

The Hot Pink Paper Campaign: Where are We Now?¹

Executive Summary

Introduction

Women and girls continue to face systemic challenges in society. On average, women do not earn the same amount of income as men, are disproportionately burdened with the unpaid work of child care and elder responsibilities, and are more likely to work part-time or for fewer hours. Their experiences with a city's policies, programs and services are affected by their gender, and by other things such as their age, their income, and their lives as Indigenous people. Because of these and other differences, women's and girls' experiences need to be uniquely considered in the development of municipal public policies, programs, and services.

In 2014, working with other women-serving organizations around Vancouver, Women Transforming Cities (WTC) created the Hot Pink Paper (HPP) Campaign as a way of drawing attention to challenges facing diverse women and girls in the city. The HPP outlined 11 important issues facing women and girls in Vancouver, and proposed up to 3 action items for each issue area. The full list of issue areas and action items is available at: <https://www.womentransformingcities.org/pink-paper-report-cards-and-commitm>. WTC asked candidates running for office to commit to pursuing the action items, with the goal of encouraging municipal policy solutions created by and for women.

How is Vancouver Doing in Meeting the Needs of Women and Girls?

This report assesses how Vancouver is doing around three issue areas that received broad support during the HPP Campaign: (1) Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls; (2) The Environment; and (3) Access to Adequate and Affordable Housing.

Vancouver has made **minimal progress** on important action items related to addressing **Violence Against Women and Girls**. The three action items in this area were to: (a) develop and implement a comprehensive Violence Against Women and Girls Civic Action Plan; (b) provide a fully accessible, centrally located Women's Hub; and (c) work with both the Provincial and Federal Governments to end violence against women and girls.

Vancouver has adopted some initiatives, such as the Health City Initiative, that use a gendered lens. The work of the municipal Urban Aboriginal People's Advisory Committee, in collaboration with Vancouver City Council, to develop a plan for responding to the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Girls and Women, is promising. Overall, identifiable progress has not been made on the first two action items, and limited progress has been made on the third.

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Competition, communication challenges, and disagreement about priorities were described as key barriers to making more progress on the issue. Moving forward, a strong feminist movement, more meaningful collaboration between community organizations and municipal governments, and strategies for confronting neoliberalism, are important for ending violence against women and girls.

Vancouver has made **moderate progress** on addressing important action items related to **The Environment**. The two action items in this area were to: (a) review green policies through an equity/intersectional lens; and (b) increase women's and girls' access to recreation and community centres, and playing fields, including dedicated spaces and programs.

The Green City Action Plan (GCAP), and Vancouver's Environmental Committee and Citizen Advisory Board which were, as of last year, required to be made up of 50% women, are important steps forward related to the first action item. Vancouver has taken tangible steps to base more of its environmental policies on an intersectional framework, but relatively minimal progress has been made towards increasing female access to recreation/community centres.

Other urgent priorities, infrastructure limitations, and interjurisdictional tensions are creating ongoing barriers for achieving the action items related to the environment. Inter-departmental collaborations, citizen engagement, and consciousness raising are important components of moving forward on addressing environmental concerns.

Vancouver has made **minimal progress** on addressing important action items related to providing **Access to Adequate and Affordable Housing**. The three action items in this area were to: (a) generate a housing strategy that addresses the distinctive and diverse housing and homeless circumstances of women and girls; (b) implement sustainable low-income housing options that focus on women and children; and (c) encourage other governments to reinvest resources toward housing strategy development, and housing supply and maintenance.

Efforts are being made with regards to each of the three action items identified, but progress on each of the action items is minimal. There is no gendered housing strategy, ongoing affordability issues despite increases in rental housing availability, and a lack of gendered attention to housing issues from other levels of government.

Funding, broader housing challenges, and lack of understanding about the serious effects of inadequate housing for women and girls, are key barriers to progress on this issue. The application of an intersectional lens in policy development and analysis is the critical step forward for achieving action items in this area.

The full report includes an overview of the information that led to the assessment, an outline of key challenges and barriers that have prevented further progress to date, and literature-based suggestions about possible steps forward for achieving outstanding action items that will improve the lives of women and girls.