

Hot Pink Paper Campaign

Candidate Policy Asks

Women Transforming Cities has developed eight policy asks for Council candidates in the 2022 Vancouver election. These policy asks are based on community input--through surveys, conversations, and focus groups--with women, gender-diverse residents, and front-line organizations that serve those who are made marginalized due to their identities. **We are asking every mayoral and city council candidate if they will commit to these eight policies if they are elected in October.**

These policy asks point to some of the critical issues that emerged through 9 months of engagement with women, gender-diverse folks, and community organizations in Vancouver.

Beyond these specific commitments, we encourage all parties and candidates to employ an intersectional feminist lens to their platforms and party processes in order to ensure equity is embedded in all your work.

A number of these policy commitments are predicated on funding critical work. Implicit in these asks is the need to ensure the city's budget is deployed effectively to fund these policies and programs. By committing to these policies, it is assumed that you raise the revenue to follow through on these commitments.

Your responses to this survey will be made public in mid-September. Please respond by **Wednesday, August 24**. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact our campaign lead Mahtab Laghaei at mahtab@womentransformingcities.org

1. An Equity Lens on Councillor Motions

Building on the City of Vancouver's Equity Framework, will you commit to directing staff to develop an Equity Assessment to be included in all Council Member Motions, which will require Councillors to consider the impact of motions and policies on equity-deserving residents before introducing and voting on them?

Why this Matters

- Residents do not feel that council makes decisions that reflect their concerns. Participants in our community survey were asked to rate (on a scale of 0-10) whether Council has made decisions that represent their concerns. 74% of participants gave a score of 5 or less; this number decreased further for respondents who were Indigenous, racialized, disabled, Queer, or who are renters.
- In the current motion proposal process, Mayor and City Councillors are not required to demonstrate how their motions will impact equity-deserving groups who are most often excluded from decision-making and public consultation.
- The City of Vancouver's Equity Framework has enabled City staff to identify inequities within City decisions and policies. Applying this existing framework to Council motions will help embed equity into the foundations of new motions and strengthen the application of an intersectional lens on all the City's work so that the concerns of equity-deserving residents are better reflected in decision-making across departments.
- This process is used in other municipalities including the City of Edmonton, and is similar to the Gender-Based Analysis Plus used by the federal and provincial governments.

- Yes
- No
- Abstain

2. MMIWG2S+ People’s Healing Lodge

Building on the City of Vancouver’s decision to develop an implementation plan to advance the City’s response to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice and Red Women Rising Report Recommendations, will you commit to prioritizing the **creation of a grassroots-led Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ peoples’ healing lodge?** This could include identifying and securing available land, partnerships and funding for a healing lodge and empowering Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQIA+ to lead this work.

Why this Matters

- Indigenous women who are leaders in their community emphasized that when a community member is in crisis they often have nowhere to go, and that their communities need space for traditional healing and grieving practices to move forward from the violence they experience.
- The recently adopted MMIWG2S Response Report, which was the culmination of work by the Urban Indigenous Peoples Advisory Committee, the MMIWG Social Planner, Indigenous community members and elders, outlines priority actions for the City’s response to the National Inquiries’ Calls for Justice and the Red Women Rising Report recommendations. But the next Council must commit to funding and implementing these recommendations, including the need for services led by and for Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQIA+ Peoples in the City of Vancouver.
- To enable this, Council must ensure land and funding is secured, and expedite the building of a barrier-free, 24/7, grassroots and community-led healing lodge designed, led and operated by Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQIA+ Peoples.
- The creation of an Indigenous-led space for healing and gathering also aligns with the priorities identified in the Spaces to Thrive: Vancouver Social Infrastructure Strategy Policy Framework and UNDRIP.

- Yes
- No
- Abstain

3. Reducing Barriers for Affordable Housing

Will you commit to reducing barriers to providing non-market housing by delegating authority to city staff to approve non-profit, co-op, and social housing initiatives of up to 12 stories in multi-family areas, and up to six stories in other residential areas, without a rezoning requirement?

