

Engaging Women, Transforming Cities: Designing an Ideal City for Women and Girls

National Conference

May 30, 2013

Summary of Recommendations



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message from
Women Transforming Cities
Board of Directors

We are pleased to present this preliminary report emerging from the *Engaging Women, Transforming Cities: Designing an Ideal City for Women and Girls* National Conference, held May 30, 2013 in Vancouver British Columbia.

The conference was a one-day event that brought together municipal officials, urban designers and planners, and women and girls interested in transforming our cities into places where women are more involved in electoral processes, and municipal governments are responsive to the priorities of women and girls in Canada's urban centres.

Engaging Women, Transforming Cities came about through the hard work of diverse individuals committed to the dream of a first-of-its-kind event in Canada: a conference focused on the interests, needs, strengths and aspirations of women and girls who live in Canadian cities. The event was informed by recommendations generated by the Women Transforming Cities dialogue café series (ongoing), featuring grassroots discussion and informed speakers on topics that affect the urban experiences of all marginalised communities.

The goal of this report is to share the recommendations developed in the conference workshops, with the aim to influence public policy, group actions, and individual awareness. A more extensive report, including recommendations under each workshop heading, is forthcoming.

We could like to thank our numerous volunteers, the WTC Conference Organising Committee, and our Sponsors: the City of Vancouver; the Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University; the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE); the Justice Education Society; CUPE Metropolitan Vancouver District Council; Housing Justice Canada; and the Vancouver & District Labour Council. Thanks also to our media sponsors: The Georgia Straight, and South Asian Woman Magazine.

The following are Recommendations generated through the WTC 2013 National Conference's many presentations, conversations, exchanges, debates, and passionate commitment to the work of transforming our cities to work for all women and girls, through community engagement, inclusive policies and equitable representation.



focal points

Each of the National Conference workshop sessions generated commentaries and recommendations specific to their themes (see Appendix I for Conference Program). Although many of the issues identified must be addressed in some way by all levels of government, a review of this data showed that recommendations were targeted toward five specific organisations, institutions or governing bodies:

- 1. Women Transforming Cities (WTC): city-based, grassroots actions**
- 2. the City of Vancouver**
- 3. the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities**
- 4. the Government of British Columbia**
- 5. the Federal Government**

1. recommendations for Women Transforming Cities (WTC)

Ideas for future actions to increase the value and effectiveness of WTC for urban women and girls:

Projects/programming

- ✓ Provide training on “gender equity” lens to local councils
- ✓ Map violence against women in the city and display it at city hall
- ✓ Plan a multi-community collaboration on violence against women
- ✓ Mentor youth
- ✓ Facilitate youth networking
- ✓ Have a monthly or weekly column in news outlet
- ✓ Review policy with a gender lens
- ✓ Address key strategies for designing cities for women and girls
- ✓ Host more cafes/dialogues throughout Metro Vancouver

Advocacy

- ✓ Advocate for changes with transportation groups
- ✓ Challenge employers to develop women’s leadership

Municipal governance interventions

- ✓ Lobby government to adapt gender equity lens

Actions

- ✓ WTC become a social movement
- ✓ Take it to the streets
- ✓ Mobilize women to organize

Topics for future events

- ✓ Sessions about family issues in a format that welcomes moms to contribute
- ✓ More discussion on work/life balance issues for women
- ✓ More discussion on need for universal childcare
- ✓ Discuss violence against women in Canadian society
- ✓ Arts-based session
- ✓ A parallel stream for youth at conference
- ✓ More about changing the paradigm we live in--the capitalist patriarchy to more neighbourhood communities



Improving future events (overall)

- ✓ Recognize privilege
- ✓ Use an anti-oppression equity lens or intersectional equity lens
- ✓ Use accessible language
- ✓ Need outlines and concrete goals for events

Recommendation: Increased outreach to the following specific populations/groups

- ✓ Youth; young women; girls
- ✓ Seniors: encourage and utilise the knowledge and resources of old(er) women
- ✓ First Nations urban populations
- ✓ Women who are homeless
- ✓ Women with disabilities
- ✓ Trans women
- ✓ Sex workers

- ✓ Women who are part of marginalized populations
- ✓ Local women from disenfranchised groups
- ✓ Educators
- ✓ Involve men
 - Especially in cafes
 - Male councillors
 - More representation from males in the community
 - Bring men to future meetings
 - Outreach to male decision-makers, educators, planners and other sectors
- ✓ Additional involvement of the non-profit world
- ✓ More representation from art and anti-violence organizations
- ✓ More activists and advocates working at grassroots level
- ✓ More dialogue among the urban planners, architects, and policy-makers

2013 National Conference outcomes

- ✓ A report should be provided if possible with all of the recommendations
- ✓ Make use of data, contacts, knowledge, insights, and research findings for wider sharing
- ✓ Speeches and collective points aired online to share with more people
- ✓ Send out information on how conference moves forward
- ✓ Translate work from conference for international access
- ✓ Proper tabling and “owning” of recommendations to ensure implementation
- ✓ Need to see what recommendations are followed through on
- ✓ Decide how to implement recommendations



2. recommendations for the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities

Broad-spectrum policies & practices

- ✓ Apply a gender lens in all municipal work
- ✓ Encourage urban policies that support environmental sustainability
- ✓ Build partnerships between school boards & cities

