

Women and Gender Equity Strategy and 2021-2022 Framework

Stratégie sur la condition féminine et l'équité des genres – Cadre de travail 2021-2022

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

That Council approve the Women and Gender Equity Strategy and 2021-2022 Framework as outlined in this report and attached in Document 2.

RECOMMANDATION DU COMITÉ:

Que le Conseil municipal d'approuver la Stratégie sur la condition féminine et l'équité des genres et le Cadre de travail 2021-2022 joints au présent rapport à titre de documents 2.

DIRECTION TO STAFF

That for Phase 2 of the Framework, staff are directed to find resources to implement transformative change and, in collaboration with community organizations, develop robust internal and external accountability mechanisms.

INSTRUCTIONS AU PERSONNEL

Que, dans la deuxième phase du *Cadre d'intervention*, on demande au personnel de trouver les ressources qui permettront de mettre en œuvre d'importants changements et, en collaboration avec les organismes communautaires, de créer de solides mécanismes de responsabilisation internes et externes.

DOCUMENTATION/DOCUMENTATION

1. Manager's report, Gender and Race Equity, Indigenous Relations, Inclusion and Social Development, dated 17 March 2021 (ACS2021-CSS-GEN-0002).

Rapport de la gestionnaire, Direction de l'équité des genres et des races, des relations avec les Autochtones, de la diversité et de l'inclusion, daté le 17 mars 2021 (ACS2021-CSS-GEN-0002)

2. Extract of Draft Minutes, Community and Protective Services Committee, dated 26 March 2021.

Extrait de l'ébauche du procès-verbal, Comité des services communautaires et de protection, le 26 mars 2021

**COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE
SERVICES COMMITTEE
REPORT 17
14 APRIL 2021**

**3 COMITÉ DES SERVICES
COMMUNAUTAIRES ET DE
PROTECTION RAPPORT 17
LE 14 AVRIL 2021**

**Report to
Rapport au:**

**Community and Protective Services Committee
Comité des services communautaires et de protection
March 26 2021 / 26 mars 2021**

**and Council
et au Conseil
14 April 2021- 14 avril 2021**

**Submitted on March 17, 2021
Soumis le 17 mars 2021**

**Submitted by
Soumis par:**

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**Ward: City Wide / À l'échelle de la ville
(0)**

File Number: ACS2021-CSS-GEN-0002

**COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE
SERVICES COMMITTEE
REPORT 17
14 APRIL 2021**

**4 COMITÉ DES SERVICES
COMMUNAUTAIRES ET DE
PROTECTION RAPPORT 17
LE 14 AVRIL 2021**

SUBJECT: Women and Gender Equity Strategy and 2021-2022 Framework

OBJET: Stratégie sur la condition féminine et l'équité des genres – Cadre de travail 2021-2022

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Community and Protective Services Committee recommend Council approve the Women and Gender Equity Strategy and 2021-2022 Framework as outlined in this report and attached in Document 2.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité des services communautaires et de protection recommande au Conseil municipal d'approuver la Stratégie sur la condition féminine et l'équité des genres et le Cadre de travail 2021-2022 joints au présent rapport à titre de documents 2.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Women and Gender Equity Strategy (WGES) was developed to ensure that the City of Ottawa's services, strategies, and plans integrate a women and gender lens and promote women and gender equity. The Strategy, includes a strategic framework that has established key organizational plans and departmental targets for its first phase of implementation from 2021–2022, which will guide four priority service areas in the City.

The City of Ottawa recognizes that women and gender inequities have ripple effects on the wellbeing and development of our whole community. Women and gender equity are key to building vibrant and inclusive communities and creating a city for all residents. Women and gender equity will ensure that the City's workforce is reflective of the diverse population it serves and will create a respectful and inclusive workplace that is equitable to all employees.

The City also recognizes that pandemics such as COVID-19 impact women and girls disproportionately. WGES places women and gender equity at the core of the City's COVID-19 response and recovery planning. Work is being done across departments and service areas and in coordination with other levels of government to ensure a gender lens is used in City's COVID-19 response and recovery. The City also acknowledges that while immediate measures should be taken to integrate a gender

lens into its response, its initiatives aim for systemic and sustainable change towards women and gender equity.