Why This Matters

- Lack of access to safe, secure housing impacts women and gender-diverse people in particular. In our community engagement, 80% of residents indicated that housing affordability was their top priority in Vancouver's municipal election.
- When asked if they feel Vancouver is a city where they belong, 100% of Indigenous respondents and trans respondents said that housing affordability is the top reason they feel they do not belong.
- Amidst a housing crisis, we must streamline the process of approving and building non-market homes in all areas of the city.
- Non-profit and co-op housing providers have identified the rezoning process as a significant barrier and said that allowing up to 12 stories in multi-family zones, and up to six stories in other residential areas, without a rezoning requirement, would allow them to provide more of the housing we need faster and cheaper; and would open up more funding opportunities from senior governments.
- Increasing the areas where new non-market housing is allowed to be built will reduce pressure on current affordable housing and lead to less displacement of existing renters.

- Yes
- No
- Abstain

4. Protecting Tenants from Heatwaves

Will you commit to implementing minimum cooling standards in residential buildings by amending the Standards of Maintenance Bylaw to require cooling systems, in addition to heating systems, to be kept in safe and good working condition so as to maintain a maximum temperature of 26° Celsius?

Why This Matters

- 30% of our survey respondents cited climate change as one of their top two priority issues as residents in Vancouver. More than half of those respondents were renters. Climate safety—and mitigating the impacts of the climate emergency on those who are most vulnerable—was a significant concern that emerged in our community input sessions.
- In the summer of 2021, 99 Vancouver residents died during the heatwave and many more experienced heat-related injuries.
- The B.C. Coroners Service report found that the majority of these deaths occurred indoors in “socially or materially deprived neighbourhoods” and were primarily people who were seniors, people who lived alone, and people with disabilities.
- **The report is explicit that these deaths could have been prevented if units were equipped with cooling systems to protect tenants from dangerous temperatures.**
- Extreme weather events such as heatwaves will continue to occur more frequently and will continue to disproportionately impact residents who are already vulnerable, such as low-income folks, people with disabilities, and seniors.
- There is precedent for this standard in other municipalities in Canada - Mississauga and Ajax have minimum cooling standards in order to avoid preventable deaths and illness brought on by heatwaves.

- Yes
- No
- Abstain

5. Alternative Models to Community Safety

Building on the City's work to decriminalize poverty and support community-led safety initiatives, will you commit to launching, sustaining, and expanding initiatives that provide non-policing alternatives to community safety? This includes programs such as:

- Community and peer-led crisis management initiatives, non-police mental health interventions, and social support programs that are determined by those who are criminalized such as sex workers, people who use illicit drugs, people experiencing mental health challenges, Indigenous, racialized and low-income people.
- Cleaning programs led by impacted individuals, and accessible, long-term storage facilities as an alternative to police-enforced street sweeps.

Why this Matters

- Participants in our community engagement identified a lack of culturally appropriate crisis support and prevention services as contributing to feeling unsafe and feeling that Vancouver is not a place that they belong. Additionally, programs that residents rely on when seeking help in crisis situations are underfunded and overworked.
- Community organizations have called for "an immediate action plan" to the growing gender-based violence in the DTES, including non-police models.
- Many residents do not feel comfortable calling the police, and even the Vancouver Police Department have said they are not positioned to respond to all situations they are currently being called to.
- Funding service-delivery organizations with community ties will allow them to expand culturally-specific programs and will empower residents by increasing their choices of supports to access while simultaneously reducing calls to police.
- People who are precariously housed in the DTES are subject to police enforced "street sweeps" as per municipal bylaws, having their possessions forcibly removed and thrown away. Organizations based in the DTES have outlined demands describing how the city can work alongside members to build a community-led alternative to the street sweeps in the motion [Street Care, Not Street Sweeps: Ending Daily Displacement in Vancouver](#) as well as the [Street Sweeps Report](#).

- Yes
- No
- Abstain

6. Washrooms for All

Will you commit to ensuring accessible, free, and clean washrooms are available across the city, with implementation starting in 2023, by fully funding the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation's Parks Washrooms Strategy and publicly reporting, alongside the Parks Board, on progress towards the Washroom Strategy?

