

From: ["Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>](mailto:Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca)
To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)
Date: 3/8/2022 3:54:59 PM
Subject: [Update on Women's Equity Strategy & Gender, Diversity, and Intersectional Audit](#)
Attachments: [CMO - Memo re Update on Women s Equity Strategy - 2022.03.pdf](#)
[CCO - GDI Memo.pdf](#)

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please find enclosed two memos for your information:

An update on the implementation of Phase 2 of the Women's Equity Strategy, summarizing the City's initiatives over the last year to advance equity for women in five priority areas:

1. Application of an intersectional approach
2. Women's safety in public spaces
3. Affordable, quality childcare
4. Affordable, accessible housing
5. Women's leadership and representation within the City's workforce

An update on the gender, diversity and intersectional audit of Vancouver City Council and Council Operations. This memo includes analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, summarizes issues facing women as elected officials, and provides an overview of initiatives put in place in 2021 to reduce barriers for meaningful participation of women in civic life.

These two updates come to you as we mark International Women's Day today - March 8th, 2022.

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
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City of Vancouver
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

MEMORANDUM

March 7, 2022

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office
Sandra Singh, General Manager, Arts Culture & Community Services
Andrew Naklicki, Chief Human Resources Officer
Theresa O'Donnell, General Manager, Planning, Development & Sustainability
Karen Fry, Fire Chief

FROM: Aftab Erfan
Chief Equity Officer

SUBJECT: Update on Women's Equity Strategy

RTS #: N/A

PURPOSE

This memo provides an update on Phase 2 implementation of the City's Women's Equity Strategy 2018-2028 (WES).

BACKGROUND

In January 2018, following close consultation with the Women's Advisory Committee, internal and external subject matter experts, other municipalities, and the public, Council adopted [Vancouver: A City for All Women: Women's Equity Strategy 2018-2028](#).

The Strategy identified five priority areas that intersect to impact women's full inclusion into the social, economic and political life of Vancouver.

1. Application of an ***intersectional approach*** to our work, including work on the other four priority areas
2. Women's ***safety*** in public spaces
3. Affordable, quality ***childcare***
4. Affordable, accessible ***housing***
5. Women's ***leadership and representation*** within the City's workforce

The Strategy's implementation has been organized in shorter, two- to three-year phases in order to allow for ongoing learning and responsiveness to changing social and political conditions. For each phase staff work with Advisory Committees and community organizations to identify goals and actions for each priority area. The goals and actions are also aligned with existing work underway in other City strategies such as the Healthy City Strategy and the Housing Vancouver Strategy.

Staff report annually on the progress of implementation.

In March of 2021, Council received a final update on [Phase 1 of the Strategy and adopted recommendations for Phase 2 actions](#).

Work on Phase 2 has been ongoing in all priority areas. The City's Equity Office is working closely with the departments of Arts Culture and Community Services and Human Resources on the majority of the actions in Phase 2. Several other departments are also involved in smaller ways.

A fulsome update on Phase 2 actions appears in the Appendix.

DISCUSSION

The year 2021 may be described as a year of incremental gains for the City of Vancouver in terms of moving the dial on women's equity. Actions continued in all five priority areas identified in the Strategy, despite intensified pressures, staff attrition and increased workloads and complexity characterizing the second year of the global pandemic. In several cases the actions underway are leading-edge and have the potential to lead to systemic change if they are supported to reach their fruition phase.

During 2021, the disproportionate negative impacts of COVID-19 on women, girls and gender-diverse people became even more apparent and were documented nationally and internationally. A [United Nations policy brief](#) warned that gains made in the past decades for equality are at risk of being rolled back, a concern that has been echoed by the [Canadian Human Rights Commission](#). A March 2021 [House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women](#) report specifically highlighted costs of the pandemic to women in three areas of concern: women's health and wellbeing, women's work and economic security, and women's physical safety. All three of these themes have strong resonance with the priority areas in WES, and their impact has been felt in the work underway.

It is likely that these disproportionate impacts are long-term and far reaching, and that they will be with us even as the acute crisis stage of the pandemic wanes. The social and economic recovery efforts in Vancouver would therefore require a feminist approach – one that considers

the reality of women, girls and gender-diverse people specifically. Furthermore, recovery efforts will need to be intersectional, as committed to in the [City's Equity Framework](#), paying specific attention to the needs of Indigenous and racialized women, women with disabilities, members of the 2S/LGBTQIIA+ community and trans women in particular.

While recognizing the magnitude of the need to do more, staff are focused in continuing to deliver on the commitments of WES Phase 2 during 2022 with constrained resources. The development of Phase 3 actions, should it be supported by Council, will focus on the unique and ongoing challenges presented by the pandemic and this time in history.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The implementation the WES Phase 2 Actions has been incorporated into existing budgets and work plans for 2022 wherever possible.

Of note are critical efforts under the Safety priority areas, which will require re-investment to continue towards implementation. The UN Safe Cities scoping study is funded until the end of May 2022, while work on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (RTS #013910) is funded until the end of December 2022 after Council allocated 300,000 in this year's budget for one time staffing until the end of 2022 (150k) and ongoing grant initiatives (150k).

Several initiatives in Childcare and Housing priority areas depend on capital funding for successful and complete implementation. Similarly, capital funding is needed to upgrade City facilities – e.g. Fire Halls – for gender inclusion.

NEXT STEPS

City staff are in contact with the Women's Advisory Committee regarding work on the Strategy.

Staff will put forward a request in the next budget cycle, to carry out the development of a Phase 3 of the Strategy, and to update the related work within the Trans* Gender Variant and Two-Spirit Inclusion Strategy which has not been updated since 2016.

In March 2023, staff will come back to Council with a final update on Phase 2.

FINAL REMARKS

The Women's Equity Strategy is one among a family of existing or emerging identity-based strategies that, together with the Equity Framework, form the basis of the City's work towards dismantling systemic oppression and advancing the interests of equity-denied groups.

Taking a specific identity-based lens, and an intersectional approach, is essential so that the City's overarching approach to equity does not inadvertently leave out some marginalized groups at the expense of others. There are also synergies and opportunities for operational efficiencies among the identity-base strategies that are becoming more apparent as we continue this work. A portion of the Equity Office's capacity is focused on aligning these strategies and holding and advancing a more integrated and comprehensive vision. Plans are underway for

building a dashboard to house all of the City's equity work, so that the linkages between various Strategies and the work of various departments can be better observed and leveraged. The dashboard will also increase transparency and reduce the inefficiencies in reporting on all the different pieces of work.

The road ahead of us remains long and tumultuous. The support of Council, staff and the tireless community members who continue to hold up a light to the challenges and possibilities is greatly appreciated.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'aftab Erfan'.

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Chief Equity Officer
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Priority - Intersectional Lens

Objective: In 2021-2023 an Equity Framework will be implemented for all City Departments.

Action: Finalize and adopt the Equity Framework (also fulfilling Council direction to create a [comprehensive gendered intersectional strategy](#)).

Update: The [Equity Framework](#) was adopted by Council on July 20, 2021. Intersectionality is one of four prominent lenses articulated in the Equity Framework.

Action: Develop and deliver training on applying the Equity Framework.

Update: A comprehensive curriculum on equity-related topics is in development for City staff. When completed, this curriculum will:

- Provide a progressive, cumulative pathway of learning
- Increase coordination of training delivered across the City and build a shared language and understanding of equity-related concepts

The curriculum is expected to be finalized by June 2022.

Mean while, new learning resources developed in 2021 incorporate the core concepts of the Equity Framework. These include:

- The Equity Framework Quiz Show, an interactive tool for introducing and socializing key definitions from the Equity Framework
- The Intersectionality Toolkit
- Anti-Oppression training developed and rolled out to Council Advisory Bodies, with plans to roll out to staff engaged in committee work in 2022

Action: Refine and roll out the Equity Framework across all City Departments.

Update: A new internal structure, the Equity Council, was struck in 2021 to align the roll out of the Equity Framework across the organization. The Equity Council consists of representatives from each department, and representatives from the City’s Employee Resource Groups. The Equity Council meets six times a year to oversee and advance the City’s internal work on equity.

To concertize the commitments of the Equity Framework, the Equity Office is leading an organization-wide maturity assessment exercise, using the [Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Benchmark](#) tool. The assessment allows the City to prioritize actions and develop targets for evaluating progress toward equity over time. An update on this work will be provided to Council in June 2022.

Action: Conduct a corporate wide workforce equity and inclusion survey.