On December 5, 2018, Ottawa City Council approved the development of a Women and Gender Equity Strategy as part of the Term of Council Governance Report, (ACS2018-CCS-GEN-0028). As part of this direction, Council approved the addition of a full time equivalent position, a one-time operating budget and appointed a Council Sponsors Group to champion and lead the development of the Women and Gender Equity Strategy. Councillor Theresa Kavanagh was appointed as the Council Liaison for Women and Gender Equity (WGE).

The Council Sponsors' Group was formed in March 2019. Members of the Council Sponsors Group include Mayor Jim Watson, Deputy Mayor Sudds, Councillor Deans and Councillor McKenney, the City Manager, the General Manager of Community Social Services, and the General Manager of Innovative Client Services.

In June 2019, the City recruited a Specialist for Women and Gender Equity, to support the development and implementation of the Strategy and to support the Council Sponsors' Group.

On September 30th, Mayor Watson and Councillor Theresa Kavanagh, and the Sponsors Group launched the development of the Women and Gender Equity Strategy with a Public Engagement Forum. Attended by over 170 community members, the forum also provided the opportunity to validate findings from a public engagement exercise which began that summer. The public engagement included focused discussions, an on-line survey, and public forums with City staff, diverse community stakeholders, and residents. Following the Public Forum, City staff consolidated findings from the various engagement activities into a "What We Heard" report which outlined the feedback received regarding municipally-based gender issues, barriers and priorities for addressing those issues.

Consultations with City Staff & Public Engagement

From August 2019 to January 2020, **590** staff and residents were engaged to collect feedback on women and gender equity gaps and needs related to City programs, services, policies, and facilities, and to identify priorities for the Strategy.

The key women and gender equity priorities raised by staff and residents included **housing, safety, gender inclusivity, and women and gender representation**. It was also proposed that an intersectional lens be applied to these priorities. As a result, Indigenous, racialized, older adult, immigrant women, and gender diverse people were identified as priority populations.

Initial implementation strategies suggested by stakeholders include:

- meaningful engagement of intersectional groups of women and gender diverse persons;
- training and awareness-raising on women and gender equity lens;
- and applying a gender lens on data, and resource allocation.

WGES Vision and Mission

Vision

Ottawa is a women and gender-inclusive, diverse, and safe city for residents from all gender groups where every person has equitable access to services and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of life.

Mission

WGES works on removing the systemic barriers that hinder intersectional groups of women and gender diverse persons. It *integrates* a women and gender equity lens in City strategies, plans, policies, and services by *developing* City staff capacity, meaningfully *engaging* women and gender diverse persons, and *ensuring* safety and inclusivity in its workspaces.

WGES is committed to the following principles:

- Women and gender equity;
- Women and gender equality;
- Evidence-based planning;
- Collaboration;
- Intersectionality;
- Accountability.

The key strategic outcomes and implementation priorities are:

- Policy change for women and gender equity;
- Safety;
- Equitable representation of women;
- Gender inclusivity.

The Women and Gender Equity Strategic Framework (WGESF) reflects the City's commitment to advancing women and gender equity as outlined in the City Corporate Strategic Plan 2019-2022. WGES is underpinned by the following five strategic implementation priorities that emerged from WGE engagement and consultations:

1. Gender-based analysis and gender lens on City's policies and strategies;
2. Women- and gender-sensitive data systems;
3. Meaningful public engagement of intersectional groups of women and gender diverse persons;
4. Awareness-raising and training on women and gender equity; and
5. Gender-sensitive resource allocation.

Intersectional Lens to Women and Gender Equity

While the primary focus of this strategy is to advance women and gender equity in the City of Ottawa, an intersectional approach was followed in developing WGES outcomes, strategic priorities, and actions. This includes a special focus on the need to develop awareness among City staff around the Indigenous Gender Lens and the unique needs of Indigenous women and girls, and 2SLGBTQ+ persons.

