
NowWhat?! Municipal Platform

Drafted by NowWhat?! Steering Committee
August 24, 2018

Executive Summary

The NowWhat?! Committee built this platform by imagining the most inclusive, equitable, and safest city for women, including Black, Indigenous, people of colour (BIPOC), women with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ folks. This living document is intended for use by both mayoral and councillor candidates. We invite everyone seeking a leadership position in Ottawa to review the commitments set out in this platform, and incorporate them into their own policies and promises to the City of Ottawa, located on unceded Algonquin Territory.

We chose 11 key policy areas, which we've organized into three target intentions for our vision for Ottawa.

Intention 1: Safe and Supportive Communities

- Housing and Shelters
- Policing and Firearms
- Gangs and Street Violence
- By-laws
- Sanctuary Cities

Intention 2: Accessible and Active Communities

- Recreation
- Social Services Funding
- Transit and Taxis

Intention 3: Equitable and Economically Sound Communities

- Women's Bureau
- Taxes
- Infrastructure

Thank you for taking the time to review our platform. If you'd like to join us in building this vision for Ottawa, we'd love to hear from you. Get in touch at nowwhatott@gmail.com, or at @nowwhatott on Twitter. You can also join the conversation on social media using #NowWhatOtt.

Contextual Note

Think we've achieved gender equality in Canada? Think again. Since women, especially BIPOC, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ people experience greater barriers to accessing safety from violence & discrimination, health & support services, employment opportunities, housing & shelter, and access to meaningful and inclusive leadership roles, it is crucial that we continue to work towards a meaningful, equitable, and inclusive city.

In fact, our progress is at risk. Canada fell from 30th place to 35th place in the 2016 Global Gender Gap rankings by the World Economic Forum.¹

No matter who you are, gender inequality and violence against women affects you. And it costs Canadians billions of dollars every year. It's estimated that promoting gender equality could add \$150 billion to Canada's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).²

More importantly, gender inequality and inequity costs lives: in recent years a woman has been killed by her intimate partner approximately every six days in Canada.³ In the first half of 2018, 79 women and girls were murdered in Canada (that's one every 2.3 days.)⁴

The NowWhat?! Committee understands that everyone benefits when women, Black, Indigenous, people of colour (BIPOC), girls and LGBTQ+ people are empowered to make decisions about their own lives. When the NowWhat?! Committee uses the word 'woman,' we are intending to include all who self-identify as women, including trans, Two Spirit, intersex women; and the word man to include all who self-identify as men including trans, Two Spirit, and intersex men. We also recognize that gender expands beyond the binary and that there are also folks who identify as gender non-conforming and non-binary (meaning neither a man or woman), and who are also marginalized because of their gender who need to be part of these conversations. We further recognize that women and LGBTQ+ folks from marginalized intersections such as race, class, ability, and citizenship are at higher risk of experiencing violence, discrimination and poverty and that we must centre these critical intersections in the work that we do. Consequently, we must all work towards finding better ways to include these crucial reflections that go beyond just contextual notes, because marginalized communities' experiences are more than just contextual notes.

¹ [Global Gender Gap Index](#), World Economic Forum. 2016

² [The Power of Parity: Advancing Women's Equality in Canada](#), McKinsey & Company. 2017

³ [The Facts About Gender-Based Violence](#), Canadian Women's Foundation.

⁴ [79 Women, girls killed in Canada from January-June 2018](#), Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability. 2018

Today, Ottawa has a unique opportunity to respond to growing movements of gender equality and equity with concrete commitments, new investments and measurable targets to advance gender equality and make our city as safe, equitable and inclusive as possible for everyone.

Our Analysis

To develop a comprehensive municipal platform that takes gender equality and violence against women seriously, NowWhat?! works towards employing an intersectional framework.

We do so because we understand how important it is to acknowledge all of the identities and realities that represent people’s lived experience such as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, attraction (sexual orientation), gender identity and gender expression, citizenship, class and ability. Acknowledging and using an intersectional lens widens our ability to address the mainstream ways of thinking about how “election issues” and “platforms” actually fail to capture and reflect the multitude of identities and experiences that make up our city.

We based this platform on this contextual analysis, and took into account the experiences of the wide array of experiences that women, BIPOC, non-binary, two-spirit, genderqueer and trans* folks experience, with an intersectional lens that also recognizes race, Indigenous status, ableism, economic status and other intersecting oppressions. For the key statistics that frame this work, please see Appendix A: Key Statistics on Gender Inequality and Violence Against Women.

Safe and Supportive Communities

Safe and supportive communities require an inclusive gender lens on all the aspects of the municipality. The way the city regulates its police force, its social services, and its housing infrastructure affects women differently. It's also important to recognize that racialized, Indigenous, and women of colour experience these services differently as well. Many of our systems have not been built to take their unique needs and experiences into account. In our platform, we considered how these services could be more inclusive to women, including BIPOC folks. These commitments are developed and created from our experiences as frontline service providers and advocates, and reflect the needs of the women we support daily. We know that actioning every single one of these tangible promises would strengthen Ottawa's ability to better serve just over 50% of its population.

Housing and Shelters

At a glance:

- Review of the Ottawa Housing and Homelessness Strategy with a gender lens
- Focus a gender lens on the Housing-First methodology to address gaps experienced by women
- Commit to many ways of delivering housing support to address homelessness, including “housing-first” and other forms of supportive housing like second-stage shelters
- Ensure that areas with supportive or affordable housing are located near transit centres and are not located in “food deserts”⁵
- Continue the Urgent Safety Policy for women in crisis
- Work with homeless shelters to ensure the safety of women in mixed gender spaces
- Work to ensure the city meets the goals of its 10-year housing and homelessness plan to end chronic homelessness⁶

In 2017 there were 10,597 people on Ottawa's centralized waiting list for affordable housing, up 5.1% from 2016.⁷ Between 2014 and 2017 Ottawa added 364 new units of affordable housing (135 supportive and 229 affordable housing units).⁸ Clearly, the City has only been able to address a small percentage of the need for supportive and affordable housing at this time.

A city where women are not safe in their homes, or not housed at all, is not a supportive city. Homelessness is experienced by women differently than it is experienced by men, and therefore any homelessness or housing strategy must use a gender lens when it reviews strategies to

⁵ [Creating a City for All, Women Reducing Poverty Together and Making Voices Count](#), City for All Women Initiative. 2018

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ [Ottawa 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan Progress Report](#), City of Ottawa. March 2018.

⁸ Ibid.

house people or develop policies around homelessness. For example, we know that many women may not be captured in surveys about homelessness as they will couch surf or trade sex for housing. How we measure and reach those experiencing homelessness in our city must incorporate these considerations in order to capture an accurate picture of the issue.

For context, the number of single women who used an overnight emergency shelter in Ottawa decreased by 7.4% between 2016 and 2017, and the number of single youth who used an overnight emergency shelter also decreased by 11.8%. During the same period the number of single men who accessed an overnight emergency shelter increased by 3.7% and the number of families who accessed an overnight emergency shelter increased by 12.4%. The average length of shelter stay increased overall by 19.2% between 2016 and 2017, with families seeing the largest increase in length of stay at 32.3%.⁹

As such, if elected, NowWhat?! will review “Housing-First” as a homelessness intervention strategy with a racial and gender lens to ensure that homeless women are getting their specific needs met. Though Housing-First is often promoted as a solution for homelessness, a report by the Mental Health Commission found that women are less satisfied than men in their quality of life.¹⁰ We know women experience homelessness differently, so once that review is complete, and specific steps are taken to address housing-first’s gender gaps, we commit to utilizing and supporting various ways of preventing and intervening in homelessness in the city, by including housing-first, second stage housing, transitional and supportive housing, and subsidized housing models. Our housing strategy extends beyond buzzwords, and we will continually be looking for evidence-based approaches that will end homelessness long-term.

