

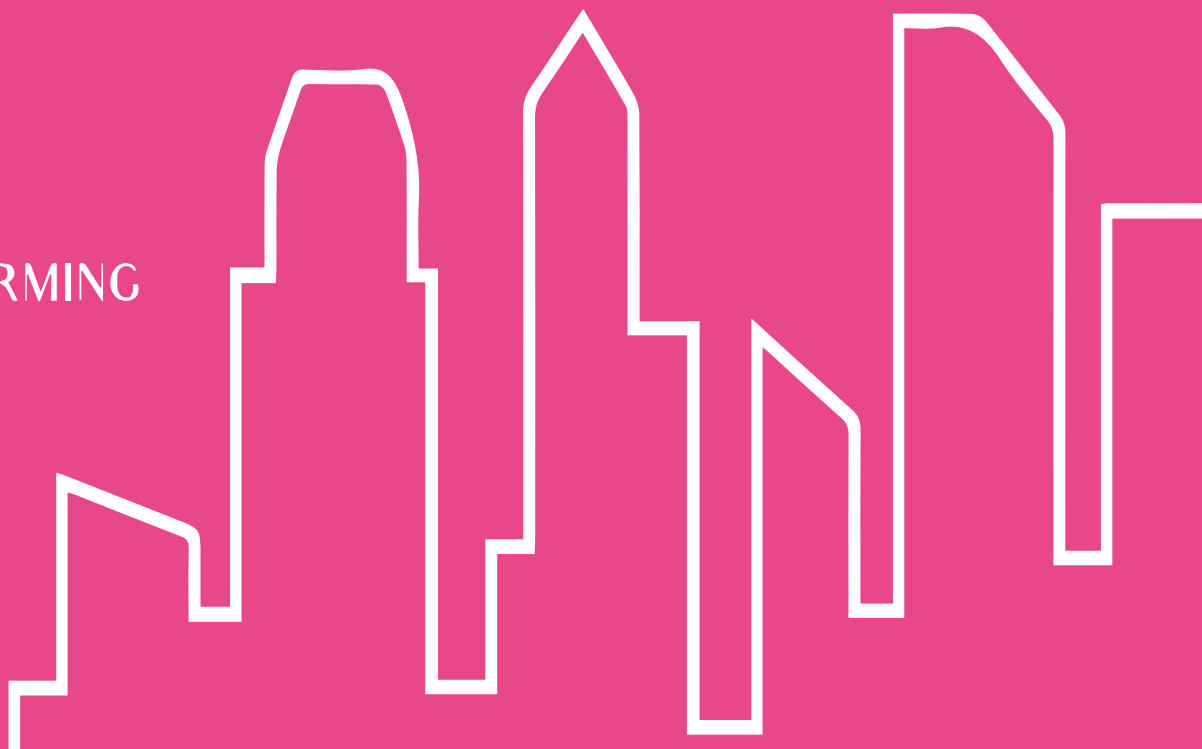
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Municipal Election Guide

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Indigenous Women and Girls

"Aboriginal women and girls are strong and beautiful. They are our mothers, our daughters, our sisters, our aunts and our grandmothers."

This statement opens a document produced by the Native Women's Association of Canada. The Indigenous women in Vancouver are strong and beautiful. They are also at a far greater risk for poverty, violence, and homelessness.

Vancouver has the third-largest population of Indigenous peoples in Canada (City of Vancouver, 2018). While the City has taken measures towards reconciliation, there is more work to be done to address the disproportionate discrimination, violence, barriers, and exclusion Indigenous women and girls face in their daily lives and in local government.

The urban Indigenous population is often under-served, at times due to assumptions that local reserves are responsible for supporting their needs. While Vancouver is located on the traditional, unceded, ancestral lands of the Coast Salish peoples, those First Nations are not responsible for housing and supporting programs for all urban Indigenous peoples in the City (MVAEC, 2015). The needs of the urban population are met through the coordination of municipal, provincial, and federal levels of government, and for services to be effective, they must be strategic and holistic. A Task Force is necessary to bring together representatives from all levels of government to prevent Indigenous women and girls from falling through jurisdictional gaps.

Meaningful engagement of Indigenous women requires more than a checkbox. Constant monitoring and evaluation of the City's efforts to engage Indigenous women is required to ensure that women and girls can access services without fear of judgment or discrimination. While the City has a policy to support culturally safe engagement, it should strive to continually improve in order to better reflect the nuances of intersectionality. Cultural safety must also be reflected in the measurement of success; allowing Indigenous peoples to define "success" in a way that reflects their culture, and allows for capacity-building through a strengths-based approach.

In 2014 WTC asserted that programs for Aboriginal women and girls need long-term investment, and they still do. They also need investment that is proportional to the population, and to their specific needs. While the urban Indigenous population is under-served generally, anecdotally this is even more true for women and girls. Funding needs to be sustainable, but also reflect the reality of the community make-up, through equitable and proportional funding for women's programs, spaces and women-led initiatives. These programs would focus on safety, culture, income, healing and wellness to assist Indigenous women to heal, to gather, and to be empowered.

The above strategies address only a few of the issues faced by Indigenous women and girls in the City. Importantly, the 2014 HPP recommendations (namely: to develop culturally safe approaches to services, review and enhance funding requirements to reflect Indigenous approaches to social development strategies, and to support the development of indigenous women-led projects through grants) still require additional institutional and operational support.

There should be Indigenous-specific priorities viewed in each of the HPP key areas as the inequity and discrimination experienced by Indigenous women and girls extends to every aspect of City life.

