Municipal Equity Kickstart Guide

Making cities work for all

Letter from the YWCA City Shift team

We recognize that not all people have had a voice in how cities are designed, how they are built and how they grow. YWCA City Shift is committed to changing that – by supporting decision-makers to challenge assumptions, incorporate diverse perspectives and take bold action that serves the entire community.

When we look at the civic landscape from a variety of perspectives, we begin to understand that our identities and abilities impact how we experience city life. Some people might see a crack in the sidewalk as just a crack. But for someone pushing a stroller or walking with a cane, a crack can be an obstacle. Dark streets and unlit pathways can feel very different depending on your gender or lived experience.

To ensure all residents are seen, heard and considered, we are asking cities in Metro Vancouver to commit to using an intersectional equity lens across planning, service, funding and policy decisions. Your city will join Edmonton, New Westminster, Vancouver and Victoria—municipalities that are already using gender- and equity-based lenses in their policy development and decision-making to transform how they plan and grow.

The YWCA City Shift team created this Kickstart Guide to support your city's equity journey. We are here to help you create policies that consider underrepresented groups and include them in civic decision-making processes, and to provide you with tools and resources to assess how you are making your city more equitable.

To learn more about YWCA City Shift,
visit **https://ywcavan.org/ywca-city-shift**

We invite you to take bold action to help make cities work for everyone.

City Shift is funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada.

Women and Gender Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité des genres Canada

Canada

YWCA METRO VANCOUVER | CITY SHIFT

Land acknowledgment

YWCA Metro Vancouver operates on the ancestral and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish) and səl̓ílwətaʔɬ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. We also **operate on and acknowledge** the unceded territories of Semiahmoo and the Stó:lō peoples, including the Qayqayt, Kwantlen, Katzie and Kwikwetlem Nations, as well as the treaty lands of the Tsawwassen Nation.

As the YWCA pursues a path of reconciliation, we are taking steps to educate staff and encourage deeper learning about Canada's colonial history, while fostering relationships with and supporting Indigenous leaders. The YWCA is committed to listening and learning from Indigenous staff, program participants and volunteers.

Before we outline some of the ways local governments can become more equitable, it is important to highlight that cities also need to work towards advancing Indigenous Rights, reconciliation and decolonization. We strongly recommend that cities see equity work and reconciliation as distinct streams of work – and that plans, strategies and resources be allocated separately.

Indigenous Peoples have **unique rights and title**[1], including Aboriginal rights to title. It is appropriate for local governments to have a tailored approach to engaging with Indigenous communities. Host Nations and urban Indigenous communities will have different needs by virtue of the reality that urban Indigenous people are also visitors in host Nations territories.

In **Appendix A. page 25,** we have provided information and resources for local governments on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. These are intended to be a starting point for municipalities.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents (continued)

Who this guide is for

This guide is intended to be used by municipal council members and civic staff who are looking for resources to help them start, or continue, to embed equity in their decision-making practices.

How to use this guide

There is no one path for creating more inclusive and equitable cities, but there is a wealth of resources and examples from other cities and organizations who are navigating this journey. This guide will outline some of the ways you can embed equity across the scope of city building and planning.

You do not need to read this guide from beginning to end. We suggest you read the *Introduction* and then review the *Table of Contents*, see what feels most relevant, and jump to that section. Reviewing the rest of the content and resources will give you a more comprehensive idea of how you can embed equity in your work.

This is also not an exhaustive guide. Creating equitable cities might include learning and growth at the individual and staff levels, or reviewing internal practices and policies before making external decisions. This guide, however, is intended to support the community-facing equity work of municipalities.

Introduction

WHY IS EQUITY WORK IMPORTANT?

Sexism, poverty, colonialism, racism, ableism and many other forms of social inequity shape our cultures and cities.

At YWCA Metro Vancouver, we see the impacts of social inequity on the women and families we serve every day, just as we see their resilience in navigating these barriers.