Targeted policies & practices

- ✓ Safety audit in recreational spaces
- ✓ Gender lens on parks/green spaces
- ✓ Create/re-invigorate Women's Equality Office--office that would put gender lens on all services

Education

- ✓ Educate, explain, and teach civic process, presentations by elections officers
- ✓ Teach political protocol & share/collaborate with new processes or different cultural processes

Youth

- ✓ Mentor and build relationships with youth
- ✓ Lower municipal voting age to 16 to address disenfranchisement
- ✓ Youth advisory role in council
- ✓ Hire students in electoral processes
- ✓ Bring young people to City Council meetings



3. recommendations for the City of Vancouver

Highlighted project

- ✓ Create a “Women’s hub” - all services in one location i.e.- Vancouver Art Gallery in Vancouver (after the Gallery relocation)

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4. recommendations for the Government of British Columbia

Highlighted project

- ✓ Adopt the \$10 a day childcare program

Housing

- ✓ Tax relief for non-profit housing
- ✓ Have a vacancy tax





5. recommendations for the Federal Government

Housing

- ✓ Tax relief for non-profit housing
- ✓ Have a vacancy tax
- ✓ Non-profit / P3 arrangements – better leveraging of developers
- ✓ Demolition control
- ✓ Enhanced homeless count - expand definition
- ✓ National housing strategy

Poverty

- ✓ Develop Charter of Minimum Standard of Living
- ✓ Establish poverty line

next steps:

The *Engaging Women, Transforming Cities* 2013 National Conference and these Recommendations emerging from it are only the beginning—or rather, they are situated somewhere along an extensive line of work that has gone before, and more work that lies ahead. More Outcomes from the conference will be available soon. In addition, we hope that conversations begun will continue; we hope conference participants, and all who care to, will add to the ideas brought forward here, flesh out bare bones and crystallise broad strokes.

we'd like to continue the work together.

share your thoughts.

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Housing Justice Canada
Addressing the issue of housing access and affordability in Vancouver.



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Appendix I

Engaging Women, Transforming Cities, Designing an Ideal City for Women and Girls

Thursday, May 30, 2013 8:30am to 5:00pm
Segal Graduate School of Business, Simon Fraser University, 500 Granville St, Vancouver BC

Conference Program

8:30 am Registration Segal Building Foyer

9:00 am Welcome and Opening Room 1300 - 1500

- Host Ellen Woodsworth, Co-Chair of Women Transforming Cities
- MC Winnie Cheung (張麗玲) WTC Board Member
- Welcome from Elder Lillian Howard, Co-Chair of the Urban Aboriginal Peoples Advisory Committee for the City of Vancouver
- Greetings from the City of Vancouver

9:20 am Morning Keynote Addresses Room 1300 - 1500

Caroline Andrew: “Partnering to Transform Cities.” Andrew is the Director of the Centre on Governance, University of Ottawa, and President of Women in Cities International/Femmes et Villes.

Tiffany Muller Myrdahl: “Interventions for Feminist Urban Futures.” Muller Myrdahl is the Junior Ruth Wynn Woodward Chair in Gender and Urban Studies at Simon Fraser University.

10:30am Break Founders Hall

Refreshments sponsored by the Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women Studies, Simon Fraser University

11:00 am Morning Sessions

- On the Streets Where We Live: Housing Rights and City-based Solutions **Room 2800**
- Young Women Take Charge: Leading the City through the Voices of Youth **Room 1300**
- Designing a Safer City for Women **Room 2300**

12:30 pm Buffet Lunch Founders Hall

- Once you have your lunch, please head into Room 1300 - 1500 in order to hear the keynote addresses.

12:45 pm Lunch Keynote Addresses Room 1300 - 1500

- Greetings and comments from **Karen Leibovici**, President of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities

Sylvia Bashevkin: “How do Women Transform Cities?” Bashevkin is Professor of Political Science at the University of Toronto. She is the author of *Tales of Two Cities: Women and Municipal Restructuring in London and Toronto* (UBC Press) and recently participated in the “Being Mayor of Toronto” panel with Barbara Hall.

Prabha Khosla: “Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Municipal Policies and Services.” Khosla is an urban planner who works on cities, equalities and democratic local governance. She has worked on issues of women’s rights and gender equality, social inclusion, urban sustainability, urban environments, democratizing local governance, water and sanitation and training and capacity building for close to twenty years. Her recent publications include: *A Training Package: Improving Gender Equality & Grassroots Participation through Good Land Governance*, and *Gender in Local Government: A Sourcebook for Trainers*.



2:00 pm Afternoon Sessions

- Putting a Gender/Equity Lens on Environmental Sustainability **Room 1300**
- Social Inclusion & Participation: The Good, The Bad and The Possible **Room 2800**
- Innovative Implementation of an Equity Lens to Create Ideal Cities for Women and Girls **Room 2300**

3:30 pm Break Founders Hall

Refreshments sponsored by the Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women Studies, Simon Fraser University

3:45 pm Plenary and Closing Room 1300 - 1500

- Recommendations for Designing Ideal Cities for Women and Girls Co-Chairs: Ellen Woodsworth and Diana Jung

5:30 pm Best Practice 2013 Awards Reception