In consultation with Ginger Gosnell-Myers

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We ask candidates and parties to:

Create a multi-sector/multi-level task force to advise the City

Ensure culturally-safe engagement policies

Make equitable and proportional funding for social services, programs, and spaces

Include indigenous women in candidates for Mayor, Council, School and Park Board

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Affordable Housing

Lack of affordable housing in Vancouver has become the centre of political platforms and debate for the 2018 municipal election. Vancouver has emerged as a city with one of the most expensive housing markets in the world. According to BC Housing's own estimation, the income required to pay the "average market rent for an appropriately sized unit in the market" would start out at \$41,500 for a Bachelor Suite (BC Housing, 2018). In Vancouver, the gap between housing and income widens every year.

Using a gendered-intersectional lens, we acknowledge that women, due to income inequities (especially low-income single mothers, racialized youth, and elder women) are impacted the most by systemic barriers to affordable housing.

No one can afford housing in Vancouver anymore. Unaffordable housing is associated with housing instability, health risks, and the perpetuation of marginalization. Poorly maintained single room occupancy buildings (SROs) or temporary shelters are often the only option that low income women are left with and there are very few of those that are designed to meet the specific needs of women. As housing prices in both the sales and rental sectors soar, so do the rates of homelessness. Women tend to be the invisible homeless, couch surfing and staying in abusive relationships to avoid being on the streets. Ending homelessness, however, is not just about building more affordable housing. It's also about preventing homelessness: we must stop apprehending children, raise the minimum wage, provide adequate support for moms to raise their children, create employment/education opportunities, deliver adequate and affordable day care and end violence against women – all of these are pathways into homelessness and if we don't deal with them, we can never build enough housing. It is about taking action, providing support, and working with all levels of government to address the many issues that act as pathways into homelessness.

Women are one of the groups most dramatically affected by homelessness, in both the challenges they face once homeless, and the impacts of the dangers of being homeless to them. Homelessness and fear of homelessness for women is closely linked to violence, both in cause and effect. Homeless women in Vancouver on a daily basis face sexual harassment and the threat of physical and sexual violence.

The lack of single-sex shelters for women is a serious systemic problem with grave consequences. We have not seen the demand and the critical need for gender segregation being met (BWSS, Women and Homelessness 2012).

We ask candidates and parties to:

Build more safe, low income, affordable housing units that are women-friendly

Enforce residential tenancy standards to protect against housing-based exploitation

Implement the City for All Women, Women's Equity Strategy 2018-2028 housing recommendations

Reserve at least 50% plus units for women on low incomes

Women who leave abusive relationships and go to transition houses can be forced back to violent and abusive situations, due to the high rental rates, when the allowed 30 days in a transition house are up. Women should not be forced to choose between a roof over their head or abuse.

In partnership with Battered Women's Support Services, ATIRA Women's Resource Society

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Child Care

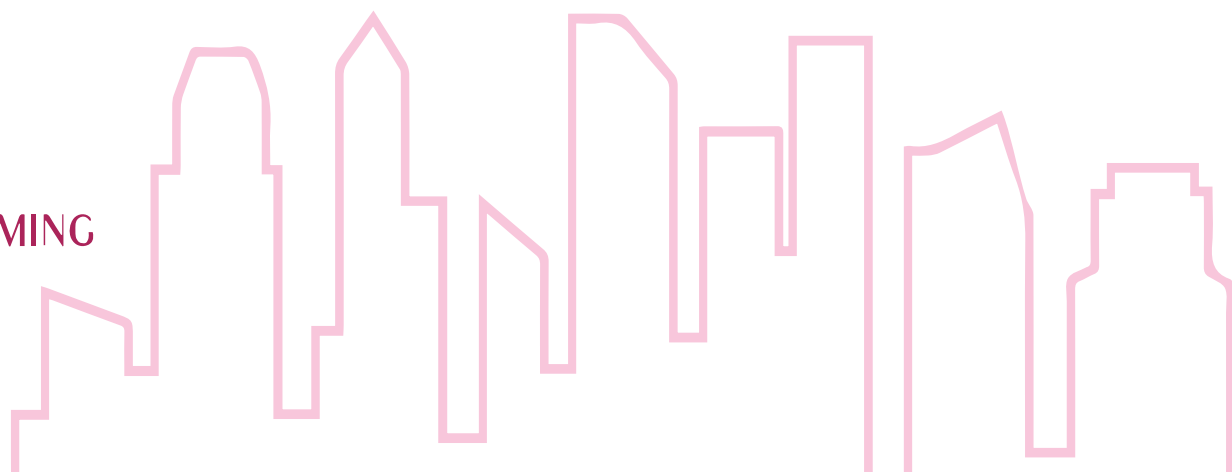
The City is an influencer in child care. The City's support for the \$10aDay Plan has been instrumental in securing current child care commitments from senior governments, who are ultimately responsible for child care policy and funding. Without enough operating funds from government, child care remains a user fee service with limited subsidies for low income families. Vancouver families pay an average of \$17,028 per year for care for their toddler, frequently making child care a family's second highest expense after housing (Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre, 2017). This cost makes it difficult for young families to live and -- especially for mothers -- to work in Vancouver. While the City has increased the number of child care spaces, there are still not enough to meet demand, and the spaces that do exist are not affordable for many families.

College-trained early childhood educators, the vast majority of whom are women, do not earn a living wage and many have no choice but to leave the field for higher paying jobs, which undermines the quality of care.

While child care costs have risen 35% since 2007, income has only increased 10%. On average, women spend 50 hours a week caring for their children. This is even more difficult to balance while also doing other unpaid or paid work, experiencing violence, or trying to leave an abusive relationship. Providing access to affordable child care would allow women who are leaving abusive relationships access to the support they need, such as legal support, support in finding housing, counselling, income assistance, employment or other support services without the worry of looking for affordable child care.

Lack of access to quality, affordable child care was a top issue in the 2017 provincial election, which ended with all parties committing to significant new public investments generally, and the BC NDP committing to implement the \$10aDay Child Care Plan specifically. The child care community is tracking government's progress towards implementing the Plan, and taking action to ensure that, over time: parent fees are reduced to a maximum of \$10/day, with no user fees for families with annual incomes under \$40,000; that early Childhood Educators (ECEs) are fairly compensated, well-educated and respected; and that licensed spaces that meet diverse family needs are broadly available.