Scope and Timeline

In addition to the organizational plans, priority service areas in Community and Social Services, Recreation, Cultural and Facilities Services, Office of the City Clerk, and Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development contributed to Phase One of WGES implementation (2021–2022).

The Women and Gender Equity Strategy is a long-term commitment for the City to work towards women and gender equity. Given the complexity of addressing barriers facing the different groups of women and gender diverse persons, and given that gender intersects with multiple service areas, WGES will be implemented in a phased approach.

Phase One of WGES will be implemented in 2020-2022, followed by Phase Two in 2023-2025.

BACKGROUND

On December 5, 2018, Ottawa City Council approved the development of a Women and Gender Equity Strategy as part of the Term of Council Governance Report, (ACS2018-CCS-GEN-0028). As part of this direction, Council approved the addition of a full time equivalent position, with a one-time operating budget and appointed a Council Sponsors Group to champion and lead the development of the Women and Gender Equity

Strategy. Councillor Theresa Kavanagh was appointed as Council Liaison for Women and Gender Equity (WGE).

A Council Sponsors' Group was formed in March 2019. Members of the Council Sponsors Group include: Mayor Jim Watson, Deputy Mayor Sudds, Councillor Deans and Councillor McKenney, the City Manager, the General Manager of Community Social Services, and the General Manager of Innovative Client Services.

The WGES Working Group was established in early 2019 to bring sector representation and expert feedback into the process of WGES development. The Working Group is comprised of more than 15 community organizations, including representatives from Indigenous organizations, community coalitions, service providers, academia, and allies, and it is co-Chaired by the City for All Women Initiatives (CAWI) (Document 1).

In consultation with key City partners and under the guidance of the Council Sponsors Group, City staff designed a process to develop the Women and Gender Equity Strategy. This process comprised of an environmental municipal scan on women and gender equity mechanisms, available research data, and existing women and gender strategies at the local and national levels. The scan was followed by an extensive public engagement strategy.

DISCUSSION

The City's first Women and Gender Equity Strategy (2021-2025) focuses on integrating women and gender equity in City processes, services, strategies, and policies, with the goal of improving access to City services for the whole spectrum of women and people with various gender expressions in the city.

Women and Gender Diverse Persons Experience Inequity and Inequality

There is a gendered difference in the ways in which inequality is experienced. Although significant changes have been made in terms of changing the roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that society may construct or consider appropriate for different gender identities, women and gender diverse persons still face discrimination. Racialized, Indigenous, newcomer, older adult women, women with disability, and gender diverse persons experience multiple layers of discrimination, and face complex barriers to services and opportunities.

Pandemics, such as COVID-19, also impact women and girls disproportionately, as evidence shows existing gender gaps in access to social services are exacerbated and

put women at a higher risk of isolation, food insecurity, loss of income and livelihood, and gender-based violence.

Progress to date

While the WGES was in the making, positive strides were taken to advance women and gender equity. Some of the early successes include:

1. The WGE Specialist successfully collaborated with multiple teams to apply a women and gender lens on several corporate strategies and plans including but not limited to the Official Plan, the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan, and the Corporate Diversity and Inclusion Plan.
2. WGES collaborated with other City equity strategies. Collaboration included the Anti-Racism Listening Forum held in July 2020, which was attended by **289 residents**.
3. The City organized several learning events and awareness campaigns for City staff around women and gender equity issues. The last 16-day campaign to end gender-based violence engaged **more than 500 staff**.
4. The City of Ottawa hired a consultancy firm to develop a Gender, Race and Equity Data Baseline Study (GREBS).
5. In recognition of the disproportionate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and gender diverse groups, [a series of tools were developed](#) to raise awareness and to assist City staff in applying a women and gender lens to the COVID-19 response and recovery.
6. The municipality is a signatory on the Electricity Human Resources Canada, Gender Accord. This initiative supports united action by employers, educators, unions, and governments to expand the depth and breadth of the skilled workforce; ensure women are informed of the opportunities in their sector of choice and once employed, are fully supported and provided with opportunities to grow and to develop to their full potential.

