resource extraction. Traditionally, Indigenous women held significant political, economic, and social power within their communities; FN women were targeted in the Indian Act to sever their relationship with the land.¹²

The issue of MMIWG2SLGBTQQIA+ in Canada demands a comprehensive examination of various factors contributing to their vulnerability. Modern mobility policy continues to overlook intersectional (including gendered and racialized) experiences, perpetuating structural oppression of IWG2SLGBTQQIA+ in mobility policy.³ This is compounded by the fact those who are forced to make precarious mobility choices (i.e., hitchhiking) as a result of the lack of access to safe, accessible transportation options are villainized, conflating mobility with morality.^{3,13}

rather than calling into question the structures that perpetuate mobility inequity. These structures ultimately affect safety, health, and well-being.¹⁴

Women are known to utilize public transportation more frequently than men, and this pattern is likely applicable to FN women in particular.¹⁵ However, FN women face unique challenges related to geographic isolation, limited transportation infrastructure, and intergenerational trauma. Needs such as childcare responsibilities and the necessity for more space to transport children, equipment, or goods and groceries further complicate transportation choices, impacting their ability to fulfill familial and communal responsibilities.¹⁷

IWG2SLGBTQQIA+ who reside in areas with limited public transportation options may be disproportionately affected by this lack of connectivity.¹⁶

*Everything is tied into anti-racism,
Calls to Action and Calls for Justice —
they are all interrelated. We
[Indigenous People] are the most
studied people in the world, yet no
action has been completed. We are
still living in poverty, still dying, still
over-represented in all poor
determinants of health like child
welfare and the justice system.*

- Brooks Arcand-Paul, MLA, Edmonton-West Henday

MOBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY



“There is a need for not just our own people to come up with solutions, but everybody to figure out how we keep all people safe.”

- Andy Rickard, Advocate

Society's focus on the economic and environmental pillars of sustainability results in overlooking social factors, including poverty and personal safety.¹⁸ Public transportation is often designed for individuals with access to other means of transportation, such as a personal vehicle.¹⁹ This is apparent in Canada's current transportation system; for example, the Canada Transportation Act Review Vision states it is looking for a “safe, secure, green, innovative, and integrated transportation system that supports...the well-being of Canada's middle class.”²⁰ The 2030 Emissions Reduction Plan focuses on urban public transportation only.²¹ With this policy focus, governments continue to systematically oppress those more vulnerable, including those in FN communities.

“You can have a low emission society without social justice, but you can't have a sustainable society without social justice.”

- Andrea Reimer, Tawâw Strategies

Renewable Energy, or Renewing Colonialism

Current plans to shift to carbon free emissions requires a significant reliance on hydroelectricity. Hydroelectric dams are disproportionately located in close proximity to rural and remote FNIM communities. While many Canadians do not feel the effects of these dams, the FNIM communities who live close to them do, as they alter fish and wild game migratory patterns and even contaminate larger mammals with mercury. This affects FNIM food security and is just one example of many effects that hydroelectric dams have on FNIM peoples.²³

Furthermore, hydroelectric projects are known to have detrimental effects on IWG2SLGBTQQIA+ as the influx of transient workers who arrive in nearby urban centres increases rates of sexual violence and racism against IWG2SLGBTQQIA+.²⁰

Beadwork and photo by Michif Artist Kiera Kowalski



INDIGENOUS UNDERSTANDINGS OF SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is inherent to Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, and being. This comes from a relational understanding that humans are not superior to animals, flora, fauna, water, and land, but rather are in relation to them. Indigenous Sciences continue to prioritize sustainability.²³ FN are one of the traditional keepers of the land with their own intricate and complex scientific knowledge systems. Women in many FN play particularly important roles in sustainability, holding roles as water keepers and seed keepers, making them particularly susceptible to violence.²⁴ Despite the ongoing interruptions of colonialism, women persist in these roles as land, water, and environmental warriors.^{1,24} This is due to Indigenous Peoples experiencing disproportional effects of climate change through environmental racism. Sustainability is not a luxury but is critically tied to Indigenous sovereignty, culture, language, food security, and spirituality.^{22,24}

*Climate change is happening
and it's not going to stop if we
continue going the way we're going. ”
Mother Earth will repair herself
with or without humankind.*

- Terri Sleeva, Advocate

If we don't spend time making sure things are done in a good way, we start to see mother earth not being treated well. So, we need to find the balance between what we've done traditionally, what our principles are traditionally, and what people are doing now and finding that middle road so the country and the territory becomes a better place to live.