The \$10aDay Plan supports Indigenous rights in Indigenous child care and urges governments to respond to the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and to implement the United



Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Affordable and high quality child care not only encourages children's healthy development, allows mothers to enter and remain in the labour force and enables families to move out of poverty, it also benefits the economy by reducing social costs and increasing tax revenues. In fact, a recent economic study projects that on full implementation of the \$10aDay Child Care Plan there will be \$5.8 billion added to the GDP, 69,000 jobs created across BC, and enough government revenues raised to cover the estimated \$1.5 billion incremental annual cost (Fairholm and Anderson, 2017). The Plan will also provide higher economic returns than typical government investments, even in the short term.

The \$10aDay Plan will allow women to better support their families, put their skills and talents to work, and fully participate in their communities. Access to affordable child care will move many Vancouver families out of poverty. Early childhood educators will receive a living wage and be able to live and spend in the City. The Vancouver Board of Education will have the resources to deliver quality child care that Vancouver's children and families need and deserve.

Businesses support the \$10aDay Plan and recent government investments because they see the benefits. They will have a more stable workforce and will also benefit from women's increased spending power. The Plan will also reduce the pressure on wages alone to cover child care costs; the 2018 living wage in Metro Vancouver would drop by \$4, from \$21 to \$17/hour. And overall it will "improve the Greater Vancouver region's ability to attract human capital" (Greater Vancouver Board of Trade, 2018).

In partnership with Child Care Advocates of BC

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We ask candidates and parties to:

Continue to improve upon the existing \$10 A Day Child Care Plan

Partner with the provincial government to create new spaces and facilities

Create policies to include child care spaces in all large developments

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Electoral Reform

In Canadian politics, women are underrepresented as both elected officials and candidates. In Vancouver's 2014 election, women comprised 20% of Mayoral candidates, 33% of City Council candidates, 48% of School Trustee candidates, and 36% of Park Commissioner candidates (City of Vancouver, 2014). Of these, the majority were not women of colour or Indigenous women.

Many barriers prevent more women from running for office, including the at-large voting system currently used in the City. Most Canadian cities and municipalities use wards instead, opting to have localized representation for each area. Ward systems enable candidates to focus on their own neighbourhood and be elected by their own community where their volunteer work counts, often removing the need for political parties and decreasing barriers to election for women from marginalized communities. Moreover, proportional voting systems lead to more women running and being elected. A 2012 study found that countries using proportional representation had, on average, 8 percent more women officials than countries using other systems (Fair Vote Canada, n.d.).

Funding a campaign is also a major issue. Women still have less income than men, earning 87 cents for every dollar made by men for full-time work (Israel, 2017). Racialized women, Indigenous women, and women with disabilities experience an even larger pay gap, earning 26 cents less than white or typically-abled women (Lambert and McInturff, 2016). Women also tend to spend 10% more on political campaigns than do men in order to pay for childcare and domestic responsibilities as well as overcome male incumbency (United Nations Development Programme, 2007). By implementing stricter rules on campaign financing and donation limits to political parties, the City can create an equal playing field for all candidates and incentivize more women to run. The City should call for equal funding and advertising space for all candidates, and then ban campaign and party donations altogether.

Women need to not just have a seat at the table, but an equal number of seats as men, in order for decisions to be truly democratic. For this reason, parties need to commit to running at least 50% women candidates, while reserving seats for Indigenous women and encouraging women from marginalized communities. Overall, parties can also do more to encourage civic engagement and provide educational resources to help more diverse voices become involved.

We ask candidates and parties to:

Ensure diverse women comprise at least 50% of candidates and elected officials

Implement wards and proportional voting systems

Get rid of the “third party” loophole allowing organizations to circumvent donation limits to political parties.

Support the “City for All Women, Women’s Equity Strategy” and the Women’s Advisory Committee.

Writer and Researcher Halena Seiferling

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Ending Violence Against Women

The United Nations defines violence against women as “Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.” Violence can also show its face in the form of racism, homophobia, ableism and ageism.

Because gender inequality and unequal power relationships between women and men are the root cause of violence against women and girls, social change that shifts these is vital for reducing and ultimately eliminating violence against women and girls (Battered Women’s Support Services 2018).

Violence against diverse women does not exist on an equal playing field.

Indigenous women are killed at six times the rate of non-indigenous women. Between 1980 and 2012 there were 1,181 to 4,000 cases of missing or murdered Aboriginal women in Canada. Hundreds of Indigenous women and girls have gone missing in Vancouver in recent decades. Indigenous women are less likely to be supported by police because of biases, and less likely to have access to justice. Support and funding for Indigenous women’s leadership is needed to help deal with this impact and is a strategy that can be used to create long term change. We know that Indigenous women and two spirit (lesbian, trans, and bisexual) people are particularly vulnerable to violence because of historical and ongoing systemic sexism, racism, and trans/misogyny.

40-60% of Asian women report experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner during their lifetime and 54% of girls between aged 15 and 19 experience “sexual coercion” in a dating relationship.

Immigrant and refugee women as well as women with precarious immigration status who are experiencing abuse in their relationships can fall through the cracks of social safety nets as many social service providers find they are unable to include refugee or non-status women that experience violence in their mandate.

Women with disabilities are also more likely to experience domestic violence, emotional abuse, and sexual assault than women without disabilities. Women living with physical and cognitive impairments experience violence two to three times more often than women living without impairments. Women with disabilities may also feel more isolated and feel they are unable to report the abuse, or they may be dependent on the abuser for their care. Like many women who are abused, women with disabilities are usually abused by someone they know, such as a partner or family member.