Update: The Employee Benchmark Survey was conducted in April and May 2021. The survey asked City staff a total of 27 employee experience questions and demographic questions. It was completed by 3,732 employees, 44% of whom self-identified as women, and 1% as non-binary or gender fluid persons. A [first update on the preliminary results of the Employee Benchmark Survey](#) was shared with Council in Oct 2021 and a second, more comprehensive and more intersectional update is currently being drafted.

Action: Develop and conduct a gender, diversity and intersectional audit of Vancouver City Council and Council Operations.

Update: City Clerk's Office led the audit. Council has been updated regularly on the progress of the audits in memos on November 5, 2020, February 29, 2021, and July 29, 2021. Council will again be updated in early 2022.

Relatedly, the Office of the City Clerk implemented a number of initiatives to better support diversity on Advisory Bodies. This included:

- Equity, diversity and inclusion training for Advisory Body members (Spring 2021).
- Advisory Body member voluntary survey to collect disaggregated demographic data (Winter 2021/2022)
- Changes to Procedure By-law allow for Hybrid meetings/virtual meeting attendance
- 2021 Budget increase for Advisory Bodies enabled Dependent Care honorarium

A Report on the Advisory Body Review will be provided to Council by April 2022.

Priority - Safety

Objective: By 2025, women's sense of safety will be increased by at least 10 per cent (aligned with [Healthy City Strategy](#)).

Action: Conduct a Scoping Study on sexual violence and sexual harassment in public spaces as a part of the [UN Safe Cities Initiative](#), which aims to improve the safety of women, Two Spirit, trans, non-binary, and gender diverse people.

Update: The scoping study has been underway since May 2020. The Scoping Study is the first deliverable of the UN Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Initiative. Its key components have included a literature/document review, external engagement via an advisory committee and key informant interviews, and internal engagement via bi-weekly Directors' Table meetings (interdepartmental working group).

One of the key learnings has been to expand the scope to look at all forms of gender-based violence and not just sexualized violence to better include and reflect trans, Two Spirit, gender diverse and non-binary people's experiences of safety in public spaces.

The work on the 'Addressing Sexual Violence in the Hospitality and Service Industries' motion (RTS# 13365) will be integrated into the UN Safe Cities initiative given that there is

likely an overlap of recommendations between the motion and the UN Safe Cities scoping study. The motion also directed staff to address sexual violence in the Granville Entertainment District through the UN Safe Cities initiative and the Nighttime Economy Strategy.

The final report of the scoping study is expected in April 2022. There is currently no funding to continue the UN Safe Cities initiative beyond its scoping study stage.

Action: Continue to engage with Indigenous communities and review and identify opportunities to integrate within the City's work key recommendations from: (1) Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and (2) Red Women Rising: Indigenous Women Survivors in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

Update: [MMIWG has been underway since January 2020](#). The work was however interrupted by Covid in March 2020 and resumed in the Fall of 2020. Its key components have included:

- Project management and support of Moccasin Mafia, a grass roots team of Indigenous women and Two-Spirit Peoples who provide food and support to Indigenous peoples in Vancouver and especially in the DTES.
- A literature/document review.
- External engagement via an advisory committee and support with key MMIWG groups and advisories.
- Internal engagement via bi-weekly Directors' Table meetings (interdepartmental working group).

Work on the project is organized in three phases:

- Phase 1 – Examined the number of recommendations that are relevant to the City and identified what actions have been taken to implement the recommendations to date. [A memo update went to Council in November 2021](#).
- Phase 2 – Further analysis of data from 11 departments/organizations on actions taken to date including in-depth conversations with departments/organizations to further understand implementation and outcomes achieved. A report will go to Council June 2022 and will include: the number of actions to date including an assessment of actions and assessment of impacts on community; and building on the four Pathways to deepen impact of identified actions.
- Phase 3 – Develop Implementation and Evaluation plan of how to implement recommendations more fully into City systems and to ensure outcomes meet the needs of Indigenous community forward.

Action: Develop a Sex Worker Safety Plan with focus on long term goals and planning with internal departments and external partners.

Update: [Sex worker safety remains a priority](#) in the immediate and long-term regarding gender equity for women, 2SLGBTQQIA and gender diverse peoples. The City

continues to implement the [Sex Work Response Guidelines](#) inter-departmentally and to engage with the diverse sex work community across Vancouver in safety planning.

Key 2021 highlights which focused on sex workers and some anticipated 2022 initiatives:

- Continued consultations with sex workers and sex work affected groups in 2020-2021
- Deployed washroom trailers that prioritized sex worker safety and peer employment
- Increased sex worker safety training opportunities for Arts, Culture and Community Services staff
- Supported Social Policy Grants Team in exploring multi-year funding opportunities focussed on gender safety and sex worker safety goals
- TGD2S housing and social services roundtable with service providers, community members, BC Housing & City of Vancouver staff commenced

A draft Sex Worker Safety Plan is anticipated in Q4 2022.

Other related safety updates in 2021:

In July 2019, Council passed a motion to address sexual violence and ensure the safety of women working in the hospitality and service industries, with a specific focus on the Granville Entertainment District (GED) and Vancouver's luxury hotels. The motion directed staff to report back with recommendations in the areas of mandated training, conducting audits and a common policy for business operators.

Prior to the pandemic, a working group convened by staff and comprised of industry leaders, union representatives, VPD and Good Night Out Vancouver met three times and began drafting recommendations. However, due to the impacts of the pandemic, the work was delayed.

With the reopening of the hospitality and service industries and the increased rates of sexualized violence, staff have reached out to the working group and hope to be convening again soon. Staff anticipate that the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 on the businesses involved in this work may affect their ability to participate. Staff will be sensitive to these pressures as they seek to re-engage while still attempting to settle on some commitments and recommendations, perhaps with some further scoping to focus on actions within the City's jurisdiction. A re-scoped engagement is important despite the challenges as the GED is one of the most cited answers on the UN Safe Cities survey as an area that people feel unsafe.

Staff are also engaging with the City of Victoria who are working on a similar initiative with the aim to avoid duplication and leverage efforts.

Priority – Childcare

Objective: Through a unique [Memorandum of Understanding with the Province](#), up to 2,300 new licensed spaces will be added to Vancouver's supply, building on the target of 1,000 spaces set by City Council as part of the City's [2019-2022 Capital Plan](#).

Overall Update: 867 new City-facilitated licensed childcare spaces have been committed since 2019, towards the fulfilment of Council's target of 1,000 spaces.

Successful childcare infrastructure expansion serving children younger than school age has been made possible through partnerships between the City, the Province, the development industry, and public and non-profit partners.

Slower progress has been made to expand spaces serving school age children. Conversations with the Vancouver Board of Education and Provincial partners are underway to explore opportunities to accelerate creation of new school age care spaces.

Action: Childcare policy development - Addressing priority areas such as increasing equitable childcare access; supporting Vancouver's workforce; aligning childcare policy and investment with affordable housing policy and programs and with the Vancouver Plan; and building new and strengthened partnerships across sectors.

Update: An auxiliary staff position was created to respond to resolutions in a Council Motion on Extended Hour and 24hr Childcare. The scope of work included:

- A detailed case-study and jurisdictional analysis of 24-hour and extended hour care practices and examples, locally, provincially and nationally.
- A survey of current childcare operators regarding their interest, barriers and potential incentives in providing extended hour and 24-hour care.
- Examination of the design, licensing and operational requirements for offering extended hour and 24-hour or childcare.
- Identification of potential next steps.

A detailed research report and summary Memo to Mayor and Council will be completed in early 2022.

Action: Childcare design and regulatory review – Exploration and development of a suite of possible incentive programs, planning and regulatory tools intended to accelerate the development of affordable, accessible and quality childcare spaces.

Update: Council will receive a separate report in 2022 with a proposed Childcare Strategy, including a policy framework and early actions.

Action: Childcare development process review – Review to enhance efficiency of internal and external processes related to permitting and licensing for childcare.

Update: City staff across departments are working with Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) Community Care Facilities Licensing to identify opportunities to expedite and streamline childcare development application approvals, and to align City development approval processes with VCH licensing processes for new school age care license categories.

Other related childcare updates in 2021:

- [Council approved a one-time capital grant of \\$1,005,600](#) to the [Vancouver Native Housing Society](#) to integrate into a social housing project a licensed 20-space school age care program.
- The [Fraserview Childcare Centre](#) opened with funding from City-wide [Development Cost Levies](#) and support from the Province. The 69-space facility is located on the rooftop of Fleming Elementary school and is operated by the [Developmental Disabilities Association](#) of Vancouver-Richmond.
- The City contributed \$16 million in [Community Amenity Contributions](#) towards two new childcare facilities located [atop a parkade in Gastown](#). The Government of BC and the Union of BC Municipalities contributed \$1 million to the project, which will provide 74 new childcare spaces. Additional funding from the City and the BC Affordable Childcare benefit will make 24 of the spaces available at no cost to low income families. The centres will be operated by the YMCA of Greater Vancouver.