Our programs – housing, child care, legal services, mentorship, violence prevention, single mothers' support and employment services – provide life-changing opportunities across Metro Vancouver. But we know that to create a better future for everyone, we need systemic change that addresses the root causes of social inequity.

That systemic change is possible, and cities have the power to do it. Here are two examples that showcase what happens when cities are designed without consideration for the people they affect.

Elysse's story

Elysse is a single mother to two young children, six and three years old. She came to Canada four years ago and English is her second language. She works part-time at a popular coffee chain, does not have a car, and has no family close by to help. Elysse and her children are about to be evicted from their one-bedroom basement suite because the owner's daughter is moving back in.

Elysse needs to find safe and affordable housing that is adequate for her family's needs. She will also have to look for a better-paying job to afford rent. Her housing and work have to be close to her child care, and all three must be accessible by public transit.

There are many residents in situations similar to Elysse's, who have to navigate difficult civic systems in order to live. In service of equity, cities can create convenient community hubs, design smart transit routes, enact policy that protects tenancy rights and build centralized affordable housing—decisions that are more inclusive, equitable and just for residents like Elysse. The result is healthier people and families who can contribute more time, energy and money to their community, and cities where everyone can thrive.

Hogan's Alley

Hogan's Alley was a mixed immigrant community with a predominantly African-Canadian population in the heart of Vancouver, established in 1923.

Hogan's Alley was the centre for the Black community and home to Black cultural institutions. In the late 1930s, in an act of anti-Black racism, the City's planning department deemed the area a slum, describing the community for its poverty, and identified it for "urban renewal" and a 12-lane freeway. The City began leveling the western half of Hogan's Alley in the late 1960s in order to construct a freeway, spelling the end of the neighbourhood. Organized protests, led by women of colour, resulted in the abandonment of plans for a freeway.

The Hogan's Alley Society is a group of people who advocate for Black Vancouverites who have endured the legacies of urban renewal and their erasure from the official historical narrative. You can learn more about Hogan's Alley Society **here**[2].

Ways cities can begin

Your municipality's equity journey will depend on your municipality's needs and resources. As you will see below, we do not provide specific answers or a one-size-fits-all approach, but rather resources to use and examples to consider as you progress. One thing will be common for everyone engaging in this process: equity work requires *doing the work*.

Define equity: your "North Star"

Equity is about fairness (not sameness, that's equality). There is no universally agreed upon standard of what equity looks like from city to city. Each municipality will have to set these goals for themselves. We share the information below to help you better understand what equity can look like so your municipality can move toward it.

> "You cannot end or fight ableism without also ending and fighting all other forms of oppression and violence."
>
> —Mia Mingus

Inequality, equality, equity and justice
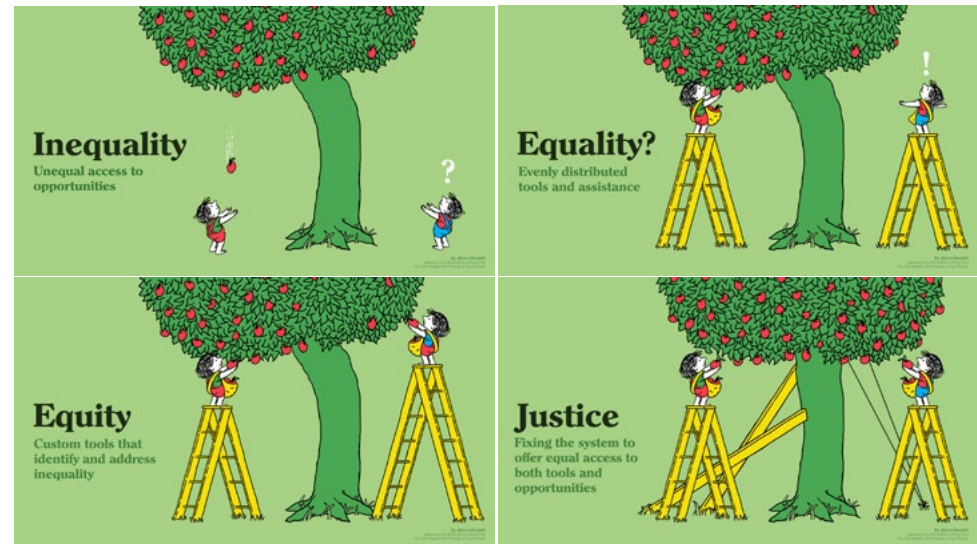
[Equality, Equity and Justice Source: Tony Ruth from Maeda (2019)](#)[3]