Senior women can experience much of the same tactics of power and control along with physical and sexual abuse that we see in all abusive relationships. Women may experience violence for the first time as seniors, or have been navigating an abusive relationship for decades. Because every woman's situation is unique to her we seek not to generalize (BWSS, Violence Against Senior Women 2016).

It is not enough to have policies around "domestic violence" if they are not followed. There needs to be greater accountability and effectiveness of work by the VPD, including training for patrol officers who may be called to a situation of sexual violence or intimate partner violence.

In a research project done by Hollaback Vancouver, 58% of women surveyed indicate they don't feel safe on transit. Although statistics are helpful to illustrate how common sexual harassment on public transportation is for girls and women, they cannot adequately convey the negative impacts on women's health and well-being.

Despite the high levels of incidents, sexual harassment remains mainly unreported. Women tend not to report the majority of incidents, amid concerns that they would not be taken seriously.

***"We all have
the right to
feel safe in
our cities."***

We believe that women must be able to move about and occupy the public space without being placed in danger or threatened. It is a fundamental freedom. Safe public transit for women and girls is about recognizing our experiences and needs. We all have the right to feel safe in our cities.

The City of Vancouver must strengthen its funding and commitment of anti-violence policies and programs to make diverse women and girls' safety a priority. The City's incentives: Women comprise 51% of the city's population making them the majority of voters and key contributors to taxes. Supporting anti-violence initiatives would directly appeal to women as they are disproportionately affected by violence and intimate partner abuse.

The City must provide multiple, fully accessible Women's Hubs for all self identified women. These gathering spaces would allow women and girls to come together to heal and receive specialized programs such as victim services, counselling, legal advocacy, assertiveness/safety training and alternative, cultural-based therapies that advocate for, and support women and girls at the time they experience violence in their lives. The Women's Hubs would allow all women and girls to affirm their participation in public life, to receive mentoring, and to learn about their health and wellbeing in a location that is accessible to them. These spaces must be safe and inclusive for lesbians, Trans, bi, and self identified women recognizing power dynamics (Battered Women's Support Services 2018).

Educate the public through dissemination of information on violence against women and girls. Research shows that high school violence prevention programs are highly effective with long term benefits such as better dating relationships, the ability to recognize and leave an unhealthy relationship, and increased self-confidence, assertiveness, and leadership. Raising awareness about gender based violence will support women and girl's voices to identify abuse and challenge gender inequality, victim-blaming, and how our community addresses violence against women.

Urban public spaces tend to generate the highest fear of crime and violence for women. Isolated wooded areas like those in like Stanley Park are often perceived as high risk areas. Women tend not to access parks alone because of perceived or real safety concerns. Girls are particularly socialized into a restricted use of public space through their parents' observations of safe places to play or go.

A safety audit is needed throughout the city to determine which areas can be changed to be safer. Safety audits help distinguish between crime statistics and fear of crime. Although crime statistics for an area may be low, people living there or frequenting the place can still be quite fearful. Safety audits can help develop the overall management strategies for parks and streets, by addressing design and safety concerns specifically for women.

A safety plan for the entire city must be coordinated by the Mayor's office and women's anti-violence organizations. We ask for a large scale effort to design our community to better cater to diverse women with diverse needs. This includes but is not limited to better street lighting and access to transportation and parks without the threat of violence.

We ask candidates and parties to:

Conduct a full safety audit of the City of Vancouver

Allocate funding for organizations doing anti violence work

Organize a City wide anti violence campaign coordinated by the Mayor's Office and women's anti violence organizations

In partnership with Women Against Violence Against Women and Battered Women's Support Services

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Environment, Climate Change & Resilience

In the City of Vancouver's Greenest City 2020 strategy, there are few points that specifically include women in the new green programs and initiatives. The City of Vancouver must employ a gender intersectional lens in order to recognize the varied impact women in cities face due to climate change, in relation to where they are situated within the existing power structures.

Women are generally responsible for most of the unpaid "green" work in the home, such as recycling, cleaning, food security, home purchases and daily transportation (Milan et al., 2011). Women's unpaid work is key to implementing green and emergency preparedness strategies but women are rarely at the table to develop the strategy. This gives them less means to access the benefits of the greenest city initiatives, especially when women are taking on greater domestic and childcare responsibilities. Special consideration should also be given to expanding the concept around 'green work' to include women's existing green work in these capacities, and also in gender equality in workforce training for these new green jobs (Williams et al., 2018)

Municipal green initiatives, such as reducing energy consumption, composting, or buying local, can impact different citizen groups in unique ways, with some experiencing a greater financial or scheduling burden. The City of Vancouver needs to explicitly include women when developing green programs and the city's commitment to green and sustainable public space infrastructure should include policies aimed at ensuring safety for women and girls, therefore increasing their inclusivity and accessibility.

Designing public open spaces to be inclusive of women and girls from diverse backgrounds creates opportunities for them to engage fully in community life, promotes health and contributes to gender equality (HealthBridge, 2016). The Greenest City Action Plan 2020 fails to include sex-disaggregated data about women's equitable access to parks and open spaces. There is a notable lack of access to green spaces in East Vancouver. While the Social Indicators and Trends 2014 had an action item for identifying overlaps between social vulnerability and gaps in access to nature, the research is yet to be conducted. Based on data on public spaces collected by Women in Cities International in 2014, interventions for parks and open spaces to be more inclusive of women are centred around four issues: (1) atmospheres,



planning and maintenance of public spaces, such as better lighting, inclusion of women from the community in festival and event planning; (2) road safety for access to open spaces, safe bicycle paths and promoting active transportation in neighbourhoods where women express lack of engagement due to lack of safety; (3) intersectionality in inclusion through measures to help immigrant women, seniors, persons living with disabilities and visible minorities out of isolation and favour their integration in open spaces; (4) citizen participation should be encouraged through public consultations, exploratory walks, public assemblies with extra care given to inclusion of women from cultural communities.