Why This Matters

- While having clean, accessible, and widely available washroom facilities open 24/7 will make our public spaces work better for everyone, it is particularly needed for seniors, people with disabilities, people with young children, and those who are unhoused.
- Participants in our community engagement said that their ability to access public spaces is determined by whether there is an accessible washroom or not, and more often than not, residents told us they would miss social gatherings due to lack of accessible washrooms.
- Providing and maintaining free, accessible, and widely available washrooms is a critical component of public health, anti-poverty, disability justice and public space initiatives—but as identified by the Parks Washrooms Strategy, most current facilities were built decades ago and are not accessible or functional.
- A systems-wide strategy is available through the Parks Washrooms Strategy alongside existing motions and commitments such as Access to Water and Washrooms as a Human Right motion, the Accessibility Strategic Phase 1 Update, and Advancing Efforts for an Age Friendly City. However, these strategies **lack funding from the city** to meet their goals, particularly the Parks Board's goals of improving facilities by 2040. Council must work to ensure they adequately resource these commitments through operation and capital budgets and improve public spaces for everyone.

- Yes
- No
- Abstain

7. Fully Fund Climate Emergency Responses

Building on the City of Vancouver's historic declaration of a climate emergency, will you commit to taking decisive action, in line with science, to address the climate emergency with an equity lens by:

- Fully implementing and funding the Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) so that Vancouver meets its GHG emission reduction targets? and;
- Fully implementing and funding the recommendations in the Planning for Extreme Heat and Air Quality Mitigation Policy?

Why this matters

- Climate action was one of the top three most important issues for residents who completed our survey.
- While the impacts of climate change are felt by everyone in the city already, the casualties of the 2021 heatwave demonstrate how equity-seeking groups are disproportionately impacted by climate catastrophes.
- The Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) and the Planning for Extreme Heat and Air Quality Mitigation motion have been developed with an equity lens, spearheaded by the groups who remain most vulnerable to increased temperatures.
- To ensure we reach the goals outlined in both the CEAP and the heatwave mitigation motion, Council must work together to allocate funding to complete these initiatives, and limit the human toll of the climate emergency.

8. Affordable and Accessible Transit

Building on the success of the City of Vancouver's Reduced Fare Transit Pilot in 2021-22, will you commit to using your role on Council to advocate to TransLink and the Province to work towards free or reduced fare transit for people on low incomes in Metro Vancouver, and identify opportunities to increase transit affordability in Vancouver?

Why this Matters

- When asked about what they would improve about the city, free and reduced fare transit was the most frequently mentioned policy proposal by survey participants.
- Free transit is one of the most transformative policy changes for women and equity-deserving communities in Vancouver as it addresses disability justice, racial justice, poverty justice and climate justice.
- Public transportation is a critical component of the Climate Emergency Action Plan, but more needs to be done to encourage transit use as fare affordability remains a barrier.
- The City of Vancouver implemented a highly successful pilot project providing free transit for low-income people in 2021-22; one of the key recommendations from this pilot was that the City work with Translink to implement free or reduced fare transit for low-income and equity-deserving individuals.
- While Mayors typically have the most influence over transit, Councillors can still use their role to push for change within local, provincial, and federal governments and influence Vancouver's policy direction on transportation.

- Yes
 No
 Abstain

If you are a Mayoral candidate, will you additionally commit to work alongside other municipalities to advocate for free or reduced fare transit, in forums including the Mayors Council and similar transit bodies?

- Yes
 No
 Abstain

Thank you for your participation in the Hot Pink Paper Campaign and for taking the time to share your position on key issues for women and gender-diverse people in Vancouver.

Women Transforming Cities will make candidate responses public in mid-September, and we will hold all elected council members accountable to their commitments over the next four years.

If you have any questions about the campaign, or would like to discuss how you can apply an intersectional feminist lens to your party's policy platform, please reach out to mahtab@womentransformingcities.org.