For women who access the shelter system, it is critical that we work closely with women living in shelters, shelter staff and management to ensure that women are safe when accessing those services, and specifically in mixed-gender shelter spaces and communal areas. As well, we commit to maintaining the City’s local urgent safety housing priority that compliments the province’s violence against women housing priority and allows women who are in danger as a result of violence to access safe housing quickly.

NowWhat?! believes in mixed-income neighbourhoods which ensures lower income communities are not further marginalized or “ghettoized.” However, in our platform, we commit to ensuring that new affordable or subsidized housing units are also near transit centres and do not exist in “food deserts.” The ability to feed ourselves and our families healthy, whole foods is a human right, not a privilege for living in the “right community.”

⁹ [Ottawa 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan Progress Report](#), City of Ottawa. March 2018

¹⁰ [National Final Report: Cross-site At Home/Chez Soi Project](#), Mental Health Commission of Canada. 2014

Policing and Firearms

At a glance:

- Quarterly external case reviews for sexual and domestic violence as a method of quality-control and oversight of police, with city funding for the agencies involved
- Mandate that the Ottawa Police Services commit to the spirit and intent of the [Tulloch Report](#), with or without provincial support
- Ensure that women who have made reports to police about sexual or domestic violence are made aware of how to make complaints if they are not satisfied with the service they received, and ensure complaint mechanisms are used and reviewed
- Ensure that firearms and Possession and Acquisition Licenses (PALs) are seized in cases of domestic violence
- Discontinue “street checks” as a legitimate form of policing
- Review human rights complaints within the Ottawa Police Service and fix problems identified
- Enhance training for law enforcement and modify investigative and enforcement procedures to ensure that owners of multiple firearms are subject to higher levels of scrutiny
- Ensure that cases where individuals are deemed to be a threat to themselves or others are reported to the provincial chief firearms officer
- Ensure that women who speak French can access service in their mother tongue

Our police service has committed to violence against women as one of its top three priority areas. As part of the commitment to ending violence against women, the Ottawa Police Service formed a community consultation table with a number of stakeholders across the city, including, among others, Harmony House, the Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women, the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre, Sexual Assault Network of Ottawa, Immigrant Women’s Services Ottawa, Minwaashin Lodge and Crime Prevention Ottawa. At this table, community and frontline workers advocated for the Ottawa Police to bring a violence against women advocate case review, also known as the “Philadelphia Model”, to Ottawa, which is an advocate case review model that draws on grassroots, frontline violence against women expertise to review the way police respond to intimate partner violence and sexual violence cases in the city. In NowWhat?!’s platform, we commit to formally incorporating the case review model into the City of Ottawa’s methodology of police service oversight and quality control.

In addition to this form of civilian oversight, we commit to working with the Police Services Board, the Ottawa Police Union, and the Ottawa Police Service itself to ensure that the recommendations by Honourable Michael H. Tulloch are implemented and measured. These recommendations address longstanding problems with police oversight drawn from widespread consultations with communities throughout the province. They include tangible recommendations

for effective oversight of police, furthering the effectiveness and increasing the transparency of criminal investigations conducted by the Special Investigations Unit as well as transparency for the civilian complaint process, and enhancing relevant demographic data collection.

Firearms

Recognizing that every injury and death due to firearms is potentially preventable, it is critical that all levels of government, programs and services are effective at identifying and managing risks related to access to firearms as part of effective public health and public safety policy.

Canada has a reputation for being a safe country, but when comparing gun-related homicide rates with similar European countries, Canada ranks fourth in firearm mortalities. In 2016, for the third consecutive year, there was an increase in both the number and rate of firearm-related homicides in Canada.¹¹ More than 60% of firearm homicides involved the use of handguns, but gun violence is not purely a handgun issue: a third of firearm homicides involved a rifle, shotgun, or sawed off rifle/shotgun.¹²

Additionally, according to a 2012 survey conducted by Statistics Canada, when violent crime resulted in an injury, the presence of a firearm increased the likelihood of a major physical injury or death to 33%, in comparison to 4% when no weapon was present.¹³ Firearms need to be a key factor that our police force considers when addressing intimate partner and gender-based violence.

Intimate Partner Violence

In 2016, there were 81 intimate partner homicides in Canada (63 victims were female) and for spousal murder-suicides, firearms are the most common method with 53% of victims dying from a gunshot.¹⁴ In Canada, 72% of women who die from gunshot wounds are shot with long guns and rifles.¹⁵

In cases of domestic violence, we continually see femicide occurring as a result of abusers having access to firearms, despite court orders that do not permit them access to weapons. If elected, we would work closely with the police service to ensure that they have the resources to uphold and strictly enforce these court orders.

As well, the presence of firearms in a home environment where domestic violence is taking place dramatically increases the level of intimidation and risk of fatal violence. When firearms are

¹¹ [Homicide in Canada](#), Statistics Canada. 2016

¹² [Firearms and Violent Crime in Canada](#), Statistics Canada. 2012

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ [Section 3: police-reported intimate partner violence](#), Statistics Canada. 2016

¹⁵ [Firearms and Violent Crime in Canada](#), Statistics Canada. 2012

involved in domestic violence, the chance of a woman’s death increases 12 times and other research has shown that access to a firearm is a risk factor for fatal intimate partner violence.¹⁶

Human Rights

A police service that does not function well internally cannot protect a city. If the culture within the force is misogynist, racist, ableist, and homophobic, members that are ostracized by those norms will not be able to provide the quality policing our city requires. As your city’s leader, we commit to taking a real look at the Ottawa Police Service’s internal human rights complaints, and acting to change the culture within policing that perpetuates those toxic environments. This also includes how racialized women interact with police, and recognizing that a police force that is dealing with race issues internally must also examine how it responds to racialized survivors of gender-based violence in the community.

Finally, NowWhat?! recognizes “street checks” or “carding” as an inherently racist and problematic practice, and would ensure that the police service no longer uses these checks as a legitimate method of policing. Instead, we would ensure that resources and training are given to police members so that we can return to community policing and prevention-focused enforcement.

Gangs and Street Violence

At a glance:

- Review data about human trafficking and home takeovers with a gender lens
- Strengthen the Ottawa Street Violence and Gang Strategy by including women’s groups in the steering committee
- Target top-level members in gangs and organized crime through enforcement in order to address issues of violence from the top-down

Much of the conversation around gangs and gang membership focuses on young men, particularly young men who live in low-income neighbourhoods and experience marginalization due to race, socioeconomic status, or other intersecting factors. However, strategies on gang prevention and intervention strategies must include a gender lens. Women are over-represented when it comes to exploitation through human trafficking, particularly Indigenous women. We must recognize that addressing these situations requires an intersectional gender lens, as women can be more vulnerable due to intersecting oppressions like age, race, Indigenous status, or poverty.