WGES Development Process

In consultation with key City partners and under the guidance of the Council Sponsors Group, City staff designed a process to develop the Women and Gender Equity Strategy. This process comprised of the following:

1. Development of Women and Gender Equity Governance

In addition to the Council Sponsors Group, a WGES Working Group was established in early 2019 to bring sector representation and expert feedback into the process of WGES

development. The Working Group is comprised of more than 15 community organizations, including representatives from Indigenous organizations, community coalitions, service providers, academia, and allies, and is co-Chaired by the City for All Women Initiatives (CAWI).

2. Research and Municipal Scan on Women and Gender Equity

An environmental scan of women and gender equity mechanisms, strategies, and available research data was conducted at a local and national level to identify effective models for the Strategy development.

3. WGES Public Engagement

A broad and comprehensive Women and Gender Equity Strategy public engagement plan was designed to include the perspectives of City staff, Indigenous, and equity-deserving community groups in the development of the WGES. The purpose of the engagement was to collect feedback from City staff and residents on existing women and gender gaps and needs, and to identify priorities for the Strategy.

What We Heard from WGES Public Engagement

The eight thematic priorities that emerged from what was heard from City staff and residents include:

- **Housing** emerged as the service area of focus for WGES with the highest priority. Lack of emergency and affordable housing disproportionately affects women and girls, especially those who are Indigenous and/or older women, as well as gender diverse people. The use of a gender lens in housing processes and procedures is key to ensure that women, especially from equity-deserving groups, are prioritized.
- **Safety** emerged as an important issue for women and gender diverse persons. Women working for the City, especially in non-office jobs and on night shifts, do consider safety an important aspect of their lives. Effective policies on sexual- and gender-based violence, including a solid and transparent reporting system, need to be in place to educate City staff and motivate survivors to report violence.
- A **gender-inclusive City** is a commitment that would allow persons of all genders to access services equitably and participate fully in society. Lack of explicit messaging on gender diversity, lack of gender-neutral washrooms and stigma prevent gender diverse persons from fully engaging in City facilities and events. Measures need to be taken to make city facilities more welcoming for persons from all gender identities.
- Although women comprise a large percentage of the workforce in Ottawa, they are over-represented in temporary and part-time positions and concentrated in social

services. It is worth noting that currently 48.7% of managerial positions (program manager and above) in the City, excluding OPL and OPH, are held by women, compared to 42.9% of market workforce availability. Work is needed to achieve equitable **representation** of women from equity-deserving groups, such as Black, racialized, Indigenous, and Francophone. The City can support policies and programs that encourage women and girls to enter male-dominated service areas.

- The lack of a gender lens in City data contributes to a lack of gender mainstreaming in City policies and strategies. **Gender-sensitive data** includes qualitative and quantitative data on barriers facing different gender groups in relation to accessing services and participating in the City's workforce.
- The City can improve its **resident engagement** to enable women from all backgrounds to engage in important City plans and strategies. Poverty, lack of access, childcare and other caregiver responsibilities can prevent women from participating in City public engagement events. Residents from all gender groups could also be better represented in City's printed and online materials.
- City management and staff need **training and awareness-raising** surrounding women and gender equity concepts. This training should include topics of stigma and discrimination based on gender identity. The City can build on its Equity and Inclusion Lens Handbook and Women Snapshot to develop gender tools for use by Council and City staff. Non-traditional engagement activities can be used to initiate dialogue among staff, and between staff and management on women and gender needs and issues.
- In order to achieve a women and gender-inclusive City, financial and human **resources** need to be earmarked to achieve women and gender equity priorities.

Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQIA People

Many participants in our engagement sessions highlighted the importance of addressing the Calls for Justice outlined in the final report from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. While the City is steadfastly committed to using an intersectional approach to women and gender issues in the development of WGES, we have come to understand that Indigenous women in Canada are confronted with sustained colonial violence through a combination of systems that must be dismantled using a decolonized, self-determined and Indigenous-led approach.

For this reason, the Women and Gender Equity Strategy will promote initiatives led by and for the Indigenous community, to address the recommendations in the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, while also committing to furthering our own understanding of an Indigenous, gender-based analysis.