- Chief George Arcand, Alexander First Nation



A TURNING POINT: GREYHOUND CANADA CONCLUDES OPERATIONS

Greyhound Canada Transportation Unlimited Liability Corporation (ULC) was a private transportation company in Canada for nearly a century before its demise. Established in 1929,²⁵ Greyhound (GH) served communities within British Columbia before expanding to an extensive transportation network nationwide.²⁶

While various bus companies existed, these companies were regional bus companies operating in specific provinces and territories, providing transportation to local communities. GH Canada earned a reputation as one of the only bus services providing travel between and through multiple provinces and

territories.²⁷ GH faced increased challenges due to the growing popularity of other modes of transportation.²⁸

TERMINATION OF GREYHOUND CANADA

The termination of GH Canada's operations was announced in 2018 and had significant economic implications, not only for the company, but also for the communities it served and the broader transportation landscape in the country.²⁸ The company cited substantial financial losses as a key reason for discontinuing services, particularly in Western Canada.²⁹ Declining ridership on long-distance routes, increasing operational costs, and competition from other modes of transportation, including low-cost airlines and private vehicles, all played a role in the company's struggles.²⁹

The termination of GH Canada left many communities, especially those in rural and remote areas, without a convenient and affordable transportation option.^{30,31} This had direct economic implications for individuals who relied on GH, whether for work, education, healthcare, or other purposes.³²

Case study on SWIFT Mini Thni Transit, outlining a bus service that connects FN with an urban centre.

The SWIFT Mini Thni Transit is a specialized transportation service aimed to meet the needs of the Stoney Nakoda Nations and foster enhanced connections with neighbouring communities and essential services. Launched in May 2023, the initiative fosters collaboration between the local municipality of Cochrane, the Stoney Nakoda Nations (Chiniki, Bearpaw, and Wesley), and the federal government. By involving various stakeholders in the planning and implementation process, SWIFT Mini Thni Transit ensures transit services align with the priorities and preferences of the communities involved. SWIFT Mini Thni Transit enhances community connections and paves the way for potential long-term solutions to transportation needs.



HOW THE TERMINATION OF GREYHOUND IS A SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUE

GH Canada cited a decrease in ridership impacting their economic model as a leading reason for terminating its services in Canada.²⁹ Is this reason enough to stop the existence of GH transportation, which had been a lifeline to so many generations of Canadians? The termination of GH Canada disproportionately affects vulnerable and marginalized communities, including Indigenous populations, low-income individuals, and those living in remote or rural areas, contributing to social and economic disparities.¹⁵ Many of these communities relied heavily on GH services for essential travel, such as accessing healthcare, education, employment opportunities, and family connections.³³

Without access to transportation, you are denying people basic human rights; you're denying them the ability to participate in economic activity, you're denying them the ability to get from point A to point B safely, something every other Canadian takes as a fundamental right.

- Andrea Reimer, Tawâw Strategies

ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Transportation is a critical component to accessing essential services, and the absence of GH services leaves many individuals without reliable access to healthcare.^{17,34} This lack of access intensifies existing health inequalities, as those with more transportation options are less affected than those in remote or economically disadvantaged regions.

ECONOMIC DISPARITIES

The economic consequences of GH Canada's termination intersect with social justice concerns. Low-income individuals relying on affordable bus transportation for daily needs face increased financial burdens and potential isolation.³⁵ Job losses resulting from GH's closure also impacted individuals and families who depended on employment within the company. The economic disparities are often felt more acutely in regions where the termination leaves a void in transportation services. remote or economically disadvantaged regions.

EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

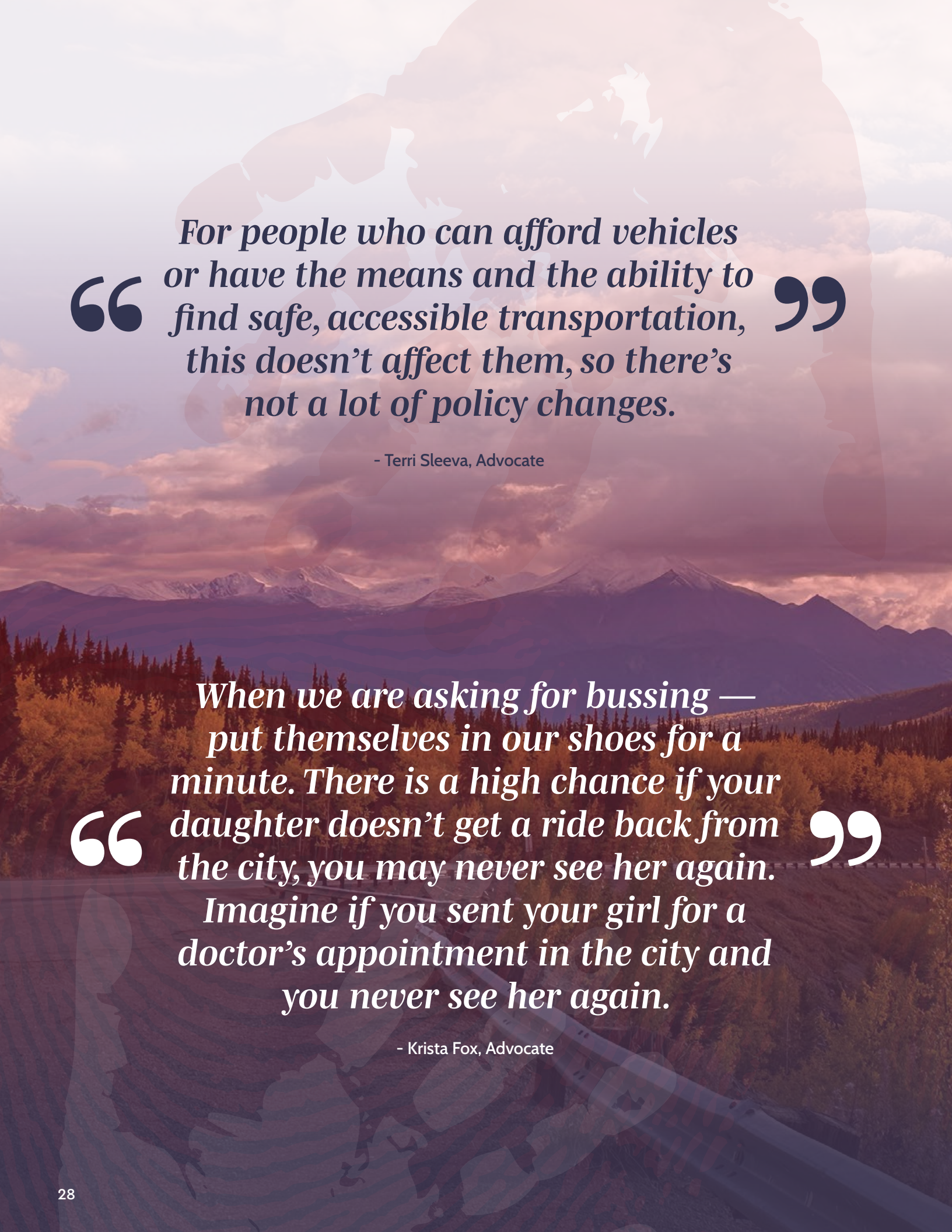
Many individuals, especially in FN communities, used GH's services to access education opportunities in urban centres. Terminating these services limits the ability of people from these communities to pursue higher education, perpetuating social and economic inequalities.³⁶ This issue is particularly pronounced for Indigenous youth seeking educational opportunities beyond their immediate communities.

Recognizing the social justice dimensions of this issue is crucial for policymakers, advocates, and communities to work collaboratively in finding sustainable and equitable solutions that address the transportation needs of all Canadians, regardless of their geographic location, socio-economic status, or race and ethnicity.

Case study of FN-owned Keewatin Railway Company (KRC).

Keewatin Railway Company (KRC) is owned by three partner Nations in Northern Manitoba. Following the closure of a mine, Mathias Colomb Indian Band, Tataskweyak Cree Nation, and the War Lake FN worked together on a plan to improve mobility in their communities in Northern Manitoba.⁴⁴ KRC was established and purchased the Sherridon rail line from the Hudson Bay Company. With financial support from the Government of Canada and the Province of Manitoba, KRC created a sustainable transportation line, boosting the local economy. Experienced rail personnel were hired to train FN members, and the federal government provided up to \$3.2 million for start-up fees and investments through the Regional and Remote Passenger Rail Services Contribution Program.⁴⁴





“For people who can afford vehicles or have the means and the ability to find safe, accessible transportation, this doesn’t affect them, so there’s not a lot of policy changes.”

