



NATIONAL ADVOCACY.
COMMUNITY ACTION.



ATTN: Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Advisory Committee

RE: QS4.5 – Gender Equity Strategy

December 8, 2021

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

YWCA Toronto is a multi-service agency with 11 locations across Toronto, from Scarborough to Etobicoke. Each year, we help 13,000 community members flee violence, secure housing, find jobs, and establish their voices. We also engage in systemic advocacy to advance gender equity and racial justice.

We are writing today to flag a concern about the consultation period of the City's Intersectional Gender Equity Strategy.

As you may know, we have a long history of partnership with the City on gender equity issues. We supported the creation of the Gender Equity Office in 2019 and even served on the hiring committee for that office between November 2020-January 2021.

The Gender Equity Office is responsible for the development of the Intersectional Gender Equity Strategy. It has partnered up with Social Planning Toronto to collect data from community members. Social Planning Toronto has invited us, and several other community partners, to join an Advisory Committee to provide strategic advice on the data collection process.

We have shared with Social Planning Toronto our concern over the allotted timelines for community consultations, which is a concern shared by other Advisory Committee members as well. Given the timelines have been set by the City, we wanted to take this opportunity to flag our concern to you as a City Advisory Committee.

As we understand it, the development of this Strategy was delayed largely due to COVID-19. Despite the urgency of this Strategy, we are requesting that you support the extension of the current consultation timelines by at least a month, in line with the request brought forward by WomanAct. This will allow us greater time to collect data and consult with community members, many of whom face compounding forms of oppression.

It is imperative that the Intersectional Gender Equity Strategy is informed by the voices of diverse communities of women, including women and trans community members who are difficult to reach. We recommend a minimum one-month extension as two of the consultation months – December and January – are busy times of the year where most organizations have staff members away on holiday.

Women and trans community members facing violence, poverty and discrimination should have their concerns reflected in this Strategy. Inclusive, meaningful consultations take time to coordinate. We really do not wish to miss any important perspectives. For all of these reasons, we hope you can support our request for a one-month extension.

Kind regards,

Jasmine Ramze Rezaee

Director of Advocacy and Communications
YWCA Toronto