¹⁶ [Statistics on Domestic Violence and Firearms](#), Giffords Law Centre to Prevent Gun Violence. 2017

The Ottawa Police Services defines a gang as, “Any group of three (3) or more people, formally or informally organized, which may have a common name or identifying sign or symbol, where members individually or collectively engage in or have engaged primarily in street level criminal behavior, creating an atmosphere of fear and intimidation within the community.”¹⁷

In 2017, there were 74 shootings in Ottawa.¹⁸ While it’s not known that all of these shootings were gang-related, it is a considerable increase in gun violence. In 2015, Crime Prevention Ottawa was able to identify eight active street gangs in Ottawa, with about a total 435 member.¹⁹

Ottawa has had various forms of a gang violence strategy since 2007.²⁰ At that time, the document was called the Ottawa Youth Gang Prevention Initiative, then in 2013 it pivoted to the “Ottawa Gang Strategy.” In 2017, they revised the strategy to more accurately reflect the issue, and it is now called the “Ottawa Street Violence and Gang Strategy.”

The strategy focuses on four pillars to create change:

- Neighbourhood Cohesion
- Prevention
- Intervention
- Enforcement and Suppression

It is guided by the following principles:

- Community-based
- Youth-centred
- Youth engagement
- Family engagement
- Evidence-based and results-focused
- Collaboration and information sharing
- Increased investment in prevention

There are 21 community service organizations who sit on the steering committee for the strategy, yet none listed are focused on women’s experiences, despite our knowledge that women are overrepresented when it comes to exploitation through human trafficking. In fact, a 2017 Statistics Canada report demonstrates that 95% of trafficking victims in Canada are young women. 70% of these young women were under the age of 25 and 26% are under the age of 18.²¹ They are also at a particular risk when it comes to home takeovers, in which gang members forcibly co-opt the home of non-gang-involved citizens in order to further their criminal enterprise. Further, there are women who are involved in gang activity, and who require a gender-specific exit strategy.

¹⁷ [Guns and Gangs](#), Ottawa Police Service.

¹⁸ [Spike in gun and gang violence in Canada has experts worried](#), CBC. March 7, 2018

¹⁹ [Ottawa Gang Strategy: Our First Three Years](#), Crime Prevention Ottawa. 2016

²⁰ [Ottawa Street Violence and Gang Strategy](#), Crime Prevention Ottawa. 2017

²¹ [Trafficking in Persons in Canada, 2016](#), Statistics Canada. 2016.

The interim report for the Ottawa Gang Strategy identifies that in the Ottawa Youth Diversion Program, a program focused on diverting youth from the criminal justice system into more restorative or proactive approaches, shows that 49 of the 225 youth who attended the program were young women. While 21% of the population may not seem like a high rate, the reason they enter gangs, and the roles they play within a gang, are unique and in many ways invisible in literature and research. However, it is thought that as research emerged in 2008, women's gang membership may be on the rise.²² This research calls on Ottawa to consider a gender lens in its gang response strategy.

In addition to the commitments made through the Ottawa Street Violence and Gang Strategy about prevention and neighbourhood programming, the Ottawa Police Service has identified gang violence as a priority for the organization. On June 12, 2018, a memo came from Mayor Jim Watson's office committing to the hiring of 10 new police officers by October 2018 to combat Ottawa's gang violence.²³ The cost of this project would come to an estimated \$660,000.00, between staffing costs and equipment expenses. These costs are expected to be covered by a federal grant that has assigned \$327 million over the next five years to deal with gang violence.²⁴ The new officers will be split between the Direct Action Response Team (DART) and the Investigative Unit.

Both the police response and the community response to gang violence in Ottawa requires an intersectional gender lens, a lens that takes racial inequity into account, and is critical to violence prevention. This intersectional lens should be applied to the existing Ottawa Street Violence and Gang Strategy, and if NowWhat?! Ottawa is elected, we commit to ensuring that grassroots, frontline women's organizations are added to the current list of steering committee members to the Ottawa Street Violence and Gang Strategy.

In addition to adding a gender lens to this framework, we also commit to looking above the street-level gang activity. It is only by looking at this higher level of coordination that we can truly address Ottawa's gang problems.

By-Laws

At a glance:

- Ensure mandatory training for all by-law dispatchers and officers in order to recognize the warning signs of intimate partner violence

²² [Youth Gangs in Canada: A Review of Current Topics and Issues](#), Public Safety Canada. 2017

²³ [Ottawa Police seek to add 10 new officers to address increasing gun violence](#), Global News. June 12, 2018

²⁴ [Ottawa Police Board approves hiring 10 offices to combat gun, gang violence](#), Global News. June 25, 2018

- Continue and support Project Soundcheck training for volunteers and security staff at festivals and other mass gatherings in Ottawa as part of the permit process
- Review the city's by-laws on Rooming Houses with a gender lens
- Ensure women for whom French is a first-language can access services in French

By-law officers have a unique opportunity to support the women in our city. They are often first responders in situations where residents may be trying to get help without escalating it to the police. Being trained to recognize when noise complaints, animal abuse, or other infractions are signs of a domestic violence would ensure that by-law officers don't miss opportunities to intervene. For this reason, we commit to collecting statistics on the number of these types of calls to understand their frequency, and to introduce mandatory training on gender-based violence, particularly domestic violence, as well as implicit racial bias training, for all by-law dispatch and officers.

In this same vein, the City of Ottawa review on rooming houses which has been completed but not yet sent to Council, must be reconsidered with a gender lens, and one that also takes into account the unique experiences of women who are housed through rooming houses.

There were 91 licensed rooming houses in the city and another four applications in the queue as of January 31, 2017. Between 2012 and 2015 there were an average of 1,417 service requests annually related to rooming houses.²⁵ Research indicates that common issues with rooming houses include:

- poor physical conditions in the units and houses such as broken locks, vermin, and heating issues in the winter;
- the requirement to share common spaces and the lack of privacy as tenants must negotiate use of these spaces with other tenants and other tenants' guests whom they do not know;
- lack of safety and security due to power imbalances between landlords and tenants. Tenants often report experiencing harassment by landlords and feel as though the landlord is not responsive to their concerns. Further, they fear eviction if they raise issues up to their landlord;
- substance use and intoxicated individuals within the common spaces of the units which cause tenants to fear for their safety and well-being; and
- tenants feeling as though the rent for rooming houses is unaffordable. Many rooming house tenants are recipients of social assistance which leaves them with limited options for housing to choose from.²⁶

²⁵ [Rooming Houses in Ottawa draw thousands of service requests](#), Ottawa Citizen. 2017

²⁶ [Health and Housing in West-Central Ottawa: The Facts on Rooming Houses](#), Centretown Community Health Centre, Somerset West Community Health Centre, Ontario Community Health Centres 2016

Individuals living in rooming houses are more vulnerable from both landlords who inappropriately exercise their power, and by other tenants in the house. Research also indicates that many individuals living in rooming houses are precariously housed and are also dealing with mental and physical health challenges, addictions and difficulty accessing essential services.²⁷

More research needs to be undertaken to determine how women who are precariously housed in rooming houses are impacted by these issues using a gender-based analysis. For example, are women living in rooming houses at higher risk for exploitation such as being trafficked? While the City has identified garbage and waste issues, noise complaints, and vandalism as key concerns of rooming houses, these do not specifically address the safety concerns of women who live in rooming houses. If elected, we commit to a re-evaluation of this policy with a gender lens. We also support the recommendations by community advocates for a designated by-law officer for rooming houses, a complaint system that supports tenants who make complaints as well as allowing designated third parties to make complaints on behalf of tenants (i.e. case workers or family members).²⁸

A study done by Dr. Kari Sampsel at the Ottawa Hospital's Sexual Assault and Partner Abuse Care Program found that in the year 2013, nearly a quarter of the sexual assaults they treated occurred during a large festival or event. Anecdotally, many frontline workers have known that when you have a large number of people assembling together at a festival or event where alcohol is involved, the risk for sexual assault and sexual harassment increases. Project SoundCheck is a project created by the Sexual Assault Network of Ottawa and the Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women that is dedicated to supporting festivals and large events in preventing sexual violence with a focus on bystander intervention that encourages folks to intervene or disrupt problematic behaviour.²⁹

We support the further integration of Project Soundcheck training for all festival volunteers and staff as part of the City of Ottawa event permit process. We commit to continuing this work, and look forward to ensuring that Project Soundcheck continues to receive the resources it needs to continue this important work.