These images show an apple tree that is slightly bent in one direction. Because of this, apples tend to fall to one side of the tree (**inequality**). If we employ equality, we will give everyone the same tool - a ladder of the same height, to reach the apples. But we see in the second image, that the ladders help one person reach the apples (on the side the tree is bending towards) and the other person still can't reach the apples, despite being given the SAME tool (**equality**). In the third image, the person who couldn't reach the apples is given a longer ladder - or a different tool specific to meet their needs (**equity**). However, the tree (representing a system) is still bent, so by providing supports for the tree to stand it up straight, we fix the system to offer EQUAL access to all (**justice**), so that no special or different tools are required.

DIMENSIONS OF EQUITY

We use these **dimensions of equity**[4] to better understand how to embed equity in our work. Depending on the context, different aspects of equity are emphasized. These dimensions of equity often overlap.

Table 1. Dimensions of equity

Dimensions of Equity	Description
Structural	Underlying institutional systems and root causes of social inequities are addressed; and decision-makers are committed to correcting past harms and preventing future unintended consequences. • What are the underlying or root causes? • What are the historical, cultural and institutional dynamics and systems? • In what ways might you be causing harm in the community, even inadvertently?
Procedural	Includes inclusive, accessible and authentic engagement and representation in the process to develop or implement programs or policies. • Are processes transparent, fair and inclusive? • Are people treated openly and fairly? • Are events and opportunities to participate accessible for all? • How are people supported and celebrated?
Distributional	Where programs and policies result in fair distributions of benefits and burdens across all segments of a community, prioritizing those with highest need. • How are resources and power distributed? • Who is benefitting? Who is being burdened? • Who is being celebrated?
Intergenerational	Decisions consider generational impacts and do not result in unfair burdens on future generations. • How can we take responsibility and action today? • What are some intergenerational impacts we should consider?
Redress	Previous harm has been analyzed, accountability taken and the harm is repaired with affected people and communities. • In what ways was harm caused previously? • How have we repaired that harm (e.g., through accountability, material change, reparations)?

INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality is a useful concept to help illustrate why we move through life with different needs. Coined in 1989 by Black legal scholar Dr. Kimberlé W. Crenshaw, intersectionality examines how systems of oppression interact with each other to shape our experiences and opportunities. One important aspect of intersectionality is that the systems at play cannot be separated or singled out from one another, even if it is easy to talk about them as though they can be.

Dr. Kimberlé W. Crenshaw on intersectionality

Q: You introduced *intersectionality* more than 30 years ago. How do you explain <u>what it means today?</u>[5]

A: These days, I start with what it's not, because there has been distortion. It's not identity politics on steroids... It's basically a lens, a prism, for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other. We tend to talk about race inequality as separate from inequality based on gender, class, sexuality, or immigrant status. What's often missing is how some people are subject to all of these, and the experience is not just the sum of its parts.

Identify benchmarks: position your city

It is important to understand where your city is positioned in terms of equity. A great way to learn this is to:

- Co-create your desired state; and
- Assess the current state against that desired state.

This is called benchmarking. Benchmarks can help you compare your work to others' who have successfully accomplished what you want to achieve. It can also help you understand where your city is at in relation to your goals, and how to track changes over time.

CO-CREATE YOUR DESIRED STATE

It is imperative to involve the communities you serve in the work of envisioning and articulating your desired state. Consider the saying "nothing about us, without us" as you move through this work. To advance equity, communities must be a part of the conversations on policies, programs and practices that impact them, so that those policies, programs and practices reflect what they need.