- Terri Sleevea, Advocate

“When we are asking for bussing — put themselves in our shoes for a minute. There is a high chance if your daughter doesn’t get a ride back from the city, you may never see her again. Imagine if you sent your girl for a doctor’s appointment in the city and you never see her again.”

- Krista Fox, Advocate

MMIWG2S+ AND GREYHOUND TERMINATION

Lack of connectivity has far-reaching consequences for the safety and well-being of Indigenous people, particularly IWG2SLGBTQQIA+, as it exacerbates the challenges related to MMIWG2SLGBTQQIA+ including:

- **Increased Vulnerability:** The absence of reliable and accessible transportation options heightens the vulnerability of IWG2SLGBTQQIA+, rendering them more susceptible to exploitation and violence. Limited mobility impedes their ability to access support services, escape dangerous situations, or seek refuge in times of crisis.
- **Impact on Reporting and Investigation:** Victims may face additional barriers in reaching law enforcement agencies or support networks. The lack of transportation further complicates the timely response of authorities and the conduct of thorough investigations, perpetuating a climate of impunity.

The termination of Greyhound bus services in Canada has had detrimental effects for Indigenous communities, with profound safety and well-being implications for IWG2SLGBTQQIA+. The lack of accessible transportation options contributes to the complex interconnected factors surrounding IWG2SLGBTQQIA+, exacerbates vulnerabilities, and hinders efforts to address and rectify these issues.




“Creating tables of discussion needs to happen immediately between Treaty areas, urban centers and the government regarding how we deal with these things so the solution becomes an all-inclusive solution.”

- Chief George Arcand, Alexander First Nation

RECOMMENDATIONS





Addressing Call for Justice 4.8 requires taking holistic action and recognizing that the lack of transportation to, from, and between reserves is rooted in colonization. Though these recommendations take on a distinctions-based approach, the hope is they also may benefit other rural and remote communities and other Indigenous communities and nations.

The principles guiding these policy recommendations include both community-led and self-determined solutions as reflected in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Report and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which has received Royal Assent.³⁷ UNDRIP emphasizes Indigenous Peoples' right to self-government and self-determination.³⁸ Future transportation solutions must be rooted in continuous engagement and consultative processes, respecting and upholding FN self-determination.

***Solutions must be FN led, run,
and invested in as equitably
as non-Indigenous
transportation systems.***

- Jodi Calahoo Stonehouse, MLA, Edmonton Rutherford



SYSTEMIC ISSUES

Current health policies overlook barriers FN face when accessing essential services from reserves, negatively impacting FN health and well-being nationwide. Essential services encompass health care, affordable food, social supports, and economic opportunities.

1. Aligning with the UN's definition of sustainable transport, we recommend that the Government of Canada:
 - a) Recognizes mobility as a social determinant of health.
 - b) Significantly invests in safe and affordable intercommunity mobility for FN.
 - c) Establishes measurable outcomes and conducts annual reviews to ensure the increase of safe and affordable transportation options.
 - d) Partners with the Assembly of First Nations and FN Governments to co-create safe and affordable intercommunity transportation options for their Nations.

INADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE

To address the mobility gap and chronic underfunding in FN communities, we propose targeted federal funding initiatives. These initiatives aim to enhance existing public transportation infrastructure, empowering municipalities to effectively reach and serve nearby FN communities, as illustrated by the SWIFT Mini Thni Transit case study. The specific recommendations include: current health policies overlook barriers FN face when accessing essential services from reserves, negatively impacting FN health and well-being nationwide. Essential services encompass health care, affordable food, social supports, and economic opportunities.

2. The Government of Canada establishes a grant funding call tailored for FN. This funding would address the need for safe, affordable, and sustainable public transportation within FN and between neighbouring communities. The funding can create, sustain, and monitor public transit and provide financial support to expand municipal public transportation systems into FN by:
 - a) Providing funding using a gender-based analysis plus approach to ensure the safety and needs of MMIWG2SLGBTQQIA+ are met.
 - b) Establish pilot programs with structured processes to encourage collaboration between the Government of Canada, Canadian municipalities, and FN. Conduct needs assessments collaboratively between municipalities and FN to inform transportation projects based on each community's specific requirements and challenges. Implement ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and collaboration to adapt to changing needs and trends, aiming to enhance reliability and safety for FN Peoples.
 - c) Develop a pre-qualified contractor list with proven expertise in areas of need identified through consultation with experts and FN leaders. Utilize a gender-based analysis plus approach throughout the process, prioritizing the needs of IWG2SLGBTQQIA+.