Another issue in urban environments is that of food deserts or neighbourhoods with little or no access to affordable grocery stores. As in all socio-economic challenges, women face a higher rate of food insecurity and malnutrition. According to a report by the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC), female lone-parent households in BC with children under the age of 18 face the highest rate of food insecurity at 34.2%. According to the Anti-Poverty Coalition, this is higher than the Canadian average for comparable households through Canada.

The City of Vancouver should implement policies to make its Food Access programs, such as community kitchens and low-cost grocery stores, more accessible to women, especially those facing additional barriers and marginalization. This is where an intersectional lens is instrumental in devising a plan that works for all women.

Vancouver is seeing a loss of green space due to development. Destruction of the land is linked to violence against women. The development and sustainability of a green economy moving away from resource extraction will benefit women and their families (BWSS, Women, resource extraction, and climate change 2016).

We ask candidates and parties to:

Review the City's Greenest City Action Plan and emergency preparedness strategies related to climate change with a gendered intersectional lens

Enhance community engagement strategies to ensure the inclusivity of diverse women and girls

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Transportation

Addressing the needs of all women requires addressing the ways in which women and girls move around the city. Accessible public transportation remains an issue that the City of Vancouver must contend with in 2018. In 2015, a report published by Cornell University regarding Street Harassment Statistics in Canada (Livingston, 2015) showed that 88% of women in Canada had their first street harassment experience before the age of 18. The same report found that Public Transit and Public Transit Stations were the third and fourth most common areas of harassment in the city, respectively. In terms of behavioural responses to harassment in public spaces, 84.18% of women interviewed said that they would “take a different route home or to their destination,” and 77.34% said that they would “choose to take different mode of transportation (e.g. call a cab instead of taking the bus)”.

These findings reveal the scale on which women and girls are structurally and individually affected by a lack of a safe transportation system. However, it is not enough to merely demand safety; transit must also be affordable.

“Lowering the transit costs enables youth to get to school and ensures those who are homeless can get to the shelters they need to survive. It means that families will no longer have to make hard choices, folks can get to work without losing the bulk of their hard-earned wages which for women, especially single mothers, is a very low income. Additionally everyone can access the health care they need, when they need it. In the words of one father on social assistance, “I had to choose between transit to get myself to the doctor or buying my daughter milk.” It is long overdue for TransLink to address the glaring fact that those who need transit the most are left off the system”. (AllOnBoard, 2018)

The City of Vancouver is going through an affordable housing crisis, which means that housing units surrounding transportation hubs are also financially less accessible. The city needs to create policies that address the wealth and income disparity between people who are able to afford transit-friendly housing and are not fully dependent on public transit (e.g. car owners) versus people who are fully dependent on public transit for work and leisure but unable to afford transit-friendly housing.

Cycling is an affordable, active, and convenient way to get around cities. To make it more accessible to women, we need a connected network of cycling infrastructure that allows women to feel safe, and able to get to their destinations as directly as possible.

We ask candidates and parties to:

Extend the operational hours of all transit to 24 hours, 7 days a week

Make Vancouver a free transit zone after dark

Create safer transit and stations

Endorse the www.AllOnBoard2018.ca Campaign

Commit to fully connecting the cycling network with All Ages and Abilities facilities

Create women centered programs tailored to improving access to complete bicycles, parts, accessories and services

Accessibility of cycling as a safer alternative to walking is a challenge to many women in Vancouver. Women centered programs tailored to improving access to complete bicycles, parts, accessories, and services for women and girls experiencing barriers to affordable forms of transportation will support women's safety.

In partnership with the All On Board Initiative, Our Community Bikes, and HUB Cycling

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All On Board Campaign 2018 retrieved from <https://www.allonboard.ca/>

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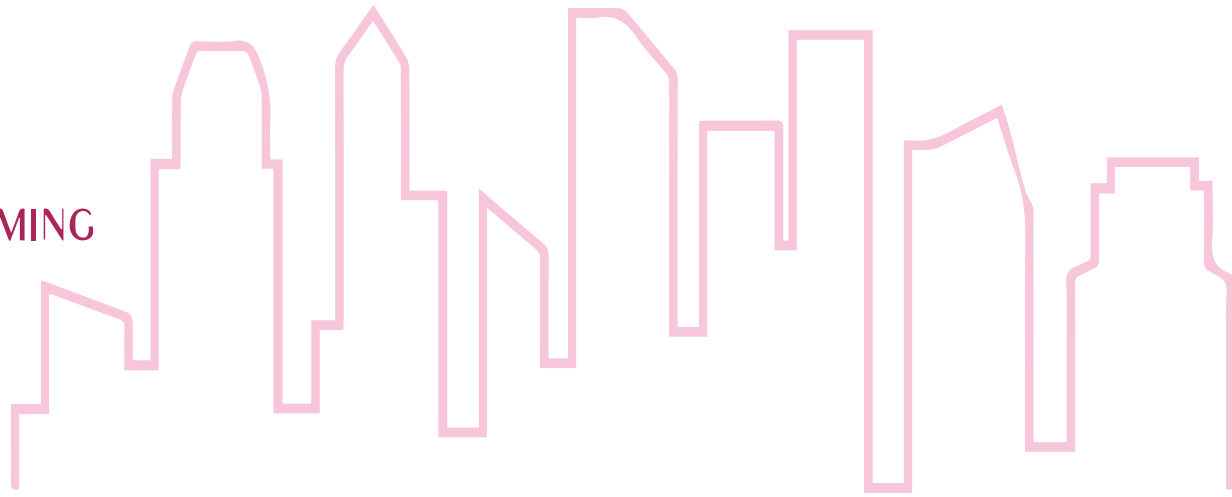
Women, Work and Income

Women face high levels of unemployment, make up a disproportionate share of low-income Canadians, and are particularly vulnerable in any economic crisis. They are also more likely to be working in precarious employment and shift work. Challenges are exacerbated if women are youth or seniors, and especially so if they are indigenous or new immigrants. Single parents or those who belong to other equity seeking groups face even more financial insecurity. 50 percent of single senior women live in poverty on incomes below the LICO line. Women account for 72% of part-time employees and approximately two-thirds of Canadians working for minimum wage. Canada has the highest levels of working mothers (working outside the home) in our recorded history; 36% of mother-led families still have incomes below the poverty line and 43% of children living in a low-income family live with a single, female parent. The median income for single mothers is more than a third lower than for single fathers.