"What gets measured matters."

ASSESS THE CURRENT STATE AGAINST THE DESIRED STATE

The Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Benchmarks (GDEIB) is a resource that aims to help governments and organizations "…work towards a fair, inclusive, and equitable workplace and a society where privilege and patriarchy do not control access and opportunity—where diversity, equity, and inclusion are not just a dream but an attainable reality for all."[6] It covers internal (organization) facing and external (community) facing work.

The goals of the GDEIB include:

- Creating a better, equitable world for everyone
- Advancing an inclusive culture
- Improving organizational effectiveness

Other Metro Vancouver cities have used the GDEIB model, including Coquitlam and Vancouver. We encourage you to learn about the GDEIB model to decide if it's the right benchmarking tool for your municipality.

Operationalize equity: define or choose an implementation methodology

Choosing an equity methodology to apply to a pilot project is a great way to start. Below are three examples of methodologies that can help you operationalize equity in external work, such as providing services and programs or developing policy. We compare them in Table 2.

Next, we provide an example of a pilot project from the City of Edmonton's work to embed equity in a zoning bylaw update.

Cities using GBA+ when developing projects and initiatives not only help deliver more inclusive results, but with GBA+ being the mandated and required analysis across all federal departments, initiatives demonstrating GBA+ consideration may have a competitive advantage. Increasingly, proof of or integration of GBA+ is a requirement to receive federal funds.

GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS PLUS (GBA+)

Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) is a user-friendly tool that was developed by the federal government and used provincially in BC. It has been adopted by cities like Edmonton, Halifax and Montreal, and has a free certificate program. GBA+ provides a rigorous method for the assessment of systemic inequalities, as well as a means to assess how diverse groups of women, men and gender diverse people may experience policies, programs and initiatives.

You can learn more about GBA+ **here**[7] and **here**[8].

Figure 1. Diagram of intersecting identity characteristics
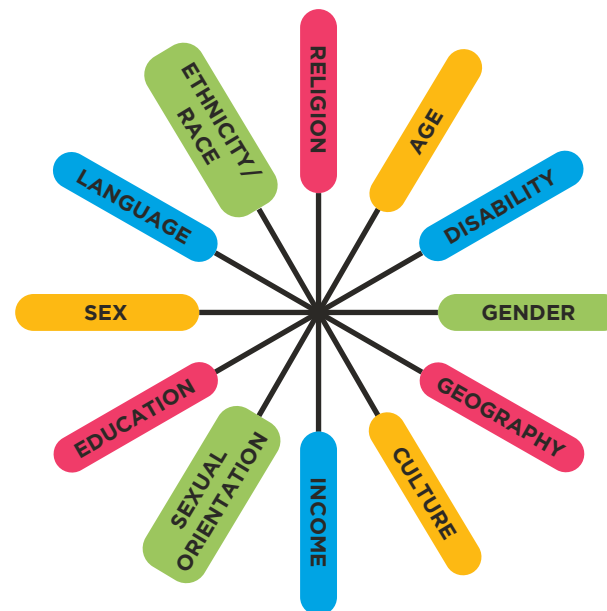
TARGETED UNIVERSALISM

Targeted universalism is an approach developed by the University of Berkley's Othering and Belonging Institute. Within this framework, universal goals are established for all groups concerned. The strategies developed to achieve those goals are "targeted, based upon how different groups are situated within structures, culture and across geographies to obtain the universal goal."

You can learn more about targeted universalism **here**[9].

SEATTLE'S RACIAL EQUITY TOOLKIT

Seattle's Racial Equity Toolkit was developed by the Seattle Racial and Social Justice Initiative. It lays out a process and a set of questions to guide the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, initiatives, programs and budget issues to address the impacts on racial equity. It recognizes that equity requires ending individual, institutional and structural racism.

You can learn more about the Racial Equity Toolkit **here**[10].

The table below outlines the steps in each of these three methodologies. You will notice that the steps are fairly similar.