Currently, the City of Ottawa's leadership and Indigenous Relations staff are supporting the development of an Indigenous Women's Safety Committee, led by members of the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition. Further information on this work will be provided as part of the Reconciliation Action Plan update later this year.

WGES Vision and Mission

Vision

Ottawa is a women and gender-inclusive, diverse, and safe city for residents from all gender groups where every person has equitable access to services and equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of life.

Mission

WGES works on removing the systemic barriers that hinder intersectional groups of women and gender diverse persons. It *integrates* the women and gender equity lens in City strategies, plans, policies, and services by *developing* City staff capacity, meaningfully *engaging* women and gender diverse persons, and *ensuring* safety and inclusivity in its workspaces.

WGES Guiding Principles

- Women and gender equity;
- Women and gender equality;
- Evidence-based planning;
- Collaboration;
- Intersectionality;
- Accountability.

WGES key strategic outcomes and implementation priorities are:

- Policy change for women and gender equity;
- Safety;
- Equitable representation of women;
- Gender inclusivity.

WGES Expected Strategic Outcomes

Based on what we heard from residents and staff during the public engagement process, the following four outcomes were identified for the WGES:

1. **Policy Change for Women and Gender Equity:** The City's decisions, programs, plans, and resource allocations are informed by an intersectional gender lens to ensure that residents from all gender groups have equitable access to services and resources.
2. **Safety:** The City establishes policies and accountability mechanisms to ensure its offices and facilities are free from all forms of gender-based violence.
3. **Equitable Representation of Women:** The City promotes and increases women and gender diverse representation in its workforce and introduces policies that support career success by providing equitable access to work opportunities, including leadership roles and other under-represented occupations.
4. **Gender Inclusivity:** The City offices and facilities are welcoming and safe environments for all gender groups.

Women and Gender Equity Strategic Framework Phase One (2021-2022)

The Women and Gender Equity Strategy (Document 2) which reflects the City's commitment to advancing women and gender equity is aligned with the Thriving Communities strategic objective of the City's Strategic Plan (2021-2022). The intersectional approach to its design ensured that the Strategy aligns with the City's Reconciliation Action Plan, Anti-Racism Strategy, Corporate Diversity and Inclusion Plan, and Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.

In recognition of the disproportionate impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic has on women and gender diverse groups, WGES applied a COVID-19 lens to the design of its Strategic Priorities and Targets.

WGES is underpinned by five strategic priorities, that emerged from WGE engagement and consultations. The five Strategic Implementation Priorities are:

1. Gender-based Analysis and Gender lens on City's Policies and Strategies;
2. Women and Gender-Sensitive Data Systems;
3. Meaningful public engagement of intersectional groups of women and gender diverse persons;
4. Awareness Raising and training on women and gender equity, and
5. Gender-sensitive resource allocation.

In addition to the organizational plans, priority service areas in Community and Social Services, Recreation, Cultural and Facilities Services, Office of the City

Clerk, and Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development contributed to Phase One of WGES implementation (2021–2022).

The strategic priorities and accompanying framework were developed by the WGES priority service areas in collaboration with the WGE Specialist.

Strategy Timeline

The Women and Gender Equity Strategy is a long-term commitment for the City to work towards women and gender equity. Given the complexity of addressing barriers facing the different groups of women and gender diverse persons, and given that gender crosscuts multiple service areas, the Strategy will be implemented in a phased approach.

Phase One of the WGES will be implemented in 2020-2022, while Phase Two will be implemented from 2023 to 2025.

Strategy Governance and Implementation Mechanism

In addition to the established Women and Gender Equity Council Sponsors Group, the Senior Leadership Team will carry the ultimate responsibility for achieving gender mainstreaming and accomplishing the strategic priorities accompanying targets outlined in the WGES Strategic Framework.

A Women and Gender Equity Team will continue the work during Phase One of the Strategy to monitor WGES implementation. A Women and Gender Community Table will be established to leverage both community and sectoral representation in Ottawa and gain continuous feedback into the City's women and gender equity work.

The composition of the Women and Gender Community Table would be guided by the lessons learned and recommendations of WGE Working group.