Sanctuary Cities

At a glance:

- Commit to making Ottawa a Sanctuary City
- Review the specific gendered implications of precarious permanent residency status
- No one should feel forced to experience abuse, exploitation, or violence for fear of deportation

²⁷ [Health and Housing in West-Central Ottawa: The Facts on Rooming Houses](#), Centretown Community Health Centre, Somerset West Community Health Centre, Ontario Community Health Centres 2016

²⁸ [Survey of rooming house tenants find many scramble to pay rent](#), Ottawa Citizen. 2017

²⁹ [Sexual Assault Network of Ottawa](#), Project Soundcheck. 2017

- Implement a community-wide awareness and public education campaign about being a sanctuary city that will educate residents and affirm to non-status migrants and others with precarious immigration status that they can access municipal services without fear of detection, detention or deportation.
- Commit to advocate with Provincial and Federal governments to provide funded programs and services to residents without status, and to provide pathways to permanent residency for those with precarious immigration status

NowWhat?! believes in a city where everyone is safe, can access services and recreation, and is able to get the care they need regardless of their immigration status. For this reason, if elected, we commit to making Ottawa a sanctuary city. It is unacceptable for anyone, but especially women who have precarious immigration status, to feel that they cannot report violence committed against them because they fear they'll be removed from this country. We commit to working with all levels of government to ensure that women who need police, healthcare, recreation, or access to labour rights, receive those services.

The term 'Sanctuary City' refers to cities that adopt policies that aim to ensure that all residents, regardless of immigration status, have access to essential services without fear. These policies must provide guarantees that service providers will not collect information pertaining to immigration status. They must also prevent service providers from sharing any such information with other levels of government, particularly immigration enforcement, unless compelled to do so by law.

The federal government has time and time again favoured immigration policies that allow migrants to visit and work in Canada, while denying them citizenship. There are “over 400,000 [people] on exploitative temporary work permits, and nearly as many others that are living precariously as refugee claimants, students or on tourist visas while they seek access to permanent immigration status.”³⁰ Migrants are either in and out of status, or at risk of losing it, thus impacting their well-being. Non-status migrants may include, but are not limited to, people who have had their status revoked, been coerced by traffickers, or had their refugee claim denied. Many have experienced conflict, violence, persecution, and human rights violations.³¹

Social isolation and the ever-present fear of detection and deportation means that non-status migrants are an “invisible” population in our communities, despite the fact that they pay taxes and are working and living alongside us. This can take a very heavy toll on their physical and mental health. All the while they are either not permitted to access or rely on basic social services and labour protections, or have to pay a high price for them. This is unacceptable, unjust and unfair.

³⁰ [Ottawa Sanctuary City Network](#), 2018

³¹ [“Sanctuary Cities”](#) webpage, Canadian Labour Congress

The Sanctuary City movement has made waves across North America. Vancouver, Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton and London have all passed motions to implement sanctuary policies.³² In the United States, over 150 cities have sanctuary city policies, in some form or other, in place. Ottawa can, and must, be a leader in Canada by taking up the cause. Although municipalities have no jurisdiction over immigration, they can minimize exclusion, reduce harm, and ensure that all residents have access to municipal services.

In the spring of 2017, a majority of Ottawa city councilors rejected a discussion to make Ottawa a Sanctuary City, despite expert³³ and public support for it.

Cities that have adopted these policies have cited a wide array of reasons for it, including to denounce efforts at mass deportation, seeking to disentangle the criminal justice regime from immigration, and to prevent irreparable harm to communities. It is also viewed by some as an important way to preserve local sovereignty, define local priorities, and enhance community trust in law enforcement.³⁴ Such policies are also crucial to protecting fundamental rights, such as the right to be free of discrimination on the basis of race and nationality, illegal search and seizure, and arrest without probable cause. There is no doubt that these policies are consistent with Charter protected rights to equality and security of the person, and are also in accordance with international human rights obligations under the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Without a doubt a Sanctuary City policy can truly save lives:

[In] December 2013, Lucia Vega Jiménez was picked up by transit police [in Vancouver] over an unpaid fare and turned over to immigration officials. After spending two weeks in detention, she committed suicide while awaiting deportation to Mexico, a country she had fled due to inadequate protection from domestic violence. In the aftermath of her death, it was revealed that transit police had turned over 328 migrants to the Canadian Border Services Agency in 2013 alone.³⁵

At the core, these sanctuary policies are about inclusion. Anti-immigrant sentiments and Islamophobia are on the rise. We are reminded every day of the insecurity and violence migrant and racialized communities in Canada experience. Now more than ever we need to take a clear and unequivocal stand against discrimination and racism in all forms, and make clear that we value and respect all of our neighbours, regardless of their immigration status.

³² [“Sanctuary Cities”](#) webpage, Canadian Labour Congress

³³ [Open Letter by 40 Ottawa Academics on a Sanctuary City Policy](#), May 7, 2017

³⁴ [Understanding ‘Sanctuary Cities’](#), Boston College Law Review, Vol 59 (2018)

³⁵ [“News Alert: Calling for a Sanctuary City Policy”](#), West Coast Lead, January 28, 2015; . See also: [“Position Paper: Sanctuary City Policy”](#), West Coast Leaf, January 27, 2015

Accessible and Active Communities

For a city to be truly healthy, it cannot only care for its residents. It must also create and embrace spaces where people can meaningfully connect. Connections happen through recreation and community participation, and opportunities for engagement for *all* the citizens of the city is crucial. In our intention for an active and accessible community, we've highlighted three priorities that ensure women are not only able to access the spaces of the city they live in, but thrive in those spaces.

Recreation

Accessible recreation is critical for the health of a community. Recreation programs provide spaces for pro-social activities for youth, foster connections among community members, and keep folks healthy both physically and mentally.

At a glance:

- Ensure that neighbourhoods with higher rates of street violence have increased access to recreational activities at accessible rates
- Continue, increase, and formalize discounted or free rates for recreational activities for women in shelters
- Prorate all recreation funding through an intersectional gender wage gap lens
- Create a work program for youth on statutory holidays and other days when city services are closed
- Ensure gender-sensitive design for parks and playgrounds
- Ensure equitable standards of operation for recreational spaces throughout the city, regardless of neighbourhood or income

Access to recreational programs and services within the community has a significant and positive impact on women's lives. They encourage a diversity of women to build relationships with other members of the community, allow women with lower income or living in poverty to develop their skills and abilities, and prevent the development of diseases by providing opportunities for women to stay active. Furthermore, if we truly want to address gang and street violence in Ottawa, we must focus on prevention. Ensuring that youth in at-risk communities have access to varied recreation programs must form part of any prevention program.