Priority - Housing

Objective: 72,000 new homes across Vancouver in the next ten years, with 50 per cent of new homes serving households earning less than \$80,000, 40 per cent of new homes large enough for families, and 65 per cent of all new housing for renters (aligned with [Housing Vancouver Strategy](#).)

Action: Conduct a needs assessment on obtaining and maintaining housing for hard-to-house women in the Downtown Eastside.

Update: Two [Homelessness Action Week Grants](#) (2019 & 2020) were provided to the [Downtown Eastside Women's Centre](#) (DEWC) to conduct research on women's hidden homelessness. This project is based on interviews with women in the community regarding areas of support and necessary resources from their perspective on issues relating to homelessness and housing.

The primary objective for this project is to ensure that the DEWC is well-informed about the specific needs of the women in this community and to appropriately advocate for the specific resources needed to set them up for success when seeking housing and when newly housed. This research is now completed and a detailed report including raw data has been provided to City staff. This research informed and provided context for the City's [2021 Homelessness Update to Council](#).

Action: Through the Women's Legacy Project, plan and develop safe affordable housing options that prioritizes Indigenous women-led families, 2SLGBTQQIA, and gender diverse peoples and their families. This project strives to attract capital from senior levels of government; co-create the functional programming & design of the project with the communities the project is intended to serve; and demonstrate women's, 2SLGBTQQIA, and gender diverse

peoples' abilities in all aspects of the project including management, design, trades, governance and operations

Update: Phase 1 of the project commenced in the summer of 2019 and concluded in the fall of 2021. It achieved the following:

- Confirmed the City's commitment to deliver an Indigenous women-led housing project
- Created a project charter outlining the commitments and roles of the many departments involved in the project.
- Prepared staff to engage in a decolonized model for the creation of an Indigenous-women led housing project.
- Invited community experts to sit on the Steering Committee and guide the project.
- Built relationships with the Expert members of the Steering committee, establishing trust and commitment to each other, the process, and the people the project is to serve.
- Co-created the Principles, Objectives and Vision of the Women's Legacy Project.

An Interim report was created in December of 2021 to summarize the results of this phase of work.

Phase 2 of the project will focus on implementation planning. This phase began in the fall of 2021 and is intended to complete in spring of 2022. It is comprised of five main components, including:

1. Referring the project to the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil Waututh First Nations and establishing government to government protocols with respect to the project.
2. Establishing Partnership Models for the design, development, funding and operations of the project.
3. Defining Communications & Engagement Approaches of the project.
4. Defining Procurement Approaches to achieve the Indigenous, women led objectives of the project.
5. Drafting a Request for Proposal for the Functional Programming Design of the project, intended for release in spring of 2022.

Motion: [On March 10, 2021, Council directed](#) staff to evaluate the occupancy and distribution of (i) city-owned social housing units, (ii) housing units located on leased city land (such as co-ops), or (iii) social housing units created through City policy (such as MIRHPP units), using a gender and intersectional diversity lens and report back to Council with results.

Update: The City has started to request demographic information, on a voluntary basis, for all new housing projects on City-owned and City-leased lands. The data set is too small at this point for an intersectional analysis and report back.

For existing housing projects on City lands, and for all other social housing units, staff are working on a coordinated data collection and reporting framework that balances the

privacy rights and comfort of residents with reporting requirements. Staff will begin to report on results once the framework is in use.

Other related housing updates in 2021:

- The City partnered with the provincial and federal governments, and Lu'ma Native Housing Society [to create 50 new supportive homes](#) for people experiencing homelessness in Vancouver.
- [Council approved a grant of \\$350,000](#) to Atira Women's Resource Society towards upgrades to the SRO-designated Murray Hotel.
- In July 2021, Council has approved a process for [land lease renewals for co-ops on public land this week](#), which seeks to offer co-ops on leased City land at below-market rate for the land, with further discounts to land rent to support low-income households and mixed income co-op communities.
- [Council committed a grant of up to \\$5.12 million to the Vancouver Native Housing Society](#) towards a housing development that will provide 81 new homes for families and seniors. The grant, from the [Community Housing Incentive Program](#) (CHIP) is funded by revenue from the Empty Homes Tax.
- [125 new homes were developed](#) through a [Community Amenity Contribution](#) for families and individuals. The new development includes 26 units at shelter rates and 32 affordable below-market rental homes for families led by single mothers.
- Council approved [new measures to prevent rising rents](#) in private Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels.
- More than [130 new affordable homes](#) were approved as part of a [Community Amenity Contribution](#). The development will include 14 shelter rate units, 55 units rented at rates within BC Housing's [Housing Income Limits](#), and 69 at 10% below market rate. Half of the new units will have 2- and 3-bedrooms.
- With funding support from the Federal government's [Rapid Housing Initiative](#) Program, the City purchased the [hotels at 205 Kingsway and 2075 Kingsway to provide approximately 133 rooms with supports](#) for people experiencing homelessness, with a target of housing 40% women.

Priority: Leadership & Representation

Objectives:

- Establish and implement goals for diverse staffing.
- Identify and remove barriers within the City for women in underrepresented occupations (engineers, information technology, firefighting, trades and entry-level operational roles)
- Identify and remove barriers to women's advancement and inclusion in leadership to ensure parity in new hires and equitable representation within the City's leadership.

Action: Develop a corporate-wide equity and inclusion plan for the City's workforce that considers objectives based on disaggregated data, that identifies and addresses systemic

barriers to full inclusion, and that includes individualized departmental plans and accountabilities for implementation.

Update: The Corporate-wide equity and inclusion plan will be informed by the results of the City's Employee Benchmark Survey, the Equity Maturity Assessment (see above, under "Intersectional Lens") and an upcoming External Review of Recruitment Practices underway in 2022.

Action: Update the City's individual and leadership development offerings with emphasis on inclusive leadership skills.

Update: In February 2021, the City updated its leadership competencies to include Equity Leadership. These competencies are now reflected in the City's updated Performance Planning and Review process.

To support the development of equity leadership competencies, the City offers two leadership development programs and opportunities:

- The internal City *Leadership Essentials in Action Program* (LEAP) is available to entry-level exempt managers/supervisors
- Opportunities to attend three City-sponsored external [Municipal Administration Training Institute](#) (MATI) courses for leaders in local government

Participation in these programs is limited. Leaders are invited to apply by completing an application that includes voluntary identity-related information. Applicants who identify as belonging to equity-denied groups, including women in under-represented occupations, receive additional consideration in their applications to support more equitable access to these developmental opportunities.

Action: Sponsor emerging women leaders to participate in leadership development programs.

Update: For the third year, the City is sponsoring women leaders to participate in [Minerva's Women Leading the Way Program](#).

- In 2021, two women successfully completed their 2021 Emerging Leaders program
- In 2022, four seats have been reserved. The successful applicants will be selected in April/May of 2022

The City's new ["Talk it Forward" podcast](#) is the capstone project of one of the City's 2020 Minerva Leading the Way program graduates, Carla Grimann (Fleet Supervisor, Parks & Recreation). The Podcast will focus on women in leadership at the City of Vancouver. The 6-episode series will launch in March 2022.

Action: Increase recruitment outreach for job-seekers who are Indigenous, Black, persons of colour, women in under-represented occupations, immigrants, 2SLGBTQ+, and persons with disabilities.

Update: The City's Recruitment team has taken steps to improve recruitment outreach and the recruitment process:

- Met with representatives of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil Waututh Nations to discuss ways in which the City could partner with their employment and training centres.
- Invited the Nations to participate in the interview processes for Indigenous-related roles such as the Indigenous Planners.
- Reached out to Employee Resource Groups (e.g., Indigenous employees, IBPOC, Women in Operations, Employees with Disabilities) to get recommendations for outreach and for removing barriers in recruitment process.
- Provide information on vacancies for various roles directly to the host Nations, in addition to organizations serving urban Indigenous people.
- Reached out to 34 organizations who support diverse candidates for direct sourcing into the City's temporary pool which is an expedient way to gain access to opportunities within the City.
- Connected with a number of community organizations to support circulation of job postings, such as [SCWIST](#), [ACEC-BC](#), [Pride a Work](#), [Qmunity](#), [Health Initiative for Men](#), [Kiwassa Neighbourhood House Society](#), [SUCCESS Vancouver](#), and [Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society](#).
- Participated in the [MOSAIC Immigrant Professionals Conference](#) 2021

During 2021, Vancouver Fire & Rescue Services, which conducts recruitment independently, also introduced several new initiatives to increase the diversity of its workforce. These include leveraging new application platforms which have shifted the demographics of applicant pools, and auditing job requirement to identity and remove antiquated and no-longer-relevant disqualifiers. VFSR is looking at the qualities that make a fantastic firefighter and reverse engineering its recruitment process to identify and highlight these in applicants, rather than following a standard process that has traditionally led to gender and racial homogeneity in this segment of the workforce.