Strategy Mid-Term Review and Reporting

A mid-term review of progress will be conducted in the first quarter of 2023. The review will include City staff and resident consultations to plan for Phase Two of the Strategy. Progress of implementation will be reported annually. Annual reports will be developed by Gender and Race Equity, Inclusion, Indigenous Relations and Social Development Service in Community and Social Services Department and presented to Senior Leadership Team, Council Sponsor Group, and Council.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

Following the implementation of the Women and Gender Equity Strategy, a more equitable distribution of services across all of Ottawa communities is anticipated, including rural areas, with a focus on the women and gender groups facing the most barriers to accessing services.

CONSULTATION

A broad and comprehensive Women and Gender Equity Strategy public engagement plan was designed to include the perspectives of City staff, Indigenous, and equity-seeking community groups in the development of the WGES. The purpose of the engagement was to collect feedback from City staff and residents on existing women and gender gaps and needs and to identify priorities for the Strategy.

The discussion and consultations consisted of:

1. Three focus group discussions with more than 75 City staff and managers from nine different City departments and service areas (August 2019)
2. Five focus group discussions with Indigenous, community equity-seeking Groups (August to October 2019)

Consultations included group meetings with City partners and stakeholders as well as members of Indigenous and equity-seeking groups. More than 150 community members attended these consultations representing one or more of the following groups:

- Women and gender advocacy networks
 - Community Health Resource Centers
 - Violence Against Women service providers and shelters
 - Stakeholders serving older adults
 - Racialized and immigrant service providers
 - LGBTQ2+ service providers
 - Indigenous Communities
 - Youth
 - Francophone Communities
3. WGES Public Engagement Forum (September 30, 2019)

The Women and Gender Equity Strategy Public Forum was held on September 30th, 2019 at Ottawa City Hall. The Forum aimed to obtain feedback from stakeholders on seven draft priorities consolidated from group consultations. Forum participants were asked to vote for three or four main priorities and identify key strategic actions that the City should consider for the Strategy. They were advised to focus on service or policy areas under the municipal purview.

Breakout sessions offered guests the opportunity to provide input and feedback into the development of the Strategy.

4. Engage Ottawa online survey

An online survey was designed in Engage Ottawa platform inviting Ottawa residents to contribute to the shaping of WGES. The survey was filled by 150 residents.

5. 2SLGBTQ+ Public Engagement

WGES partnered with a coalition formed of 14 of Ottawa's community, health, and social services on an initiative to identify the service needs and gaps related to 2SLGBTQ+ communities in Ottawa and to inform a data strategy. In addition, more than **150** community members engaged in the 2SLGBTQ+ consultation held on January 13th, 2020.

Further details are included in the "[Report on Findings from Women and Gender Equity Strategy Public Consultations](#)" and "[Ottawa 2SLGBTQ+ Service Needs, Gaps, and Recommendations](#)".

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)

Not applicable as this is a City-wide item.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE(S) COMMENTS

No Advisory Committees were consulted in the development of this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to the implementation of the recommendation in this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The expected risks that come with WGES implementation in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic include the urgent need to shift resources to respond to COVID-19 critical

needs which may impact funding needed to implement the WGES strategic actions. It may be difficult to implement planned training and learning actions on women and gender equity if human resources are reallocated or fully assigned to COVID-19 related work.

In order to mitigate these risks, a women and gender lens can be integrated into existing City training and learning rather than initiate standalone programs and activities in case resources were not made available. The Women and Gender Community Table will continue to provide guidance and resources that will ensure continuous learning around women and gender equity. Exchange of expertise and resources will ensure that best practices and lessons learned are integrated in the City's work with no additional cost.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

N/A

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with the report recommendations.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

The Women and Gender Equity Strategy was developed using an intersectional approach. Intersectionality is the way in which people's lives are shaped by their multiple and overlapping identities and social locations, which, together, can produce a unique and distinct experience for that individual or group. For example, women with disabilities can experience both sexism and ableism.¹ This intersectional approach requires that the City listen to many communities, including women, 2SLGBTQIA+, people with disabilities, racialized communities, Indigenous communities, Francophone communities, and other communities. Staff supporting the Women and Gender Equity Strategy work with staff from many other areas, including the Corporate Accessibility Office, the Anti-Racism Secretariat, and the staff supporting the City's Indigenous Relations. Together, these groups focus on common key pillars and intersections.