Table 2. Equity Implementation Methodologies

GBA+	Targeted Universalism	Racial Equity Toolkit
Step 1. Identify issue	Step 1. Establish a universal goal	Step 1. Set outcomes
Step 2. Challenge assumptions	Step 2. Assess performance relative to goal	Step 2. Involve stakeholders and analyze data
Step 3. Gather the facts (research and consult)	Step 3. Identify different performance between goal and overall population	Step 3. Determine benefit and/or burden
Step 4. Develop options and make recommendations	Step 4. Assess and understand the structures	Step 4. Advance opportunity or minimize harm
Step 5. Monitor and evaluate	Step 5. Develop and implement targeted strategies	Step 5. Evaluate, raise racial awareness, be accountable
Step 6. Communicate and document		Step 6. Report back

Case study: Edmonton Zoning Bylaw update

Zoning plays a significant role in the social structure and systemic oppression enacted in municipalities, including through **economic and racial segregation**[11]. Zoning Bylaws have led to intended and unintended inequitable social impacts.

Updating Zoning Bylaws can be a tangible and impactful way to integrate equity into municipal regulations.

"Since the early 20th century, communities have used zoning to organize land use and minimize conflicts between different activities to protect public health, safety, and welfare of citizens and the environment. Zoning has also been used to separate more than just land uses - it has also been used to segregate people and disconnect them from places, practices, and production. Regardless of intention, zoning rules have and can lead to disproportionate impacts for some segments of the population. For this reason, zoning has a dual legacy: of promoting the public good and of exclusion."[12]

The City of Edmonton is in the process of a complete overhaul of its zoning bylaw to create "A Zoning Bylaw for Everyone"; The Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative is a GBA+ pilot project for the city.

The goals for the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative project include:

- To affirm the City of Edmonton's commitment in **addressing discriminatory regulations and practices**
- To research and explore how planning, policies and regulations **have led to intended and unintended social impacts**
- To **promote equity and explicitly remove barriers** in the City of Edmonton's regulations that perpetuate inequity

To ensure equity considerations are included in all aspects of the Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative, the City of Edmonton created a **GBA+ and Equity Toolkit**[13] and accompanying worksheet called the "Compass". The Toolkit and Compass help planners consider the social impacts of regulations and take thoughtful and decisive action.

At each stage of the regulation writing process, there are accompanying tools in the Toolkit and Compass to think through equity considerations.

We strongly recommend that cities consider a pilot project using an equity tool like GBA+. You can then apply what you have learned to other areas of your work.
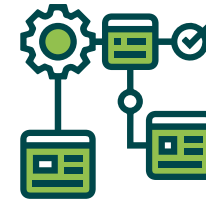
Some areas to consider for pilot projects

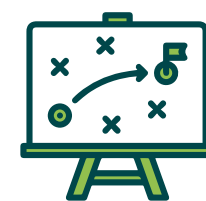Community grants program

Community consultation process

Committee governance structure

Municipal procurement policy

Municipal housing plan

Climate change plan + adaption strategies

See **Appendix B. page 30** for a short case study on how a community grants program might be revamped to be more equitable.

Table 3. Regulation writing stage and tools in the GBA+ and Equity Toolkit.

Regulation Writing Stage	Tools
Mindset: Getting in the mindset to draft the regulation.	**Role of the planner:** (Re)thinking the role of the planner and how planners can advance equity.
Issues + Opportunities: Researching and identifying direction for the regulation, including which social inequities you are going to address, how you are going to address them, and why you think that is the best approach.	**Libraries of Historical Negative Externalities and Equity Regulations:** A (first draft) of a bibliography of zoning's historical impacts on unaffordability, inaccessibility, social fragmentation, climate emergency and health risk factors, as well as examples of how cities have addressed inequities perpetuated by land use regulations.
Draft: Writing regulations.	**Communication Barriers and Strategies:** Identifying communication barriers that impact the way users access, find and interpret zoning/policy information. Developing communication strategies to remove or overcome communication barriers. **Human Rights and Charter Rights Lens:** Thinking of the draft regulation in relation to various protected groups outlined under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and human rights legislation and to consider the impacts your regulations may have on such groups.
Quality Control: Stakeholder, peer, and legal review.	**Public Engagement Recommendations and Peer Review:** Engaging with the public, peers, and lawyers to learn about equity, clarity, conciseness and identify any gaps.
Approval: Regulation is approved.	**Monitoring Recommendations:** Monitoring and assessing the performance of the regulation over time.