Action: Finalize the corporate-wide long term, flexible and remote work strategies.

Update: Remote work at the City was expedited due to the pandemic. The Flexible Work Program was developed and rolled out across the organization in 2021. The Remote work Policy was approved in September 2021. The full implementation of the flexible work program planned for Q1 2022.

Action: Review and evaluate the City's Works Yards in order to develop facilities that provide equitable access to all staff and genders.

Update: Through a series of site visits, interviews and workshops, City staff worked with a consultant to identify requirements for additional women's or gender diverse washroom, change, and locker facilities in 20 buildings located in eight works yard throughout the City.

The project was organized in four phases:

- Phase 1 - Facility Reviews - Complete
- Phase 2 - Management and Staff Consultation - Complete
- Phase 3 - Prioritization - Complete
- Phase 4 - Concept Design - Planned completion February 2022. This phase includes a communications strategy to impacted staff on the upcoming changes.

Additionally, Vancouver Fire & Rescue Services has undertaken an internal review and evaluation of facilities within Fire Halls with an eye to inclusion and access rights for people of all genders. This work is crucial as Fire Halls function not only as workplaces but as living spaces for firefighters while they are on shift. A range of facilities - washrooms, showers, decontamination areas, rest quarters etc. – will need updating to reflect the physical and psychological realities of all people, beyond the gender binary.

Other related updates in Leadership & Representation in 2021:

- The City's extended health benefits plan was updated to include coverage for contraceptives and some selective surgeries for employees or dependents undergoing gender transition.
 - The CUPE collective agreements and the Vancouver Charter were updated for gender-neutral language.
 - According to the City's HR files, exactly 50% of senior leaders hired in 2021 were women (25 out of 50 total hires). The Employee Benchmark Survey results shows 41% of senior leaders self-identifying as women. The City will need to continue to hire women at or above parity in order to close the historic gender gap over the next decade.
 - The City Leadership Team is now comprised of eleven women and four men. 2021 appointments include Vancouver's first woman Fire Chief. VFRS also hired its first Deputy Chief People, Culture & Equity.
 - Twelve new Employee Resource (ERGs) were established at the City, supported by the Equity Office. These include a Women in Stem ERG, Women in Operations ERG, and a Women of Colour in Planning ERG.
- For the third time, the City participated in [McKinsey's Women in the Workplace Survey](#). The City's results, received in December 2021, are being shared with City leadership and relevant Employee Resource Groups.

MEMORANDUM

March 8, 2022

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
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Maria Pontikis, Director, Civic Engagement and Communications
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
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Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office
Sandra Singh, General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services
Aftab Erfan, Chief Equity Officer, Equity Office
Tina Penney, Director of Legislative Operations and Deputy City Clerk
Rosemary Hagiwara, Chief Election Officer and Deputy City Clerk
Lisa Southern, Integrity Commissioner

FROM: Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk

SUBJECT: Gender, Diversity and Intersectional Audit – Update #4

RTS #: 014792 (see also previous related Memorandum RTS # 013827)

PURPOSE

On March 10, 2020, Council passed a resolution establishing an annual Gender, Diversity and Intersectional Audit that would review the City of Vancouver's operations and recommend policy, by-law, and conventional changes to promote gender, diversity, and intersectional equity in Vancouver City Council. This memo provides an update on the process made thus far on the Audit, including the data gathered, interviews conducted, and alignment with current COV strategies, and summarizes the actions taken since the last update to Council in July 2021.

BACKGROUND

Staff have provided three official updates on the audit's progress thus far (in memos dated November 5, 2020; February 26, 2021; and July 29, 2021).

These memos summarized actions to date, and are briefly summarized below:

- **November 5, 2020, memo:** recommended narrowing the scope of the audit and highlighted other related work currently underway, most of which sits with the Equity Office

(e.g. Equity Framework, Women's Equity Strategy, Employee Benchmark survey) and some of which sits with City Clerk's Office (CCO) (Type A Advisory Body Review with an Intersectional and Equity lens). This stage of the audit involved gathering demographic statistics as a baseline measure.

- **February 26, 2021, memo:** shared high-level findings and highlighted data collection gaps. This memo outlined the need for new cross-departmental data collection (disaggregated demographic data). It also provided a high-level infrastructure analysis and a high-level overview of current demographics collected, and outlined various strategies underway that have an equity and inclusion focus.
- **July 29, 2021, memo:** shared timelines for interviews with Council. At this time, the employee benchmark survey was underway. The memo outlines the interdepartmental nature of the work and the role of the Equity Office regarding overall coordination of equity-related projects and initiatives. It positioned that the GDI audit and actions stemming from it may be included in the Women's Equity Strategy and will be operationalized through the CCO in core areas of responsibility (Council and Advisory Bodies).

In the spring of 2021, Council approved Phase 2 of the Women's Equity Strategy (WES). In the summer of 2021, shortly after the last memo, Council approved the Equity Framework. This will support and align with the ongoing work of the GDI Audit. Council interviews for the audit were undertaken in the fall of 2021. This current memo summarizes the actions taken and information gleaned since the last update.

Please note that while the GDI Audit has been referred to as "annual", in practice, the collection of demographic data and analysis of gaps will be conducted once per Council term. This is due to the amount of information-gathering required for the audit, the synthesis and presentation of that information, and the development of related recommendations for policy changes, which cannot be feasibly completed within one year. By not rushing the audit process, staff can ensure that the work done will be careful, thorough, thoughtful and accurate. The audit's outcomes will inform Council's decision-making process as they review the City's policies and practices with a focus on gender, diversity, and equity. Additionally, both Council and Advisory Bodies sit for specific terms which means that demographic data collection would only need to occur once per term. Any new initiatives implemented to address gaps will be included in the annual reporting within the WES update.

CCO staff intend to proceed with the GDI audit using a two-tiered process, with data collection occurring in the first half of term and audit findings presented to Council once results are analyzed later in the term (once per term). We anticipate that reporting out in year 3 of the 4-year term will allow sufficient time for Council to implement any necessary actions in response to the audit's findings, such as updates to policies or by-laws.

The GDI Audit is the product of collaboration between the City Clerk's Office, the Equity Office (EO), and the Social Policy and Projects Division of Arts, Culture and Community Services (ACCS). The Equity Office is responsible for overall coordination, tracking progress and reporting on the many initiatives, in accordance with the Equity Framework. The GDI is intended to fall under the larger umbrella of the Women's Equity Strategy and the Equity Strategy. Any task items related to Council operations will be actioned by the City Clerk's Office, while the Equity Office will coordinate the final report on the audit's results. The GDI Audit and any associated actions emerging from it may also be synchronized where feasible with other in-progress City initiatives such as the Healthy City Strategy, Accessibility Strategy, UN Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces initiative, and other work led by Social Policy and Projects (ACCS).

DISCUSSION

Focus Areas

The GDI Audit has been divided into three focus areas:

1. Gathering descriptive statistics about the level of diversity (e.g. gender, racial, and sexual orientation) within the narrowed COV scope specified in the November 5, 2020, memo;
2. A review of the infrastructure currently in place to support accessibility and equity; and
3. A review of the established legislation and policies that support diversity and equity.

Progress has been made in all three focus areas. This section provides further details on the work in these areas.

1) Descriptive statistics

The gathering of descriptive statistics includes the voluntary reporting of gender identity, diversity, and intersectional representation amongst election candidates, elected members of council, non-elected support staff, and advisory bodies. This process found that our past survey tools were inadequate to capture the data required, so part of this stage also involved improving those tools.

Chart #1 below outlines the progress on this item by both the Equity Office and the City Clerk's Office (CCO). The CCO work-plan will include an ongoing once-per-term commitment to collect disaggregated demographic data through voluntary surveys for Advisory Body members, electoral candidates, and Council. This will allow us to monitor changes over time.