A gender-sensitive lens when thinking of accessible recreation requires that leaders take into account the factors that make it more difficult for women to access recreational services and programs in their community.

Engaging low-income women

Women are more vulnerable to low income and are more likely to live in a low-income household than men.³⁶ In 2016, women in Ontario earned 29.3% less than men.³⁷ The lack of free activities, especially during the winter months (i.e. indoor activities), and the shame often felt by women asking for a subsidy is a barrier to their ability to be active and access recreational activities for themselves and their families.³⁸

If elected, NowWhat?! commits to youth and women in shelters having discounted access to recreation activities, along with free passes to certain city events. We would also review with a race, ability, and gender wage gap lens, and discount entrance fees by the equivalent of what they earn to every man’s dollar.

Mobility

Another challenge faced by women with respect to access to recreation programs is the lack of mobility. Women are more likely to work part-time, take on the majority of family responsibilities (i.e. care for children and younger or older family members, accompany their family members to health appointments and other services etc.), complete errands for the family, and participate in community and volunteer work. Despite their often irregular schedules, women are also the major users of public transit.³⁹ However, due to this reality, women often use public transportation outside the busiest hours, when transit runs with greater frequency. Journeys during these hours are often less direct, longer, and require women to take more than one or even two different buses to reach their destination. Because of the time spent in transit, less time is available for leisure and recreation. Women in rural areas also face challenges accessing recreational programs and services because these programs may not exist in their area and the distance and lack of transportation offered from their homes to Ottawa.⁴⁰

If elected, we commit to review public transportation service during peak and non-peak hours to make it easier for women to access parks, public spaces and recreational centers in a time-effective manner.

Safety

Access to, and safety within public spaces like parks, public squares, shopping malls and community recreation centers during the day and evenings is another area of concern for

³⁶ [Women in Canada: A Gender-Based Statistical Report – The Economic Well-Being of Women in Canada](#), Statistics Canada. May 16, 2018.

³⁷ [Every Step You Take – Ontario’s Gender Pay Gap Ladder](#), Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. 2016.

³⁸ [Gender Equality Lens](#), City of Ottawa and City for All Women Initiative, 2008. See also “[Advancing Access to Affordable Recreation in Durham](#)”, Tucker-Reid and Associates, 2013, as an example. A study done in Durham showed that one of the challenges in addressing affordable access to recreation was due to the fact that the process to ask for a subsidy was “cumbersome and sometimes humiliating”.

³⁹ [Gendered Cities: Built and Physical Environments](#), *Women and Urban Environments*, National Network on Environments and Women’s Health (NNEWH) and Toronto Women’s Call to Action (TWCA). 2013.

⁴⁰ [Gender Equality Lens](#), City of Ottawa and City for All Women Initiative, 2008.

women. Women in the city are more likely to experience gender-based violence, violence in their home, threats and intimidation due to racial and sexual harassment and physical assault. Because of fear of violence, particularly sexual assault, women are less likely to go out, especially after dark (which is particularly restrictive during winter months when it gets dark so early in the day). While we know that in fact, most sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the survivor, this perceived fear has a huge impact on women's ability to engage in employment, adult education, civic and community participation and social and leisure activities.

Studies have shown that planning the appropriate design and effective use of built environments can lead to reduction of fear and the incidence of crime, therefore making urban environments safer for women.⁴¹ Gender-sensitive planning and development will allow women to feel safer in their communities and facilitate women's access to parks and public spaces.

If NowWhat?! is elected, we commit to using a gender-sensitive design lens when it comes to playgrounds and city parks to ensure safer and more engaging spaces for girls and young women. This can be achieved in particular by:

- increasing accessibility in parks, shopping and recreational areas. For example: wider sidewalks, staircases with ramps;
- ensuring proper lighting in the streets, parks and public spaces;
- increasing the number of clean, safe and accessible public toilets in parks and public spaces; and
- increasing the number of sports courts in parks to allow a wider variety of activities.

Family responsibilities and unpaid work

Finally, recent statistics demonstrate that women generally spend less time on leisure activities than men, and when they do so, they are more likely to do such activities at the same time as unpaid work, such as taking care of their children.⁴² It is necessary to consider this reality when thinking about access to recreational activities. For example, building an environment (like parks and other public spaces where recreational services and programs are available) with women *and* children in mind. Furthermore, finding childcare and activities that parents can access on holidays is very difficult, and can be a barrier for many women who are either seeking employment or attempting to maintain employment.

Therefore, if elected, we will commit to creating a program that provides work opportunities for youth, that also provides childcare for parents who need to work on holidays, when other city programs are closed.

⁴¹ [Reflections of Cultural Differences on Gendered Use of Public Spaces](#), Politecnico di Milano, 2015. Also read about [Vienna's gender mainstreaming experiment](#) on urban planning re-organizing parks to adapt them to women's need.

⁴² [Women in Canada : A Gender-Based Statistical Report - Time use: Total work burden, unpaid work, and leisure](#), Statistics Canada, 7th edition, July 31st, 2018

Social Services Funding

At a glance:

- Commit to long-term, sustainable funding for social service agencies
- Increase sustained city funding to social services programming

Ottawa social service agencies are in need of more funding. This funding must be sustainable, long-term, and continue to fund core operating expenses. The City of Ottawa is currently engaged in reviewing the Community Funding Framework. Currently, the funding envelope earmarks \$23.9 million for community funding in 2018. After reviewing the Community Funding Framework City staff will bring forward any changes to Ottawa City Council in 2019.

We will commit to not only maintaining this funding envelope but look to increase the funds available. We will work with community partners to ensure that agencies, particularly those serving women, get the funding they require to operate their core activities, rather than just project-based funding.

These commitments will absolutely cost the city “more,” in the sense that the budget line must increase. A proposed surtax on provincial income would raise additional funding City which could in part be used to support the Community Funding Framework. Investing in supports, resources, and prevention always costs us less in the end.

Transit and Taxis

At a glance:

- Formal commitment from City of Ottawa to continue the excellent work of the OC Transpo and VAW committee
- Publish rates of complaints against taxis, with a gender lens
- Begin a city-wide consultation on transit, taxis, and ride-sharing services, with a particular focus that consults women and incorporates their lived experiences
- Utilize a gender lens and push for more city regulation of ride sharing programs
- Require equal gender representation on the Transit Commission
- Increase infrastructure spending for snow removal at transit stations and stops and on sidewalks
- Increase rural transit access, with a particular focus on women’s safety
- Reduce EquiPass fare from \$58/month to \$43/month in 2019⁴³
- Freeze transit fares to make them more affordable for everyone⁴⁴

⁴³ [Creating a City for All, Women Reducing Poverty Together and Making Voices Count](#), City for All Women Initiative. 2018

⁴⁴ Ibid.

OC Transpo's anonymous reporting system for harassment on public transit is an achievement feminists and frontline workers can be proud of. If elected, NowWhat?! will continue this great work and make street-harassment prevention a standing item on the Transit Commission's agenda.