Seek input and feedback: be responsive to community needs

Equity work should be responsive to the needs of the communities you serve. Engage with a variety of community members and groups about what they need and the steps you are taking in response, as a municipality, to provide more equitable outcomes for them. Front-line and community serving organizations and the people they serve will let you know if you are heading in the right direction and can help you course correct to be more responsive.

This could include creating advisory committees, hosting focus groups or taking surveys of residents with lived experience.

It is important to make this a positive experience by providing capacity support for organizations and people to participate in conversations with you. This can look like:

- Direct funding
- Honoraria payments
- Providing food
- Providing child care
- Providing transit tickets
- Sharing culturally appropriate gifts

See **Appendix B. page 31,** for a case study example of Toronto's Intersectional Lived Experience Advisory Group.

"It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences."

—*Audre Lorde*

Commit long-term: resource the work and learn over time

This work is rooted in the willingness to change. Change requires time, patience, practice and resources. Resourcing the work is necessary for success. Embedding equity will come naturally as you become more diligent in practicing it. Don't expect perfection, and recognize that you will make mistakes along the way. Use mistakes as opportunities to deepen your learning, not as reasons to stall or stop your work. And remember that even small changes can have positive and transformative impacts.

Hire staff to help lead this work

Hire staff to help your city navigate this work. Depending on the size of your municipality, you may want to hire a team to create an equity office.

Create separate positions for internal and external facing functions of equity work. There may be a lot of demand for internal support and having a person in an external facing function can help bridge the needs of the community with the work your city will need to do to meet those needs.

Separate out equity positions from Indigenous or Intergovernmental Relations positions.

Develop a community of practice

The term "community of practice" was initially coined by social learning researcher Etienne Wenger and anthropologist Jean Lave while studying apprenticeship as a learning model. They define a community of practice as "a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do, and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly."

The idea is that we learn better together and by working collaboratively we are better equipped to understand and address complex issues. Members of a community of practice can help identify existing barriers and opportunities. They can also champion this work by advancing equity within their departments' projects and business lines, while building a network of resources.

While a community of practice is internal to the organization, it supports external (community) facing work through creating a supportive environment, opportunities for feedback and learning, and a team of colleagues to develop ideas and practices with.

It is important that participation in a community of practice is supported by management and included in staff job descriptions and work plans. This will allow staff to fully engage, while reducing the likelihood of burnout.

There are three key elements to a community of practice:

- The domain: members come together based on a shared learning need
- The community: their collective learning becomes a bond among them over time
- The practice: their interactions produce resources that affect their practice

The Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) department of the Seattle Government included 28 to 30 Executive racial equity change teams across the City as a part of the implementation of their Race and Social Justice Initiative's 2019 — 2021 Strategy.

Other cities are using employee resource groups. The City of Vancouver has one called Women Planning in Colour, that provides a safe and empowering space for city staff who identify as women and are Indigenous, Black or people of colour, who work in a planning-related field to regularly meet and discuss equity-related opportunities and challenges in the workplace.

Provide training

Provide training for all staff during paid staff time, and include senior staff and Council. Training needs can be determined once the outcomes of the benchmarking work is complete.

You might anticipate the following types of training:

- Anti-racism
- Anti-oppression
- Conflict resolution
- Equity awareness
- Gender inclusion
- Indigenous cultural safety
- Trauma-informed practice

There are a number of consulting firms and organizations offering this type of training.

Create an equity framework

Consider creating an equity framework based on the unique needs of your municipality. Your framework should include goals and priorities, and should anchor equity work in your city. Make sure your equity framework is a public document that is accessible on your website. And most importantly, track and report out on the goals and priorities identified in your framework.