Chart #1: Collection of Descriptive Statistics

Equity Office:	CCO:
Lead for Staff Audit	Lead for Council and Advisory Body(AB) member audit
Co-developed demographic survey tool which can be used cross-departmentally to capture demographic composition of the workforce	Adapt demographic survey tool to be used for AB members, electoral candidates and elected officials (done)
Conduct Employee Benchmark Survey (completed 2021), repeats employee benchmark survey to track change over time	Advisory Body Demographic Survey <i>Jan/Feb 2022 - data analysis underway</i>
Provides recommendations to Council based on survey findings (see October 26, 2021, memo)	Electoral Candidates Demographic Survey <i>planned for autumn 2022 (City of Vancouver Elections)</i>
The political support staff (ie. Staff at the Mayor's Office) were included in the Employee Benchmark Survey, however, due to the small size of the group data has been suppressed by BC Stats to protect privacy	Elected Officials (Council) Due to a small number of high profile people being in this category, only broad questions can be asked (do you belong to equity-denied group(s)/are you a care-taker?) to protect confidentiality. (Completed)
	Repeat surveys once/term to track change over time

Preliminary findings from the voluntary demographic survey with Advisory Body (AB) members indicate that some equity-denied groups have numerically strong¹ representation in ABs, specifically members identifying as women, LGB², Indigenous and those identifying as disabled. However, representation of equity-denied groups is often strongly concentrated in specific ABs. It was found that AB members identifying as belonging to racialized groups or born outside of Canada were under represented across ABs. These representation gaps are also present within the City's workforce, requiring all Departments to develop strategies to improve representation of these groups. In geographic terms, there is an under-representation of AB members residing in South-East Vancouver neighbourhoods. This highlights the need for increased outreach in these neighbourhoods during the next AB member recruitment drive. The insights gained from the demographic survey will inform future recruitment and training strategies and help us address the gaps in community representation in AB membership. Staff will use this information to work towards improving recruitment strategies and accessibility in order to present Council with a broadened Advisory Bodies' pool of candidates that may assist Council's AB selection process to increase representation from equity-denied groups.

2) Infrastructure currently in place to support Council members and staff with their work

Infrastructure includes building layouts and furnishings, access to childcare, safe spaces, inclusive artwork, chamber floor permissions, night sittings, parental leave, proxy voting, video conferencing, electronic voting, and washroom inclusivity and accessibility. Memo 2, RTS 13827 on February 26, 2021, shared findings pertaining to existing infrastructure, which identified several important unaddressed gaps. For example, there are currently no wellness rooms designated for the use of Mayor and Council, staff, or members of the public, and there is a lack of adequate childcare support (during meeting times) for elected officials, staff and members of the public. Possible remediation for these gaps would need to be presented during budget considerations before any action could be taken.

The interviews conducted with elected officials during fall 2021 included individual members' suggestions for infrastructure improvements and are listed below in Tables 1-6. The majority of these suggestions would require resources and need to be considered as part of a budget process. With revisions to the *Vancouver Charter* and *Procedure By-law* to allow for hybrid meetings, some of these issues are in the process of being resolved. Due to the changes wrought by the pandemic, the landscape has shifted; hybrid meetings have provided more flexibility to elected officials and Advisory Body members. While some individuals may require reimbursement for dependent care or childcare during meetings, the hybrid option makes the physical infrastructure less of a challenge. Some of these physical infrastructure gaps are, therefore, considered less pressing than they were pre-pandemic.

¹ Strong representation = representation of equity-denied group is on par or exceeding community demographics. Note that numerical representation is necessary but not sufficient for meaningful representation.

² Note: staff benchmarked survey results against available data sources for City of Vancouver community demographics (2016 Census, 2017-2018 Canadian Community Health Survey, 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability). Staff have recoded these survey results to match the questions and categories used in these datasets, which do not include all aspects of identity (e.g. gender identity, caregiving), may offer categories that do not reflect people's full identities (e.g. "visible minority" categories), or may underrepresent certain populations (e.g. Indigenous peoples).

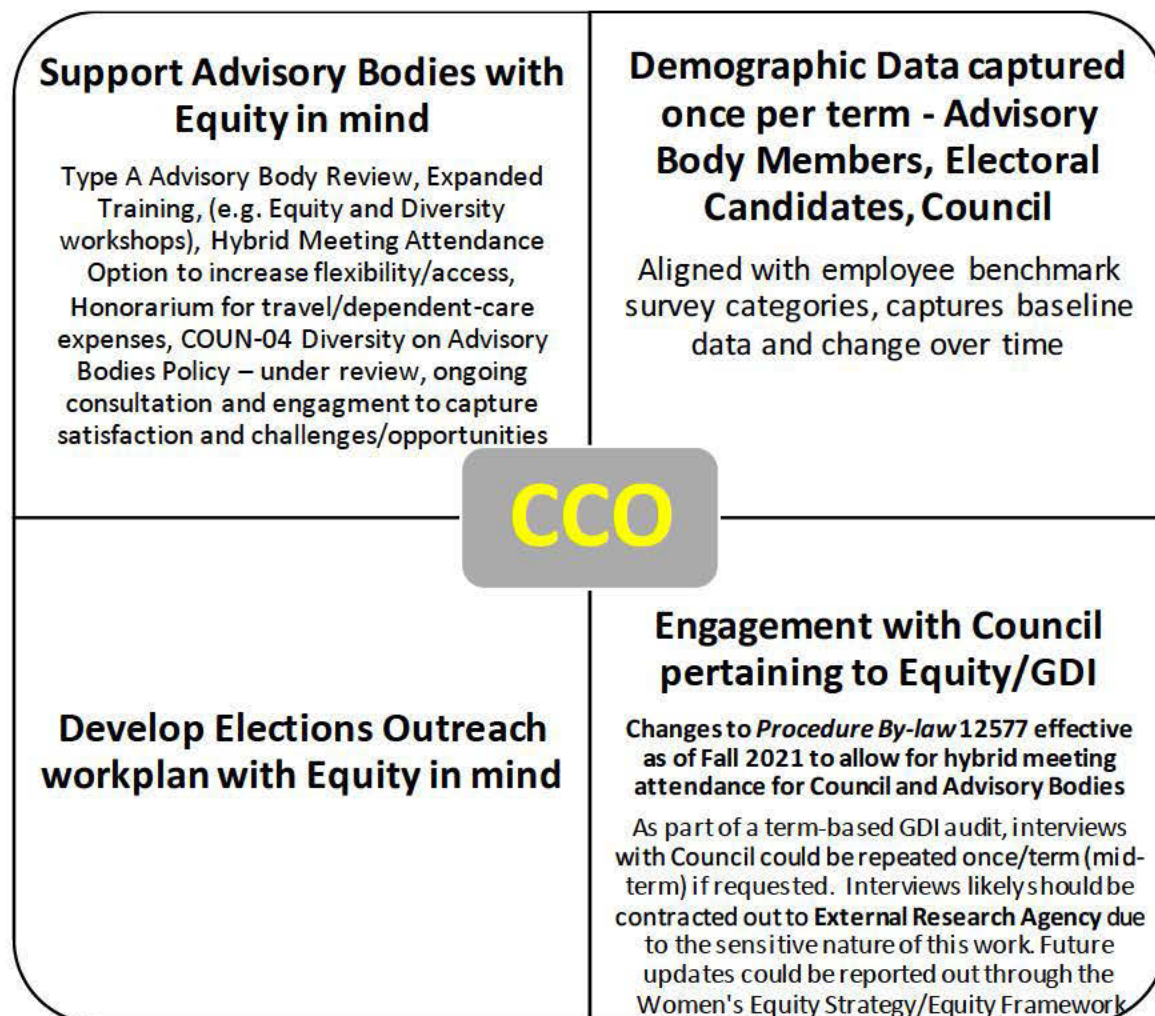
3) Policies and legislation in place to change the workplace culture, including those pertaining to codes of conduct, harassment, sexual harassment, heckling, gender - based analysis plus (GBA+) and equity

The Equity Office and Human Resources are the lead agencies for inward-facing equity-work. ACCS has also consistently developed policies, projects and strategies which focus on equity, diversity and inclusion, all of which typically pertain to how we interact with the community. There is currently a significant amount of work underway supporting equity goals, ranging from the Women's Equity Strategy, the Equity Framework, and the Accessibility Strategy to the review of relevant policies (e.g. Respectful Workplace and Human Rights Harassment policies, Code of Conduct, etc.). The newly-appointed Integrity Commissioner is an additional equity-related resource available to Council.