We will also work to ensure that the Transit Commission committee has equal gender representation, including women of colour, rather than the one woman representative in place on the committee now. As part of the renewal of this committee, we also commit to a city-wide consultation using a gender lens on transit, taxis, and ride-sharing services. After researching transit options as part of this community consultation and review, we will publish rates of taxi and transit complaints, and develop more oversight of ride-sharing programs in the city.

Finally, by increasing infrastructure spending we will ensure proper snow removal and improved accessibility for women with disabilities and women using strollers with small children on sidewalks and at transit stops and stations. In addition, we will focus on the access that rural Ottawa women have to transit, and increase their options for getting into the city outside of peak hours.

Equitable and Economically-Sound Communities

We believe in an equitable city. Equitable cities are always economically-sound, because women’s increased access to services, infrastructure, and transit means increased opportunities for women to contribute. When women are able to achieve leadership positions in the city, they are able to spend more money in local businesses. When women entrepreneurs receive municipal support, we are better equipped to have an innovative, progressive city. When women feel safe using transit to get to and from work, we have a greener city with more fare income to pay for our systems. Investing in equity in a city makes financial sense, and NowWhat?! has a plan to ensure Ottawa is the most equitable and economically-sound city in Canada.

Women’s Bureau

At a glance:

- Commit to a Women’s Bureau with meaningful involvement from city councillors
- Empower the Bureau to undertake a review of all city policies and services using a GBA+ analysis
- Empower the bureau to set new standards for gathering gender-based, race-based and LGBTQ+-based statistics for all City of Ottawa institutions
- Mandate adequate financial and human resourcing for the Women’s Bureau through the City’s fiscal plan
- Ensure city staff at the working level, the senior management level and boards reflect Ottawa’s diversity by recruiting from equity-seeking groups - including Indigenous people, women, racialized people, LGBTQ folks, people with disabilities and newcomers

The councillors who pushed for a Women’s Bureau at City Hall should be commended for their work in equity. If elected, we will continue this work with meaningful contributions not just from the councillors who pushed for it, but from City Hall in general. This means ensuring that the bureau is sustainably funded, is given proper human resources for the work, and has important, impactful work to undertake. The first task of the Bureau, under our leadership, would be a review of all City policies using a GBA+ analysis. As defined by Status of Women Canada,

“GBA+ is an analytical tool used to assess how diverse groups of women, men and gender-diverse people may experience policies, programs and initiatives. The “plus” in GBA+ acknowledges that GBA goes beyond biological (sex) and socio-cultural (gender) differences. We all have multiple identity factors that intersect to make us who we are; GBA+ also considers many other identity factors, like race, ethnicity, religion, age, and mental or physical disability.”⁴⁵

⁴⁵ [Gender-based Analysis Plus](#), Status of Women Canada. 2017

As well, this bureau would be responsible to ensure that equity-seeking groups also have meaningful contribution from city staff.

In 2018, 23 years after the United Nations endorsed the target of having at least 30% representation of women at all decision-making levels, Ottawa is still lagging behind with only 16.6% of city council seats being held by women.⁴⁶ Having a ratio of at least 30% women is a widely accepted minimum figure to ensure that women's perspectives are being considered.⁴⁷ Due to Ottawa's lack of representation of women at the municipal level, a Women's Bureau and Women's Issues Liaison are essential to ensure that Ottawa includes the diverse perspectives and voices of women within decision-making, and that all policies and practices are created and implemented with a gender-based plus analysis. To be effective, the Women's Bureau must reflect the diversity of the women of Ottawa.

Ensuring Sustainable Use of GBA+ within the City of Ottawa

Policy and programme decisions affect women and men differently. Other factors such as race, class, ability, sexuality and Indigeneity also contribute to the ways in which someone is impacted by policy and programme decisions.⁴⁸ This is why it is important that there is a framework and accountability measures in place to ensure that decisions are being made in a way that reflects this understanding.

Building on steps the City has already taken, such as working with Women's groups to create the [Equity and Inclusion Lens](#), the Women's Bureau can serve as a mechanism to ensure that GBA+ is truly being applied throughout the City of Ottawa. Having a designated Bureau focused on ensuring this will improve accountability around gender mainstreaming initiatives.

The Women's Bureau will be tasked with implementing GBA+ within the City by following the recommendations made by Status of Women Canada to ensure the sustainability of GBA+:

- oversee the implementation of GBA+ and provide internal advice;
- conduct an organizational needs-assessment that will inform the creation of a work plan;
- ensure city staff are trained in GBA+, beginning with senior level city officials, and build capacity within the City;
- monitor progress (ongoing) to highlight successes, best practices, and identify gaps and priorities; and
- implement a pilot initiative that will provide a concrete example of GBA+ application.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ [Municipal Statistics](#), Federation of Canadian Municipalities. 2015

⁴⁷ [Getting to 30%: Lessons learned](#), Federation of Canadian Municipalities. 2010

⁴⁸ [Mainstreaming of a Gender Perspective](#), Government of Canada. 2017

⁴⁹ [Making GBA+ Sustainable](#), Status of Women Canada. 2017

Promoting Diverse Women’s Participation in Decision-Making and Planning

- NowWhat?! is committed to ensuring 50% representation of women, women of colour, trans, or gender-variant individuals on advisory committees.
- Research has shown that a barrier for women’s political involvement is having less access to relevant support networks.⁵⁰ The Women’s Bureau will look into creating an internship program to create opportunities for young people, particularly young women, women of colour, trans*, and gender-variant individuals, to facilitate opportunities for network building and gaining relevant experience at the Municipal level.
- Regular consultations will take place with diverse community groups to ensure the interests of women across the City are being considered.

Additional Priorities

- Ensure proper funding for the Women’s Bureau staffing and project needs.
- Review and make recommendations to Council about the creation of guidelines for businesses bidding for City contracts to ensure city contracts abide by gender equitable practices and review the number of contracts going to women-owned or women-led businesses.
- Promote and support childcare initiatives, including increasing affordable daycare spaces⁵¹
- Review best practices for collecting disaggregated data to better support Ottawa residents in accessing programs and services and understanding the effects of policy decisions.⁵²
- Increase access to services for individuals who speak French as well individuals who speak neither English or French.⁵³

Taxes

At a glance:

- Review of the cost of living increase to implement a 5% surtax on provincial income

Cost of Living Increases between June 2017-2018 ⁵⁴		
	Ontario	Ottawa
All items	2.4%	2.5%

⁵⁰ [Getting to 30%: Lessons learned](#), Federation of Canadian Municipalities. 2010

⁵¹ [Creating a City for All. Women Reducing Poverty Together and Making Voices Count](#), City for All Women Initiative. 2018

⁵² [2017-2018 Work Plan: Women’s Advisory Committee](#), City of Vancouver. 2017

⁵³ [Creating a City for All. Women Reducing Poverty Together and Making Voices Count](#), City for All Women Initiative. 2018

⁵⁴ Statistics Canada. Table 18-10-0004-01 Consumer Price Index, monthly, not seasonally adjusted

Food	2.9%	2.9%
Rented Accommodation	1.5%	0.8%
Owned Accommodation	2.3%	3.5%

We believe that as the cost of living increases, so must our taxes. We must take care of one another, and have a city that ensures there is a social safety net. The best way to pay for these services is to collect a tax amount that is in line with increases in the cost of living. A 2% increase every year that Ottawa has maintained for many years is simply not sustainable. Our city is unable to keep up with the need for services and support when we only increase taxes by 2%. We acknowledge that some people may not support this, but we believe that it is necessary to operate a properly functioning city and will ultimately benefit the entire community, including low-income folks.