DATA, RESEARCH, AND NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

Research led by community advocates, Indigenous scholars, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community development practitioners is essential to explore transportation options in rural and remote areas. This research should focus on the unique challenges of these areas, considering environmental impacts, social and safety implications, and overall effects on health and well-being. Gathering data and statistics on transportation challenges is crucial for informed decision-making, leading to appropriate funding and resource allocations through the following recommendations:

3. Enhance transportation data in FN communities through a gender-based analysis plus (GBA+) approach, by:
 - a) FN taking the lead in conducting public transportation needs assessments, impact assessments, and establishing Key Performance Indicators tailored to the unique needs of each community.
 - b) The Assembly of First Nations collaborating with the Government of Canada on a pilot project, ensuring two FNs in each province have access to experts for the development of public transportation assessments and Key Performance Indicators, which will be used for future grant applications.
 - c) The Tri-Council Agencies (Canadian Institutes of Health Research [CIHR], Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada [NSERC] and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada [SSHRC]) uniting to create a long-term grant funding call addressing the unique needs of MMIWG2SLGBTQQIA+ for sustainable transportation.
 - i. In collaboration with the Assembly of First Nations, form a FN Community Driven Think Tank, comprising transportation innovators, strategic planners, community development practitioners, and Indigenous scholars, to find tailored sustainable transportation solutions for each community's distinct needs.
 - ii. Develop culturally appropriate studies and evaluation processes to understand the distinct needs of IWG2SLGBTQQIA+ not currently engaging with public transportation, exploring barriers.
 - iii. Establish effective and sustainable FNIM education and training programs to build community capacity for evaluation, data management, and infrastructure repairs.
 - d) Conducting research to understand the long-term economic effects of new FN public transportation projects, looking beyond rider fare revenue to include tertiary and downstream benefits, not limited to increased access to economic opportunities. This comprehensive approach dispels the myth that linking FN communities with larger centres through public transportation is not profitable and lacks significant benefits.

SAFE, AFFORDABLE, AND READILY AVAILABLE TRANSPORTATION FOR IWG2SLGBTQQIA+

4. The Native Women's Association of Canada initiates a nationwide public awareness campaign, funded by the Government of Canada and Provincial Governments. The campaign aims to enhance understanding of the root causes of violence against IWG2SLGBTQQIA+, emphasizing the intergenerational effects of colonization, including intersections of racism, sexism, transphobia, homophobia, and resource extraction. The goal is to garner broader support for establishing safe, affordable, and sustainable transportation systems for IWG2SLGBTQQIA+.
5. The Assembly of First Nations collaborates with Transport Canada to host an annual symposium, sharing insights on sustainable transportation. The aim is to establish best practices for transportation policy and infrastructure that prioritize the safety and well-being of IWG2SLGBTQQIA+. Specifically for all responsible governments and transit authorities to ensure all pre-existing and future public transportation projects are inclusive and safe.
 - a) Inclusivity involves ensuring easy and dignified access for everyone, including those with mobility challenges, parents with young children, and IWG2SLGBTQQIA+.
 - b) Safety encompasses well-lit bus stops, ensuring there is mobile reception and connectivity along public transportation stops and routes, staff with cultural competency training, and vigilant employees, especially at night.

“

It's hard to sell taxpayers on providing services outside their city but there is no reason not to think about cost-sharing regional solutions that involve collaborations between First Nations and municipalities.

”

- Don Iverson, Civic Good

Case study on Ikwe Safe Rides questioning whose responsibility is safe reliable mobility?

Ikwe Safe Rides (Women Helping Women) Winnipeg, Manitoba is home to the largest urban percentage of Indigenous people in Canada.³⁹ While people routinely rely on taxis, IWG2SLGBTQQIA+ often face racism, discrimination, and assault while using taxi. Ikwe Safe Rides started as a Facebook group to address the lack of safety IWG2SLGBTQQIA+ felt while using taxis.⁴⁶ Today, it is a not-for-profit where women volunteers provide Indigenous women and children free transportation (donations encouraged).

This is a community initiative offering safe, reliable transportation for IWG2SLGBTQQIA+. Calling into question: Should safe mobility be the responsibility of volunteers, or is it a public service with governmental responsibility?⁴⁷





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