This memo highlights findings from the interviews with Council pertaining to equity-related policy and legislation changes. These findings have been shared with the Equity Office and other important internal stakeholders to maximize the alignment of all projects pertaining to equity work.

The ongoing role of the CCO in continuing the important work identified in focus area #3 of the GDI Audit is outlined in the Chart # 2 below:

Chart # 2: Ongoing Role of CCO in Equity-Related Issues



Recent Equity-informed Achievements

Advisory Body members have experienced positive changes pertaining to equity, diversity and inclusion due to the implementation of hybrid meetings and the provision of an honorarium for travel and dependent-care expenses. These changes have helped reduce barriers to participation. These include:

- Honoraria for dependent care and travel expenses
- Free parking at City Hall during AB meeting times
- Changes to the *Vancouver Charter* and *Procedure By-law* to allow for hybrid meetings and virtual attendance
- Closed captioning for meeting available upon request to AB members
- Healthy snacks/meals for in-person meetings
- Improved recruitment process to ensure we are effectively reaching out to equity-denied groups and targeting geographic areas that are currently under-represented
- Training focused on conflict resolution, anti-oppression and the building of respectful relationships

As noted under Focus Area #2 above, the pandemic prompted changes to the *Vancouver Charter* and *Procedure By-law* No. 12577 (see By-law 13129 October 5, 2021) to allow for hybrid Public Hearings and Council meetings. These changes have also provided more flexibility for Council and public speakers. For example, equity-denied groups and care-givers expressed that they benefit from the option of hybrid attendance. The hybrid option has also increased accessibility for members of the public, as the *Charter* and *By-law* allow for electronic attendance for public speakers. The *Procedure By-law* was amended by Council so that public speakers who missed their turn at Council and Standing Committee meetings, now have the opportunity to speak at the end of the speakers list, with the Chair calling again at the end of the list for those who have missed their turn. Another change to the *Procedure By-law* approved by Council, doubled the speaker time for those needing a translator. In addition, funding was established for live closed-captioning which will carry over to the video recordings available on the City of Vancouver website, with staff currently investigating the best option to implement.

Flexibility for a significant percentage of City of Vancouver staff has been created through the remote work policy ADMIN 047 (August 2021) and the flexible work program. The shift to remote working for some staff was initially pandemic-informed, but is now being applied on a permanent basis. The flexibility of remote work has shown to have benefits to mental health and productivity and thus supports overall health and balance in the workplace. Staff tend to be more efficient, energized, and motivated when offered this kind of flexibility, which is part of the rationale for maintaining some of these pandemic-related workplace strategies moving forward.

Interviews with Council Solutions Proposed and Concerns Expressed

In addition to the work on the three focus areas and the achievements identified above, staff also interviewed elected officials. These interviews were designed to collect information about elected officials' lived experiences, recommendations, and suggestions for improving equity and diversity. Ten of the invited 11 Council members participated in the interview process.

The interview process with Council highlighted suggestions pertaining to an equity-informed Elections Outreach process. These suggestions have been shared with Elections Outreach and are currently being reviewed and analyzed to help inform their work-plan, where feasible.

Because the information below has been collected via personal interviews, it is important to emphasize that the suggestions and solutions might not reflect a majority opinion. In addition, some of these proposed solutions are not actionable, without input from Council as a whole and consideration for additional resources. However, several of the suggestions (programs, initiatives, strategies and policies) are currently underway or already integrated into the work-plans of various departments. Information from the interviews will also be shared with the Integrity Commissioner for their consideration.

Below are tables highlighting Council members' responses to key equity-related themes (these are indicated in boldface at the top of each table). "Frequency" refers to how many Council members touched on suggested solutions for this issue, ranging from **50% or more (High)**, **20-40% (Medium)**, to **10%(Low)**. Work completed, work underway or work in progress pertaining to the themes is highlighted in the comments sections.

Elections Outreach with Equity in Mind

One common area of concern among interviewees was the equity-related challenges of running for office. 60% of Council members reported experiencing systemic discrimination on the campaign trail, including sexism, ageism and/or racism.

Elections Outreach has conducted their work with equity in mind in past elections and will continue to do so in this upcoming election. However, it is clear that more needs to be done. Suggestions emerging from the Council interviews have been shared with Elections Outreach so that they can help inform the work-plan for the 2022 Election. Suggestions that were out of scope³ for City of Vancouver were not included. City of Vancouver Elections will provide a voluntary survey for electoral candidates in 2022 to allow the collection of disaggregated demographic data. The survey questions will align with the demographic questions from the Employee Benchmark Survey. This will allow for comparison with community demographics and enable monitoring of change over time.

Table 1: Elections Outreach – Planned Improvements

Issue/Theme	Suggestions from Interviews	Frequency mentioned	Work underway, other comments
Elections Outreach with Equity in Mind	Ongoing civic education and workshops for candidates on the role and responsibility of local government. The presenters should reflect the community's diversity.	High	Planned for 2022
	Language accessibility/outreach in various languages.	Medium	Planned for 2022
	Offer workshops and/or mentorship from past retired politicians belonging to equity-denied groups (politician peer mentoring).	Medium	In consideration for after the 2022 Election
	Offer workshops for candidates from equity-denied groups.	Medium	Planned for 2022

³ Out of scope suggestions: Diversity Policies for political parties; election campaigning financial supports for candidates who are equity-denied; electoral supports from other levels of government.

Issue/Theme	Suggestions from Interviews	Frequency mentioned	Work underway, other comments
	Outreach to take into account how busy parents/caregivers are – meet them where they are at (supermarkets, playgrounds etc.).	Medium	In consideration for 2022
	Offer various options to submit election candidate packages to streamline the process and make it more easy and accessible.	Medium	In consideration for 2022
	Use accessible spaces for meetings.	Medium	Planned for 2022

Keep Council Chambers Respectful

Council, public speakers and staff interact in Council Chambers. 90% of Council members interviewed shared that they have witnessed and/or experienced micro-aggressions in these settings and a few have shared that they experienced harassment/discrimination in these settings.

Table 2: Keep Council Chambers respectful: Potential Options

Issue/Theme	Suggestions from Interviews	Frequency mentioned	Work underway, other comments
Micro-aggressions, disrespectful language or behavior or harassment	Review and update pertinent Policies/By-laws. For example, Code of Conduct, must have effective complaint investigation processes in place.	Medium	Code of conduct/respectful workplace policies for staff are currently under review. The Code of Conduct for Council and Advisory Body members was put in place as a By-law (# 12886) on February 9, 2021. Council and AB's have access to & can draw on support of the Integrity Commissioner to investigate Code of Conduct related complaints (Jan 2022).
	Offer additional Chair training so that chairs can effectively address disrespectful behavior in Council Chambers.	Medium	Training will be part Council Orientation for incoming Council, Autumn 2022. There will be ongoing Chair refreshers and opportunity for Chairs to collaborate on managing meetings to ensure consistency while still allowing for individual style.
	Create signage at entrance of Council Chambers and on speaker website to remind speakers to keep language respectful during Council meetings. This relates back to Chair training to manage speakers.	Low	Presently in place; language posted outside the Chamber and on the website was reviewed and refined in 2019. It is continually monitored and will be improved as needed.

Supporting Caregivers and People with Disabilities

All Council member interviewed expressed that they would like to see more supports in place for care-givers. There were a broad range of suggestions (see Table below). Some of the proposed solutions for care-givers overlap with suggestions from other chapters, indicating that while a healthy work-life balance benefits all, it is especially important for those with care-giving responsibilities.

Solutions that Council member proposed need further discussion to determine which ones might be focus areas for Council and would receive the most support. Evening meetings were mentioned by 60% of Council members interviewed, although there were diverging opinions on this topic. Some Council members expressed that evening meeting are needed for public access to Council, while others suggested that evening meetings could be discontinued or limited. Those with care-giving responsibilities stressed that it was more challenging to accept evening and weekend community engagement due to care-giving obligations. There is also an indication that the pandemic-informed shift towards hybrid meetings and being able to work from home might have changed the child-care needs landscape. The interviews found a greater focus on improving flexibility via remote work and creating a healthy work-life balance than on improving infrastructure at City Hall (e.g. family room, child care on site). However, some indicated that being at home while working was disruptive to their household routines.

50% of Council members interviewed discussed increasing supports for elected candidates who identify as disabled. In particular, Council members emphasized the importance of the City being pro-active in this matter rather than waiting for elected officials to disclose disabilities and request assistance.

