

COUNCIL MEMBER'S MOTION

2. Trans, Gender Diverse and Two-Spirit (TGD2S) Inclusion and Safety Action Plan

Submitted by: Councillor Boyle

WHEREAS

1. Trans, Gender Diverse and Two-Spirit (TGD2S) individuals are important members of our community who deserve to be safe and deserve equitable opportunities to belong and thrive in Vancouver. However, TGD2S communities are facing increased levels of hatred and harassment that is putting their safety and wellbeing at risk;
2. In 2016, following extensive community consultation, Vancouver City Council adopted a Trans, Gender-Diverse and Two-Spirit Inclusion Strategy.¹ A key theme of the 2016 strategy was that “Changes Require Long-term Commitment” emphasizing that change includes integrating TGD2S recommendations into current equity and inclusion strategies, and pursuing intentional measures specific to the TGD2S community;
3. A 2020 memo updating City Council on implementation of the TGD2S Inclusion Strategy and Women’s Equity Strategy² highlighted the completion of Phase One of the strategy and stated that Phase Two intended to look specifically at systemic barriers to apply an intersectional approach to gender equity, with ongoing “vigilance, learning, growth, and action.”;
4. Since the adoption and implementation of the 2016 TGD2S Inclusion Strategy, the social and cultural context for the TGD2S community has shifted significantly. There has been increased visibility, public awareness and understanding of the diversity of gender expressions, thanks to courageous leadership from trans and queer communities. There has also been significant backlash;
5. Hostility toward TGD2S people has been on the rise in Canada and BC, fueled by a widespread and organized campaign of misinformation and fear-mongering. This rise in hostility is happening despite gender identity, expression and sexual orientation being protected personal characteristics under the BC Human Rights Code;³
6. In September 2023, harmful and at times violent rallies were held around Greater Vancouver and across the country against SOGI (sexual orientation and gender identity) inclusive education. These rallies were met with significant counter protests from trans and queer communities and their allies;

¹ 2016 City of Vancouver Report, “Supporting Trans* Equality and an Inclusive Vancouver”. Available at: <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/trans-gender-variant-and-two-spirit-inclusion-at-the-city-of-vancouver.pdf>

² 2020 Memo to City Council, “Updates on Women’s Equity Strategy and Trans Gender Diverse and Two Spirit Inclusion Strategy”. Available at: <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/11-12-2020-womens-equity-trans-gender-diverse-two-spirit-inclusion-strategy.pdf>

³ BC Human Rights Tribunal, Personal Characteristics Protected in the BC Human Rights Code. Available at: <https://www.bchrt.bc.ca/human-rights-duties/personal-characteristics/>

7. Educational policies and procedures that reference SOGI seek to address bullying, and foster inclusion and acceptance for all youth. SOGI initiatives are proven to reduce discrimination, suicidal ideation and suicide attempts for students who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+ and research shows that these positive outcomes also extend to cisgender and heterosexual youth, too;
8. 60% of sexual minorities in Canada have experienced physical or sexual assault in their life times. In 2020 alone, 259 people in Canada from 2SLGBTQIA+ communities reported targeted hate crimes based on their sexual orientation – the highest rate since 2009⁴. Hate crimes against minority communities are often under-reported;
9. In BC, 1 in 4 queer and trans youth are forced out of their homes due to severe family conflict. 29% of trans people often report being turned away when trying to access shelters with nearly a quarter of those reporting being assaulted by shelter residents and staff. Within this group, people of colour and Indigenous peoples often fare worse;⁵
10. Newcomer and migrant 2SLGBTQIA+ communities face additional barriers to inclusion and safety upon their arrival and integration into life in Vancouver. Accessible resources on SOGI and TGD2S rights are often only offered in a limited range of languages making cross cultural conversations more difficult;
11. November 20th is Transgender Day of Remembrance, an initiative started by transgender advocate Gwendolyn Ann Smith as a vigil to honour the memory of Rita Hester, a transgender woman who was killed in 1998. Communities around the world now host vigils on November 20 to honour all those trans, gender diverse and two-spirit people whose lives were lost to anti-trans violence that year;
12. In June 2023 Council received an Equity Framework Implementation Update. The report stated that most of the actions from Vancouver’s 2016 TGD2S Inclusion policy have been implemented or are underway, and that “there has not been much progress to report on since the March 2020 update to Council”. The report also recognized that “the context of the TGD2S community has evolved over the past seven years since the initial work was done”⁶; and
13. The above mentioned 2023 report outlined that while many other elements of the equity framework implementation were going well or exceeding expectations, “work on women, trans and gender-diverse communities is being flagged as being in need of renewal.”⁷

⁴ November 20th, 2022 Statement by Minister Marci Ien on Transgender Day of Remembrance 2022. Available at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/news/2022/11/statement-by-minister-marci-ien-on-transgender-day-of-remembrance-2022.html>

⁵ https://bchumanrights.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/2013_prc-lgbqt-poverty-factsheet.pdf

⁶ 2023 Equity Framework Implementation Update to Council. Available at: <https://council.vancouver.ca/20230628/documents/pspc1.pdf>

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THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council commit to the creation and implementation of a renewed Trans, Gender Diverse and Two-Spirit (TGD2S) Action Plan with a focus on inclusion and safety;

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to engage with community leaders and organisations to inform next steps, and report back with a draft work plan and goals by July 2024.

- B. THAT Council direct staff to ensure that any action plans, resources, and community engagement activities are available in multiple languages to encourage engagement from diverse language communities.
- C. THAT Council direct staff to include suggested funding for this work as an amendment to the 2024 budget.