Supporting women's economic empowerment through skills based training and supporting women's micro-businesses through training and funding will help increase economic security for women.

Women do the overwhelming majority of the unpaid housework, child and elder care and volunteer work for which they are neither recognized nor given credit. They are therefore an invisible part of the functioning of our cities. The working conditions and low incomes of women have a direct impact on the high rates of child poverty. The City can improve women's working lives by implementing supportive policies and acting as a model employer such as providing affordable child care for staff and for people attending Council and advisory meetings.

Women are underrepresented in the higher paying jobs as well as traditionally male dominated occupations at the city. The City of Vancouver (CoV) needs ongoing training and monitoring to reduce systemic barriers and reach equity of diverse women throughout all departments and in management. It needs to collect and publish disaggregated data on city staff, contractors (including job descriptions, demographics, benefits, salaries). It needs a public posting of salaries as well as provision of mentoring systems to advance women. It needs to redesign transparent, timely, proportional, and confidential complaint mechanisms to make it easier for women to complain without fear, and as well as for the purpose of accountability. The CoV should not require women to state their previous wages in their applications for work which often results in women employees starting at a lower salary. The CoV should lobby the Federal government to provide EI coverage for elected representatives who lose elections.



We ask candidates and parties to:

Commit to comprehensive pay equity and employment

Recognize all work: volunteer, unpaid, precarious, reproductive and domestic work

Hire a City advocate for all workers, including sex trade, illegal, and domestic etc.

Complete a yearly gender pay gap audit on all City staff

Advocate for a provincial and federal anti-poverty plan

References

Mckinsey Report "The power of parity: Advancing Women's Equity in Canada"

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives "The best and worst place to be a woman in Canada Study" (2017).

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. (2014) "Working for a living wage: Making paid work meet basic family needs in Metro Vancouver"

City of London, UK Gender Pay Gap retrieved from <https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/governance-and-spending/spending-money-wisely/gender-pay-gap-report-march-2017-data>.

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Young Women

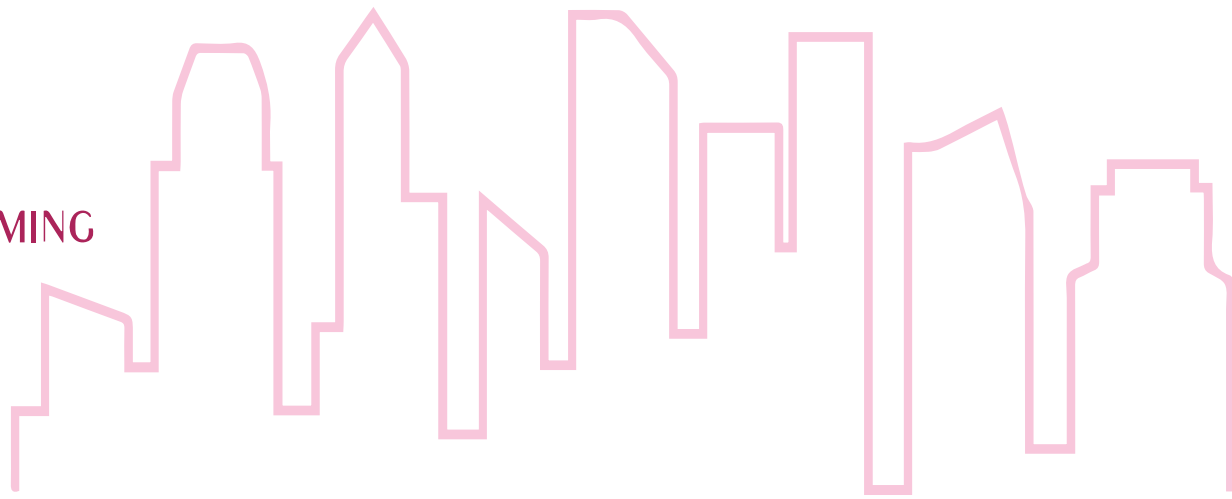
Youth in Vancouver have difficulty accessing the necessary resources, services and opportunities to become more active civic participants. Young women in particular feel alienated from formal political processes and are disengaged from civic duties. To ensure that the City of Vancouver serves its entire population equally and democratically, it must eliminate age and gender-specific barriers to political and civic participation and give youth and young women an equal voice in their city.

While young people bear the brunt of political, environmental and economic decisions, and while in BC young people have the right to work from 15 and effectively pay taxes, they have no say on how these tax dollars are used and they cannot shape the policies that impact them and their future. (Employment of Young People Factsheet)

Evidence suggests that those who vote at an earlier stage in their life tend to be voters for life. Analysis also shows that the discussion of political issues in the classroom (rather than the simple delivery of civics-style classes per se) may act as a positive factor in the political socialisation of young people (Mobilisation through early activation 2018). Young people show a greater willingness to vote when civic knowledge is increased (The School's Role in Developing Civic Engagement. 2002).