Table 3: Supporting care-givers and people with disabilities: Potential Options

Issue/Theme	Suggestions from Interviews	Frequency mentioned	Additional Information, Comments
More support for care-givers and people with disabilities Focus on healthy work-life balance	Keep unconditional hybrid meeting model beyond the pandemic.	High	Achieved. <i>Procedure By-law</i> was amended in 2021 to accommodate hybrid Council and Standing Committee meetings on a permanent basis. The <i>Vancouver Charter</i> was amended to permit hybrid Public Hearings.
	Schedule changes to create a more balanced workload, for example: limiting number/ length of evening meetings, limiting length of workday hours, increase number/length of breaks, align break times with childcare peak times (e.g. after-school pick-up).	High	Needs Council discussion/direction. Diverging opinions on evening meetings were noted.
	Increase political staff supports (i.e. full-time staffer for each Councillor).	High	Needs Council discussion/direction. Budget implications. Staff memo

Issue/Theme	Suggestions from Interviews	Frequency mentioned	Additional Information, Comments
			provided to Council on this topic.
More targeted supports for care-givers and people with disabilities Focus on additional infrastructure, policy	Additional infrastructure at City Hall e.g. family room, child-care on site, ergonomic workstations etc.	Medium	Needs Council discussion/direction. Budget Implications. Hybrid meeting may be a mitigating factor.
	Focus on evening childcare needs e.g. allowance for evening baby-sitting expenses.	Medium	Needs Council discussion/direction. Budget Implications.
	Pro-active outreach by administration to inquire if new Council have any needs that should be accommodated (e.g. Disability Accommodation).	Medium	Embedded in 2022 Council Orientation for incoming elected officials.
	Parental leave for Politicians.	Medium	(Unpaid) parental leave policy recently developed in a number of BC municipalities (e.g. North Saanich Feb 2021) and actively being explored by others (Kitimat, Gibsons).

Increase Support for Elected Officials

The theme of elected officials and especially those from equity-denied groups needing more support was frequently raised. Council members offered a broad range of potential solutions. If Council so directs, this would need discussion and prioritizing which suggestions should be explored and turned into agreed upon protocols. Any costs associated with implementing these items likely would be brought forward as part of the annual budget considerations.

Table 4: Increased Support for Elected Officials: Potential Options

Issue	Suggestions from Interviews	Frequency Mentioned	Work underway, other comments
Increase support for Elected Officials from equity-denied groups	One FTE non-elected support staff per Councillor – this would require a clear definition of the support staff's role and scope of access.	High	Memo to Staff was provided to Council as directed.
	Politician Peer Mentoring Scheme – Newly elected officials from equity-denied groups could receive one-on-one mentorship from retired	Medium	Potential Budgetary Impact (new program). Formal direction required from Council.

Issue	Suggestions from Interviews	Frequency Mentioned	Work underway, other comments
	politicians who are also from equity-denied groups.		
	Discretionary training budget for elected officials.	Medium	Budgetary impact – Formal direction required. By-Law 11529 Mayor and Council expenses currently in place.
	Access to Counselling services for elected officials.	Low	Can be accessed via extended Healthcare Plan/Homewood.
	Scholarships for Women's Campaign School for newly elected officials who do not have party support.	Low	Formal direction required; budgetary Impact.

Scheduling, Workflow, and Increased Flexibility

80% of Council members interviewed indicated that the overall workload and length of workdays can be excessive⁴, which makes it challenging to maintain a healthy work-life balance. The negative impact was amplified for Council members from equity-denied groups and care-givers. Council members indicated that improving workflow and providing additional flexibility wherever possible was of prime importance. The City Manager's Office and CCO work consistently towards keeping agendas practical and manageable within established meeting dates and times. Administration has also moved to using memorandums in cases where no decision is required. Due to this change, less time is required for matters that do not require a Council decision, as the memorandums can be reviewed at each Council member's convenience. The entrenchment of hybrid meetings into the *Procedure By-law* has had a significant positive impact on both elected officials and public participation by adding increased flexibility for meeting attendance.

Table 5: Scheduling, Workflow, Flexibility – Potential Actions/Options

Issue	Potential Suggestions	Frequency mentioned	Comments
Scheduling, Workflow, Flexibility	Keep unconditional hybrid meeting model going beyond the pandemic.	High	Achieved - <i>Procedure By-law</i> was amended to accommodate ongoing electronic meeting attendance options (October 5, 2021) – increase in flexibility. The <i>Vancouver Charter</i> was updated to permit hybrid public hearings.
	Limit length of workdays and restructure work	High	Would need Council discussion/direction. Times, limits and boundaries can be placed

⁴ Comments as to the reason why meetings can be so lengthy vary – ranging from locating some responsibility for work overload with politicians themselves (e.g. lengthy speeches, lots of questions), to Vancouver having a very active and engaged public (high speaker attendance) to minority governments take longer to process information/land decision (consensus-based model).

Issue	Potential Suggestions	Frequency mentioned	Comments
	schedule so that workload is more evenly balanced. Longer breaks.		in the <i>Procedure By-laws</i> subject to public notification and majority Council decision making.
	Allow sufficient time to review documents & reports, keep information precise.	Medium	Underway through organized efforts of CMO/CCO to keep agendas/workload manageable and Staff reports/presentations on target.
	Work towards a less formal work culture, more flexibility in general.	Medium	This could be achieved through agreed upon protocols for Chairs that would guide them in keeping meetings within reasonable works hours. A stronger reinforcement of reasonable work hours could be implemented via the <i>Procedure By-law</i> , which could restrict work hours appropriately and therefore help elected officials and staff maintain a healthier work-life balance.
	Provide meals during long work days (for elected officials).	Low	Those who advise they are attending in person, are provided with meals during the lunch and dinner breaks, upon request.

Big Shifts

Please note: Legal advice would need to be obtained, should Council wish to explore any of these suggestions.

Table 6: Big Shifts – Potential Options:

Issue/Theme	Potential Solution Suggestions	Frequency	Comments
Exploring institutional changes to how Council is elected and structured	Create a Ward System.	High – but diverging opinions	Diverging Opinions, requires legislative change to <i>Vancouver Charter</i> .
	Create designated Council seat for Local First Nation Representative/Councillor.	Medium	Example: New Zealand local government has a designated Maori Seat – this would require a request to Provincial Government to change the legislation – <i>Vancouver Charter</i> .
	Create additional Council Seats to increase diversity on Council.	Low	See above.
	Designate Council Seats for equity-denied groups.	Low	See above.

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the work in our three focus areas, as well as the interviews with elected officials, that while some achievements have been made, there remains work to be done in order to increase accessibility and equity at the City of Vancouver.

Many commitments to equity, accessibility, and inclusion have already been put into action through collaboration between the City Clerk's Office, the Equity Office (EO), and the Social Policy and Projects Division of ACCS as identified in the foregoing.

Going forward, the GDI audit is intended to fall under the larger umbrella of the Women's Equity Strategy and the Equity Framework. Any task items related to Council operations will be actioned by the City Clerk's Office, while the Equity Office will coordinate the final report on the Audit's results. The GDI Audit and any associated actions emerging from the Audit may also be synchronized where feasible with other in-progress City initiatives. The GDI audit will be undertaken and reported out once per term, likely in Year 3 of the Council term. This will allow staff sufficient time to gather data and explore potential solutions, and will enable Council to propose solutions that can be put into action by the end of their term. The Audit's timing will therefore ensure that it is a practical exercise with clear outcomes. New initiatives implemented to address identified gaps will be included in the annual reporting within the Women's Equity Strategy update.

Please let me know if you have any questions in regards to this memo.

Regards,



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City Clerk

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Appendix A: Interviews with Council Additional Findings – High Level Summary

Context

Academic research and recent media coverage has highlighted that harassment and discrimination are common experiences for political candidates and elected officials from equity-denied groups¹. Please note: for the purpose of this research-project, equity-denied groups were defined as: Women, gender-diverse people, Indigenous people, racialized people, people with disabilities, those who identify as 2SLGBTQ+ and/or or religious minorities. Inequity/discrimination can also be experienced due to age or social condition (class).

Research² from the Inter-parliamentary Union on Sexism, Harassment and Violence against Women Parliamentarians in 2016 found that 82% of women Parliamentarians have been subjected to psychological violence. In this study, psychological violence was defined as any hostile behavior or act likely to cause psychological harm, suffering and/or fear. 66% of informants who took part in the study from the Inter-parliamentary Union experienced humiliating or sexist remarks; 42% experienced extremely humiliating or sexually charged images of themselves spread through social media, 44% reported threats of deaths, rape, beatings or abduction and 33% reported harassment. The study highlighted that “perpetrators of harassment and violence were both political opponents and colleagues from the women’s own party, or ordinary citizens (Inter-parliamentary Union, 2018).”