Canadian cities are limited in their ability to raise revenue, relying on property taxes, some user fees, and transfers from other levels of government. Internationally, this is unusual. This reliance on property taxes limits the ability of municipal governments to raise revenues in a fair and progressive manner. In 2016, the Institute on Municipal Finance and Governance at University of Toronto’s Munk School of Global Affairs published a paper recommending that Canada's larger cities look at alternative sources of revenue to meet growing infrastructure needs.⁵⁵ They outlined three options, a fuel surtax, a sales surtax, and a personal income surtax. We chose a surtax on provincial personal income tax, as it is the most progressive option.

A 5% surtax on provincial income would raise an additional \$130 million for the City that can be used to support social services spending as well as other City of Ottawa programs and services. To create a surtax of this kind will require approval from the provincial government. We commit to lobbying the provincial government to allow the City to implement this surtax. Because the surtax will be based on income tax, which is a progressive tax framework, those individuals and families in the City of Ottawa who make less income will be less impacted by the surtax.

Numbers aside, we commit to raise taxes as needed in order to meet the unmet and emerging needs of our increasingly complex city (i.e. housing, transit, social services).

Infrastructure

At a glance:

- Commitment to formal, yearly safety audits by the Women’s Initiatives for Safer Environments, in all city-managed spaces with appropriate resourcing for that work

⁵⁵ [More Tax Sources for Canada’s Largest Cities: What, Why, How?](#), Munk School of Global Affairs. October 2016

- Ensuring that all transit stops and major sidewalks are kept in good condition and are cleared of snow in the winter months
- Commitment to an action plan for an accessible city, working in consultation with provincial guidelines set out by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
- Apply an intersectional gender lens to the process of awarding city contracts, and ensure gender representation is equal on these juries, including managing the supply chain
- Manage and limit predatory lending in Ottawa, and require more taxes from these institutions which can be applied to women's equity programming

Safety audits by the Women's Initiative for Safer Environments:

Infrastructure spending is key to equitable access for women, trans* and gender-diverse people in a city. If elected, NowWhat?! commits to having yearly safety audits by Women's Initiatives for Safer Environments for all city-owned spaces, to make it clear that women, trans* and gender-diverse people are welcome in all spaces and that their safety in these spaces matters. Further, these audits will be budgeted for and paid for within the City's budget. In maintaining the gender lens for our city, we believe that ensuring safety in all spaces is just as important as road maintenance is.

NowWhat?! commits to a gendered safety audit every year, as has been done in other major Canadian cities such as Toronto and Montreal.⁵⁶ In doing the audits, intersectional perspectives will be taken into account, specifically looking at homeless populations, a range of ages from children to seniors, people with disabilities, as well as visitors to the city who may not be as familiar with the environment. We are committed to this because when we build a safe city for women and marginalized groups, we are building a safe city for everyone. This safety audit will be funded yearly, and funding will keep pace with inflation to reflect the city's commitment to safety for marginalized people.

These safety audits will include a detailed map of the city that will be publicly available. The map will allow women, trans, gender-diverse, and other folks in the city to plan out a route or pick a neighbourhood to live in that suits their needs best. The maps will include:

- information on curb heights and width of sidewalks;
- indications of where sidewalks become narrowed seasonally with patios or snow banks;
- traffic lights and crossing aids;
- distance to services from residential neighbourhoods and/or buildings;
- locations of ramps in publicly owned buildings;
- which areas are well lit, or require more lights; and
- public transit stops, including information on which ones are barrier free.

The results of the safety audit and map will allow City Council to make increasingly more informed decisions about infrastructure investments. By allowing councillors and the public to see

⁵⁶ [Gendered Cities: Built and Physical Environment](#), Women and Urban Environments. 2013.

which areas are more difficult to manoeuvre, and which ones require maintenance or repair, appropriate resources can be allocated.

Snow clearing of sidewalks and bus stops:

NowWhat?! commits to clearing sidewalks and bus stops within 24 hours of snowfall. Sidewalks become much less usable when reduced below 1.5 meters in width, but should be maintained at 2 meters on a regular basis. With the heavy snowfall that Ottawa sees, NowWhat?! is sensitive to the impacts this can have on mobility for folks with disabilities, seniors or parents with small children. Without access to public transit stations or safe sidewalks, these, and other populations can become isolated in the winter months. In order to combat this, as well as the safety concerns caused by snowbanks, ice and narrowed sidewalks, NowWhat?! will advocate for a program for seasonal employment to increase capacity to keep the sidewalks and public transit stations safe depending on the conditions caused by the range of seasonal weather Ottawa experiences.

A Plan for an Accessible City:

We commit to creating an accessible city, including, as previously mentioned, maintaining sidewalks so that folks with mobility issues are able to participate freely in city space as much as able-bodied people are. This also includes making sure that transit stations and stops are kept clear of snow and ice.

Creating an accessible city is a multi-pronged challenge for the coming years. Currently, the city invests \$2.5 million into retrofitting existing city structures to be more accessible.⁵⁷ We propose a 5% increase every year over the next 5 years to achieve an accessible city. NowWhat?! will advocate for the following:

- where possible, widening sidewalks to be:
 - Never less than 1.5 meters wide
 - An average of 2 meters wide throughout the city
 - 3 meters wide in front of schools and other high-use public buildings;
- maintaining sidewalks to be free of tripping hazards;
- in all new construction of roadways and pedestrian areas, slip-resistant materials must be used;
- having ramps in all buildings that are open to the public that have an incline of no more than 1 inch per 1 foot, complying with building codes, and have proper handrails;
- buildings that do not have the space to install the necessary length of ramp must have a lift or elevator;
- all new purchases of buses and public transit vehicles will have wider doors to better accommodate larger wheelchairs and strollers; and
- entrances and bathroom doorways in public buildings will be widened where possible to better accommodate strollers and wheelchairs.

Predatory lending in Ottawa:

⁵⁷ [City of Ottawa 2016–2020 Municipal Accessibility Plan](#), 2016.

In 2018, City Council passed a motion to look at zoning by-laws for minimum distances between payday loan establishments in Ottawa. There is suggestion that there will be a capped number of these stores that can operate in Ottawa, however the results will not be reported until 2019.⁵⁸ Predatory loans prey on the most vulnerable populations. 95.3% of respondents in a study done of predatory loan users indicated that they only used these high-interest loan options as a last resort.⁵⁹ Research also shows that there is a widening margin of people who either do not have enough access, or in some cases, any access to regular banking processes.⁶⁰ NowWhat?! proposes working with other major Canadian cities and the federal government to set up banking programs for low-income individuals, so as to reduce the need for predatory lending companies, while simultaneously and increasingly restricting these storefronts in Ottawa.

Gendered lens to awarding city contracts:

Finally, we will apply a gender lens to the city's supply chain, and ensure that our contracts are given in an equitable manner. This includes ensuring that juries who award the contracts have gender parity, and even will review the suppliers of the businesses awarded contracts to ensure they are using contractors that respect women's rights. The aim is to mitigate corruption and other below-board deals, and ensure that our city is built for everyone, by everyone.