Youth and young women in particular are not equipped with adequate tools to be civic leaders and have a direct impact in shaping the city of Vancouver. The establishment of more youth hubs and funding programs specifically designed to support women in leadership and entrepreneurial positions is a step in the right direction toward improving civic literacy and engagement. Hubs like City Hive exemplify the kinds of youth-driven communities that promote civic engagement initiatives and connect urban leaders with one another. The Forum For Women Entrepreneurs (FWE) in Vancouver is another example of an organization that empowers young entrepreneurs by providing networking and mentorship resources. The FWE cultivates a diverse community that is both willing and eager to support young women.

In addition, as young women experience discrimination based on gender, age, sexual orientation and other intersecting factors, there is a critical gap in funding and resources for education, skills development and mentorship. This impacts the ability of young women to realize their full potential as leaders. (UN Women 2017)



There is currently a lack of gender specific programs in the City of Vancouver that enable young women to become active participants in city-planning initiatives and municipal elections. The funding and implementation of these kinds of programs is critical in order to confront the gender and age-specific barriers that impede a young woman's involvement in decision making processes in the public sphere (Justice Education Society of BC, 2013).

As gender stereotypes in leadership and civic engagement coexist within frames of age, culture, race, ethnicity, class, ability and sexual orientation, special care must be given to creating spaces for diverse young women, to strengthen their skills and knowledge to overcome the multiple barriers they may face as they attempt to be more engaged in civic life. (Equitas Young Women, Young Leaders)

We ask candidates and parties to:

Advocate to lower the voting age to 16

Fund programs that support the creation of women-friendly service hubs and incubators to develop skills and networks

Create gender-specific programs to learn about, and participate in city planning, municipal elections, and other civic engagement activities

In consultation with City Hive and Check Your Head

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Employment of Young People Factsheet. Retrieved from <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/employment-standards-advice/employment-standards/factsheets/general-employment-of-young-people>

Mobilisation through early activation and school engagement – the story from Scotland (2018) retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13676261.2018.1450968>

The School's Role in Developing Civic Engagement: A Study of Adolescents in Twenty-Eight Countries. Torney-Purta, J. (2002) retrieved from https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1207/S1532480XADS0604_7

City Hive <https://www.cityhive.ca/>

Forum For Women Entrepreneurs retrieved from <http://www.fwe.ca/>

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Immigrant, Migrant and Refugee Women

Violence against women is a global problem, with immigrant, refugee and migrant women and girls experiencing greater violence and discrimination than others, due to additional factors such as ethnicity, class, immigration status, isolation, and language barriers. Lack of access to health services, women's shelters and women's centres further exacerbates the violence and isolation immigrant women face. For example, immigrant women fear reporting abuse and violence to police due to the threat of deportation or lack of knowledge of their rights and Canadian systems.

The city of Vancouver needs to be a safe place for all women and girls. Having access to unbiased, essential social services is crucial in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of non-status, refugee, and immigrant girls and women, and women with precarious immigration status. Recent changes in federal immigration policy have created barriers in migrants' access to official refugee, resident, or citizenship status (Cohen, 2013; CCR, 2013), while an increased frequency of deportation and detention prevents precarious migrants from accessing essential services due to fear of deportation and detention (No One is Illegal, 2014; Keung, 2013). In February 2013 and 2014, the cities of Toronto and Hamilton became Sanctuary Cities, granting universal access to municipal services irrespective of immigration status. We ask that the City of Vancouver become a sanctuary city to ensure that all individuals can access municipal services such as health care, housing, food, education, and emergency shelters and services. This policy will not only support women, but also their dependent children, since children have limited access or no access to school while they or their families live under the threat of deportation.

According to the 2016 BC census, BC has 14.5% immigrants and 40.8% of the total population of Vancouver is represented by immigrants. In 2016, BC resettled a total of 4,095 refugees (ISS of BC, 2018). Many of them flee from war, violence and torture and face numerous barriers and hardships as newcomers. An immigrant advocate, similar to the city's former Child and Youth Advocate, could liaise with newcomer and settlement and women's organizations to identify service gaps (utilizing an holistic approach), and encourage newcomer women and girls to share their opinions about the issues that affect their communities. Creating space for all immigrant, migrant and refugee women and girls to take a leadership role in the city would bring diverse, inclusive perspectives and practices, and legitimize their presence and participation in the public sphere.

We ask candidates and parties to:

Make Vancouver a Sanctuary City

Hire a City advocate to support immigrant, migrant and refugee women

Address systemic barriers present in areas such as housing and violence

In partnership with Priti Shah and MOSAIC

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Intersectionality

This section explains the meaning of intersectionality and its importance in interweaving it into all the issues presented in the 2018 Hot Pink Paper.

Everyone has different needs. If we say “one size fits all” or that “everyone will be treated equally”, some people will be excluded or still experience inequities. Intersectional feminist frameworks aim to understand the many circumstances that, combined with discriminatory social practices, produce and sustain inequality and exclusion. An intersectional framework can help cities understand the multi-dimensional lives of their citizens, including concepts of gender, race, culture, income, ability, age, refugee or immigrant status, sexual orientation etc. Using an intersectional approach can help to address systemic barriers and power structures in cities.

Intersectionality is a measurable, time-sensitive lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where power interlocks and intersects (Crenshaw 2017). Different dimensions of power include gender, race, culture, income, paid and unpaid work, ability, diversity, age, the rural and the urban, and many others.