¹ "Ableism" refers to attitudes in society that devalue and limit the potential of persons with disabilities.

As noted above, women with disabilities can experience unique forms of discrimination. The labour force illustrates this point. Persons with disabilities have a lower rate of employment than those without disabilities and participation rate of men and women with disabilities differs considerably. Women with disabilities are less likely to be employed than men with disabilities. The disproportionate share of domestic responsibilities performed by women with disabilities has presented significant barriers to their labour force participation and, as a result, has contributed to increased poverty for many of these women.²

Women with disabilities can also be targeted for sexual harassment and sexual violence due to a perception that they are more vulnerable and unable to protect themselves. They may also experience discrimination related to their right to reproductive freedom.³

The WGES Strategy also aligns with the City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility Plan (COMAP), along with City's Reconciliation Action Plan, Anti-Racism Strategy, Corporate Diversity and Inclusion Plan.

As noted in the WGES Strategy, the Expected Strategy Outcomes are the following:

- 1. Policy Change for Women and Gender Equity:** The City's decisions, programs, plans, and resource allocations are informed by an intersectional gender lens to ensure that residents from all gender groups have equitable access to services and resources.
- 2. Safety:** The City establishes policies and accountability mechanisms to ensure its offices and facilities are free from all forms of gender-based violence.
- 3. Equitable Representation of Women:** The City promotes and increases women and gender diverse representation in its workforce and introduces policies that support career success by providing equitable access to work opportunities, including leadership roles and other under-represented occupations.

² <http://www.ccdonline.ca/en/socialpolicy/poverty-citizenship/income-security-reform/in-unison#:~:text=In%20Unison%20is%20a%20vision,all%20aspects%20of%20Canadian%20society.>

³

http://www3.ohrc.on.ca/sites/default/files/Policy%20on%20ableism%20and%20discrimination%20based%20on%20disability_accessible_2016.pdf

- 4. Gender Inclusivity:** The City offices and facilities are welcoming and safe environments for all gender groups.

The WGES Strategy and its expected outcomes will benefit women and the 2SLGBTQ+ community with disabilities who, due to their intersectionality experience discrimination through policy, are more likely to be underemployed, are subject to gender-based violence and experience marginalization. Through this Strategy, these groups are expected make gains in the areas of equality through policy changes, will experience increased safety through accountability mechanisms in facilities, will experience more representation in our workforce in welcoming and safe work environments.

All activities within the Strategy will be completed in compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and Integrated Standards Regulation, which recognize the history of discrimination against persons with disabilities in Ontario and establishes standards for accessibility with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises.

To that end, a representative from the Accessibility Advisory Committee could be invited to participate on the new “A Women and Gender Community Table.” This body will be established to leverage both community and sectoral representation in Ottawa and gain continuous feedback into City’s women and gender equity work.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

The Women and Gender Equity Strategy aligns with the City’s strategic priority “Thriving Communities”.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1: Women and Gender Equity Strategy Working Group Membership

Document 2: Women and Gender Equity Strategy and Strategic Framework 2021-2022

DISPOSITION

The City’s Staff in the Gender and Race Equity, Indigenous Relations, Diversity and Inclusion Branch, Community and Social Services Department, will action any direction

received as part of City Council consideration of this report, and will move to implement the Women and Gender Equity Strategy as outlined in this report, and will be responsible for reporting on progress and outcomes of the strategy.

Staff will work with other departments, the Women and Gender Equity Team, other relevant external stakeholder including the proposed Women and Gender Community Table and community partners to implement the workplan in accordance with this report.

City staff will report annually to Committee and Council as well as the public, on the progress made towards achieving the goals and objectives of the strategy. The report will also identify and recommend, as appropriate, any corrective action to the strategies and tactics.