NowWhat?! commits to gender equity in awarding city contracts for construction and consultancy. In Canada, women account for only 12.6% of the construction industry, and less than 4% of skilled trades. In some trades, the rates are as low as 2%⁶¹ despite the research that increased gender diversity in the construction industry leads to more innovation and commercial viability.⁶² Unfortunately, there is no research about trans and non-binary participation and employment in the construction industry. Going forward, any company that applies for a city contract must have 30% non-male representation in their company and supply chain, and 50% representation by 2025. This representation must be throughout the company in all departments. These companies must also prove that non-male employees are receiving equal pay for equal work. This will apply retroactively to companies that have already been awarded construction and consultancy contracts by the city. For companies that are currently working with the City of Ottawa, if they do not currently meet the set out gender requirements, they must propose a plan to meet them in the next 2 years.

⁵⁸ [City to pursue limiting payday lenders in Ottawa under new regulations](#), CTV Ottawa. April 11, 2018

⁵⁹ [Predatory Lending: A Survey of High Interest Alternative Financial Service Users](#), Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. 2016

⁶⁰ [Memo to the Ministry of Finance](#), ACORN Canada.

⁶¹ [The State of Women in Construction in Canada](#), Construction Sector Council. February 2010

⁶² [The importance of gender diversity in construction](#), Turner & Townsend, October 2017

Conclusion

NowWhat?! Ottawa is proud to be part of the 2018 municipal election. We wrote this platform envisioning ourselves as a candidate, and by imagining what a gender-mainstreamed city could look like.

We encourage you to get in touch if you'd like to incorporate these ideas into your policies or platforms as you seek election in Ottawa. Further, as this is a living document, if you have a suggestion or addition that you'd like to see included in our platform, we would love to hear it.

Please visit us at nowwhatott.com or on Twitter at [@nowwhatott](https://twitter.com/nowwhatott) for more.

“No country can ever truly flourish if it stifles the potential of its women and deprives itself of the contributions of half its citizens.”- *Michelle Obama*

Appendix A: Key Statistics on Gender Inequality and Violence Against Women

Gender-Based Violence

- All Canadians pay a steep price for gender-based violence. It's estimated that each year, Canadians collectively spend \$7.4 billion to deal with the aftermath of spousal violence alone, according to the Department of Justice. This figure includes immediate costs, such as emergency room visits and related costs, such as loss of income. It also includes tangible costs such as funerals, and intangible costs such as pain and suffering.⁶³
- Half of all women in Canada have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16.⁶⁴
- There were 1,181 cases of missing or murdered Aboriginal women in Canada between 1980 and 2012, according to the RCMP. However, according to grassroots organizations and the Minister of the Status of Women the number is much higher, closer to 4,000.⁶⁵
- On any given night in Canada, 3,491 women and their 2,724 children sleep in shelters because it isn't safe at home.⁶⁶ Out of the 4,476 women and 3,493 children staying in shelters on the snapshot date of April 16, 2014, 78% (or 3,491 women and 2,742 children) were there primarily because of abuse.
- LGBTQ+ people experiencing gender-based violence may be reluctant to approach the police. Research highlights mistrust and low-confidence of the police in LGBTQ+ communities, which is still often seen to embody homophobia.⁶⁷
- Trans people are the targets of specifically directed violence; 20% had been physically or sexually assaulted for being trans, and another 34% had been verbally threatened or harassed but not assaulted.⁶⁸

⁶³ [An Estimation of the Economic Impact of Spousal Violence in Canada](#), Department of Justice Canada. 2009

⁶⁴ [The Violence Against Women Survey](#), Statistics Canada. 1993

⁶⁵ [Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: 2015 Update to the National Operational Overview](#), Royal Canadian Mounted Police. 2015

⁶⁶ [Shelters for Abused Women in Canada](#), Statistics Canada. 2014

⁶⁷ [Intimate Partner Violence in LGBTQ+ Communities](#), Rainbow Health Ontario. 2011

⁶⁸ [Suicidality among trans people in Ontario: Implications for social work and social justice](#), Service Social Journal. 2013

Poverty

- When children are poor, it's usually because their mother is poor. The number of lone-parent families is on the rise and 80% of all lone-parent families are headed by women.⁶⁹
- In 2011, median employment income in female lone-parent families with children under 6 was \$21,200, about 50% of the income of male lone-parent families, which was \$43,300.⁷⁰
- Women who leave a partner to raise children on their own are more than five times likely to live in poverty than if they stay with their partner.⁷¹
- There's plenty of evidence showing abused women sometimes stay in abusive relationships because they know that leaving will plunge themselves and their children into poverty.⁷²
- Each day, men and women work about the same number of hours, but women do more unpaid work (housework, childcare, meal preparation, eldercare, etc.).⁷³
- Among families with both parents working full time, women spend 49.8 hours per week on childcare, while men spend 27.2 hours per week.⁷⁴
- Among full-time working couples, women spend 13.9 hours per week on household work, while men spend 8.6 hours.⁷⁵
- Almost 70% of part-time workers are women.⁷⁶ And 60% of minimum-wage earners are women.⁷⁷
- Canada's lack of affordable childcare—and the lack of workplace policies such as flex-time and caregiver leave—often forces women into career choices that severely limit their earning power. That's why many women refuse overtime and promotions, and select careers that promise to be 'family-friendly.' Women's domestic responsibilities also make it harder for them to return to school or attend training sessions that could advance their career.

⁶⁹ [Portrait of families and living arrangements in Canada](#), Statistics Canada. 2012

⁷⁰ [Income composition in Canada](#), National Household Survey. 2011

⁷¹ [Canadian women on their own are poorest of the poor](#), Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Sept. 8, 2009.

⁷² [Breaking the Links Between Poverty and Violence Against Women](#), Public Health Agency of Canada. 2008

⁷³ [Cooking, Caring and Volunteering: Unpaid Work Around The World](#), Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. March 2011

⁷⁴ [Time spent on unpaid childcare in the household](#), Statistics Canada. 2010

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ [Paid Work](#), Statistics Canada. 2009

⁷⁷ [Minimum Wage](#), Statistics Canada. 2009

The Wage Gap

- According to an Ontario Government report, women with the same experience, socio-economic and demographic background earn approximately \$7,200 less than men counterparts per year.⁷⁸
- A 2017 study from the Institute for Women's Policy Research in the United States found that if equal pay were achieved, it would cut working women's poverty levels in half.⁷⁹
- Indigenous women working full-time, full year earn an average of 35% less than non-Indigenous men, earning 65 cents to the dollar.⁸⁰
- Newcomer women working full-time, full-year earn an average of 29% less than non-newcomer men, earning 71 cents to the dollar.⁸¹
- According to the 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability, women living with a disability in Canada working full- and part-time earn approximately 54 cents to the dollar when compared to the earnings on non-disabled men, equaling a wage gap of around 46%.⁸²

⁷⁸ [Final Report of the Gender Wage Gap Steering Committee](#), Prepared for Ontario Minister of Labour and Minister Responsible for Women's Issues. 2016

⁷⁹ [The Impact of Equal Pay on Poverty and the Economy](#), Institute for Women's Policy Research. 2017

⁸⁰ [2016 Census. No. 98-400-X2016268](#), Statistics Canada. 2016

⁸¹ [Census. No. 98-400-X2016200](#), Statistics Canada. 2016

⁸² [2012 Canadian Survey on Disability](#), Statistics Canada. 2012