Once you have developed your framework it can be used to inform and guide other important documents, including corporate plans, strategic plans and community plans.

The City of New Westminster created a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Framework in 2022. Learn more about this case study in **Appendix B. page 32**.

Embed equity in motions and staff reports

It is important to embed equity in Council motions and reports. Municipalities will not make meaningful progress towards creating more equitable communities if this work isn't championed and supported by Mayors and Councillors.

In **Appendix C. page 34,** we have provided an example of a Council motion that directs staff to prioritize equity work in your community, and then we have provided a fictional staff report that shows how equity has been embedded in a municipal climate action plan.

Things to be mindful of

We want to leave you with some lessons we've learned from our work over the years and from the case studies we reviewed for this resource guide.

- Equity work is an opportunity and a responsibility.
- Equity work needs to take place both internally and externally to the organization. Over time, you can determine the best starting place for your organization.

INTERNAL (ORGANIZATION) FACING WORK

- Equity work needs buy-in from Council and senior management. If they aren't driving this work, involve them from the start to build understanding and support.
- Hire people who care about your equity goals, and give them the mandate and resources to lead and innovate within the organization.
- Engage with and empower municipal staff from across the organization. Connect with staff already well-versed in gender and social equity – they can be great champions. Foster opportunities between staff to talk, listen to and educate each other.
- Empower staff with different backgrounds and opinions to respectfully discuss and solve problems together. While this can be a transformative experience for everyone, be careful not to burden anyone to become a resident expert based on their lived experience.
- Resource equity work through budgets, staffing and training, and ensure staff have decision-making power.

## INTERNAL (ORGANIZATION) AND EXTERNAL (COMMUNITY) FACING WORK

- Equity work is iterative and incremental and involves learning over time. Take time, build trust, understanding, relationships and new ways of being and working. Don't rush projects or set immovable deadlines.

- Consider carefully what work should be carried out within the organization versus done by consultants. Staff will have a better understanding of internal dynamics and nuances, and having staff do the work will create greater buy-in and ownership. Staff (not consultants) should hold relationships with communities. Use consultants to support the technical work where necessary. Consultants can also foster safety in gathering feedback from staff, as they are a third party and can hold greater confidentiality.

- Tokenization of staff is a risk. People in charge of leading equity work should be doing it because they want to be – not because they are being pigeonholed into this work because of their identities. Skills, expertise, passion and lived experience are also important considerations.

EXTERNAL (COMMUNITY) FACING WORK

- Gather information about and identify the inequities that residents are facing: What is an issue for residents in your municipality? What are the needs?

- Build relationships with and be accountable to communities. The first part of equity work is to involve the people and communities who face inequities by giving them power and access to resources in order to influence decision-making in ways that are defined by them.

- Honour lived experience like you do professional experience; engage grassroots and community organizers.

- Be mindful of when equity work becomes performative. Equity is not just about education – it is about changing power structures and culture, addressing barriers to success and thriving, and being accountable to communities.