Women Transforming Cities Research from 2018³ identified that individual, structural and system barriers exist for women politicians in Vancouver and Surrey, especially in the areas of sexism, childcare and flexible schedules, and electoral systems.

Demographic Findings – Interviews with Council:

We asked two demographic questions to identify if interviewed Council members belong to equity-denied group(s)⁴ and also if Council members had care-giving responsibilities (e.g. childcare, parenting duties, taking care of sick or elderly family members etc.). The majority of Council members identified as belonging to equity-denied-group(s) and half of the Council members interviewed indicated that they are care-givers.

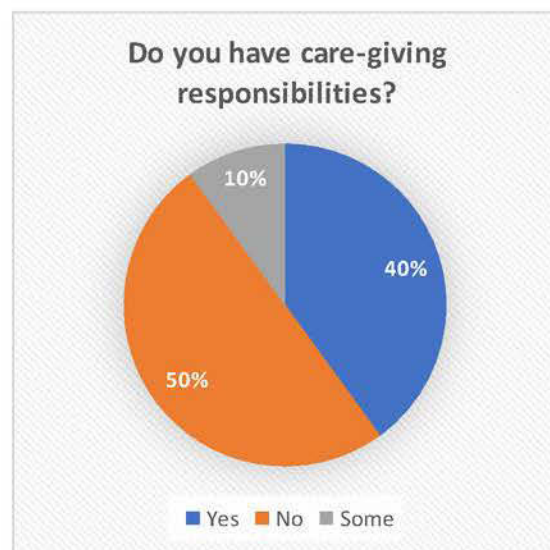
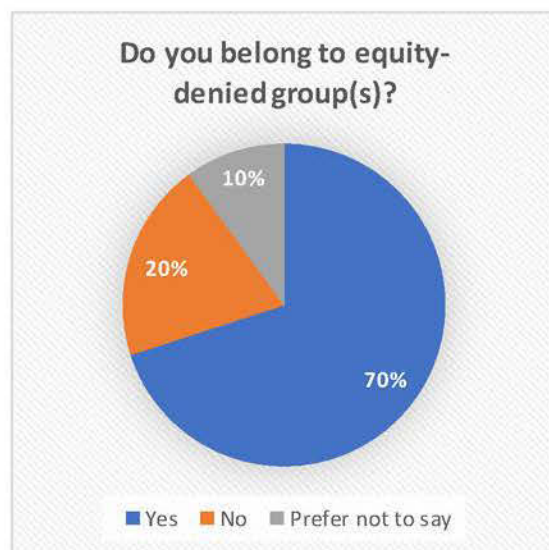
¹ Please note: individuals can belong to numerous and intersecting equity-denied groups, which is connected to our understanding of Intersectionality. Intersectionality is a framework of understanding which explores how different forms of systemic oppression, like racism, classism and sexism, intersect and create compounding, negative effects for individuals and communities throughout their life.

² See: Inter-parliamentary Union, 2016: Sexism, Harassment and Violence against Women Parliamentarians. <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/issue-briefs/2016-10/sexism-harassment-and-violence-against-women-parliamentarians>. See also: Inter-parliamentary Union, 2018: Sexism, Harassment and Violence against Women in Parliaments in Europe <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/issue-briefs/2018-10/sexism-harassment-and-violence-against-women-in-parliaments-in-europe>

³ Women Transforming Cities & The Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, November 2020: Action on systemic barriers to women’s participation in local government <https://www.womentransformingcities.org/research>

⁴ Demographic questions asked were designed in order to protect privacy; taking into account that Council is a small group of high profile people

Council Demographics:



Findings from the Interviews:

All Council members interviewed reported that they experienced, and/or witnessed harassment, discrimination and micro-aggressions related to gender, race, age and other prohibited grounds of discrimination. Unregulated spaces such as social media or the campaign trail were typically considered the most unsafe. All Council members expressed that they have been attacked/harassed on social media and that this has become an unsafe and toxic environment. 40% of Council members reported that they received online threats requiring the need for corporate security to assess and manage risk to themselves and/or their family members.

- 60% of Council members reported experiencing systemic discrimination on the campaign trail, including sexism, ageism and/or racism. Examples include: being harassed/yelled at when street canvassing, social media harassment, campaign signs being de-faced, condescending/belittling comments experienced by some candidates from equity-denied groups during interviews (e.g. by media/panel moderator). 40% of Council members shared that they were not explicitly targeted during the campaign period
- Council meetings, whether public or closed, were seen as complex and challenging spaces. 90% council members interviewed witnessed or experienced micro-aggressions⁵ in these settings. Council members generally referenced that it was often difficult to delineate micro-aggressions connected to partisanship politics from gendered micro-aggressions. In a few instances, Council members referenced having experienced harassment/discrimination⁶ in these settings.

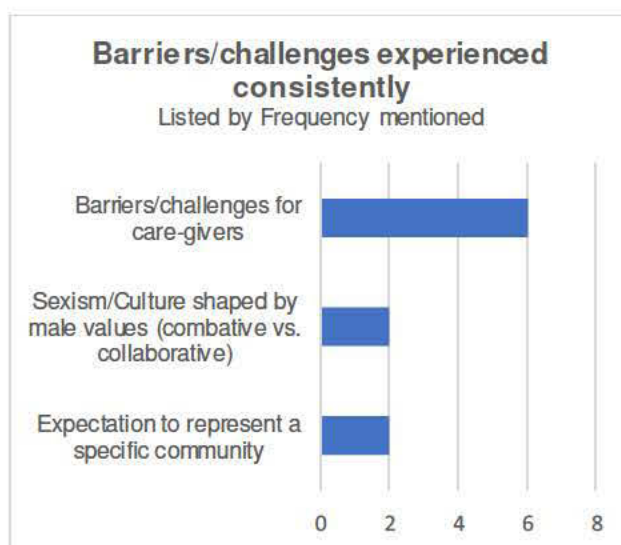
⁵ This was typically referenced as either stemming from members of the public or other elected officials

⁶ Please note: experiences of harassment/discrimination could also relate to past terms

- 40% of Council members shared that community settings have been unsafe settings in which they experienced harassment/discrimination or personalized attacks, which in many cases appeared to be gendered.

Consistent challenges experienced by those belonging to equity-denied groups:

The chart below details barriers and challenges that Council members from equity-denied groups experienced consistently.



All Council members interviewed were supportive of increasing measures to support those with care-giving responsibilities better. Excessively long work days were seen as particularly detrimental for those raising children. Some Council members with care-giving responsibilities expressed that they felt limited in some of their work (i.e. community invites or events during evenings/weekends) due to their care-giving obligations. 50% of Council members flagged the need to better support elected officials with disabilities. Pro-active dialogue and engagement to inquire about workplace accommodation needs was seen as particularly helpful.

Being the lone representative for a specific community was seen as a challenge, both in terms of facing additional community expectations and in terms of a limited ability to create change⁷.

⁷ Research indicates that a critical mass of 30% of elected members from a specific equity-denied group is needed to create change (e.g. to second a motion, highlight a specific barrier/ issue etc.)

Gender, Diversity and Intersectional Audit: Motion Language

The March 10, 2020, adopted resolution reads as follows:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff in the City Clerk's Office to establish an annual Gender, Diversity, and Intersectional Audit to examine how Vancouver City Council operates, and make recommendations for policy, bylaw, and convention changes to promote gender, diversity, and intersectional equity in Vancouver City Council including examining:

- Descriptive statistics, including the volunteer reporting of gender identity, diversity, and intersectional representation amongst election candidates, elected members of council, non-elected support staff, and advisory bodies;
- Infrastructure currently in place to support council members and staff with their work including building layouts and furnishings, access to childcare, safe spaces, inclusive artwork, chamber floor permissions, night sittings, parental leave, proxy voting, video conferencing, electronic voting, and washroom inclusivity and accessibility;
- Policies and legislation in place to change the workplace culture including those pertaining to codes of conduct, harassment, sexual harassment, heckling, gender based analysis plus (GBA+) and equity;

FURTHER THAT the Audit be designed and led by City Clerk's Office with the input and involvement of Advisory Committees;

AND FURTHER THAT this first audit and recommendations be presented to Council in Q1 2021 during International Women's Day Week and in each subsequent year at this time.