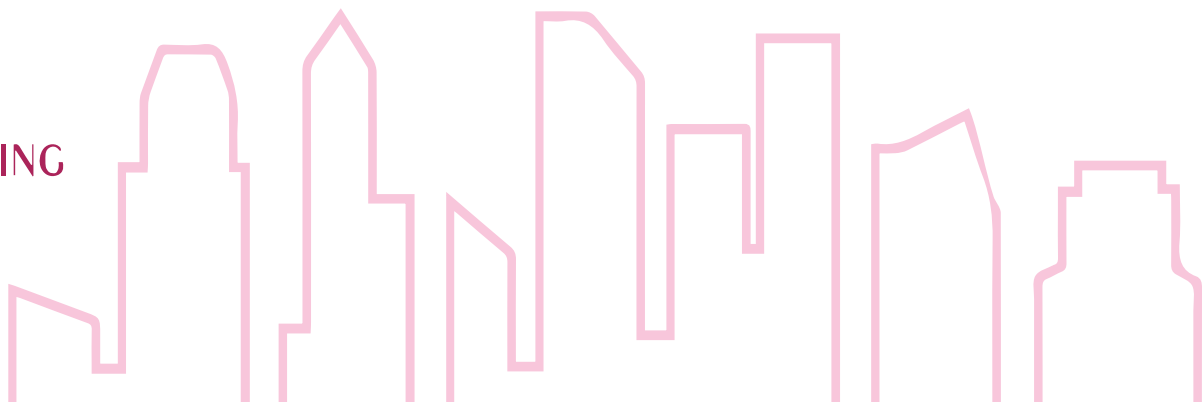
As a lens, intersectionality must be applied to all policies, programmes, budgets, funding, governance, and staffing. It can address systemic barriers and global crises.

Existing legal and policy mechanisms within Vancouver are stacked against people with multiple minority identities. We call on Vancouver to identify and address the specific acts and policies that sustain inequalities experienced by various social groups.

Intersectionality recognizes that a one size fits all approach does not address complex inequalities and the interdependent relationships between them.

We ask candidates and parties to:

Develop a gendered intersectional framework to be applied to all City policies, programs, budgets, funding, staffing and governance



A Diagram of a Gendered - Intersectional Framework

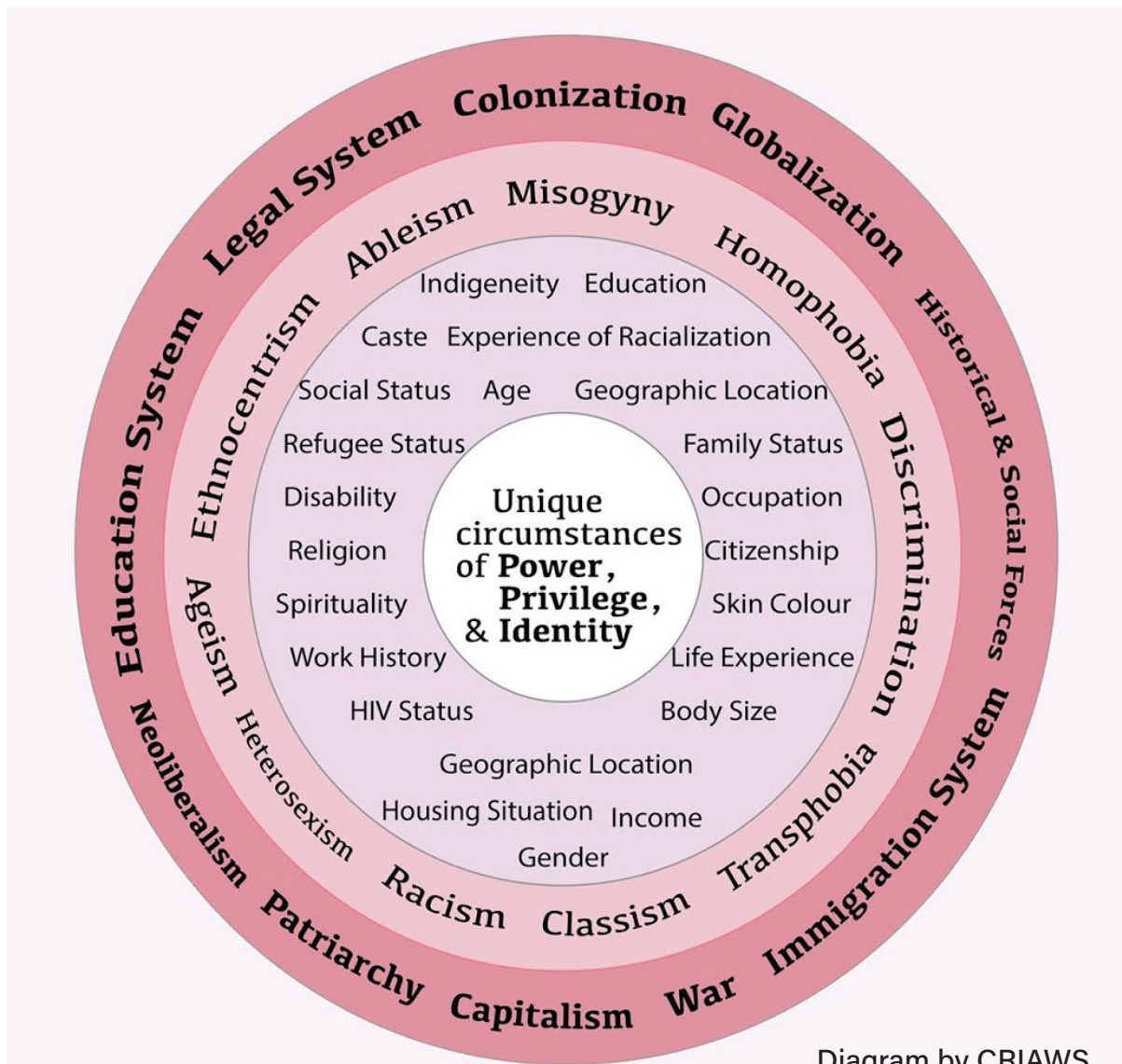


Diagram by CRIAWS

The innermost circle represents a person's unique circumstances. The second circle from the inside represents aspects of identity. The Third Circle from the inside represents different types of discrimination , -isms, prejudiced attitudes that impact identity. The outermost circle represents larger forces and structures that work together to reinforce exclusion and inequality.