> "A constant sense of urgency reflects our cultural habit of applying a sense of urgency to our every-day lives in ways that perpetuate power imbalance while disconnecting us from our need to breathe and pause and reflect. The irony is that this imposed sense of urgency serves to erase the actual urgency of tackling racial and social injustice."
>
> —Tema Okun, from their 2021 (updated) article *"White Supremacy Culture, Still Here"* [14]
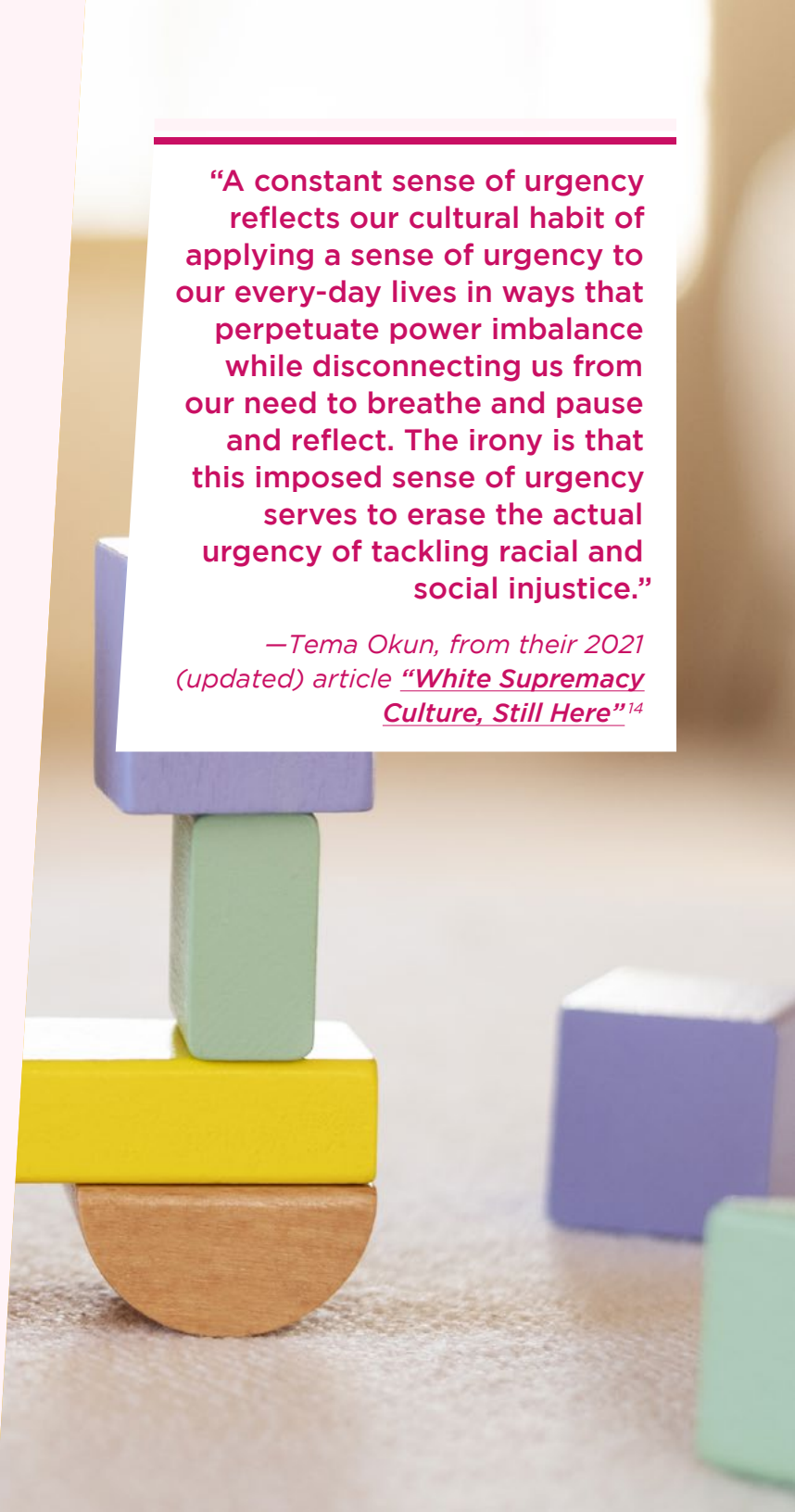
The Fish, The Lake and The Groundwater

We hope you find this guide helpful as you embark on embedding equity in your work as a local government. We want to leave you with this story to help illustrate how we all need to think about systemic impacts of our work as we work towards a more equitable future.

Adapted from **Bayard Love and Deena Hayes-Greene of the Racial Equity Institute**[15]

If you have a lake in front of your house and one fish is floating belly-up dead, it makes sense to analyze the fish. What is wrong with it? Imagine the fish is one person who cannot successfully find adequate, and suitable housing.

We'd ask: Did they look hard enough? Are they getting the support they need to find housing?

But if you come out to that same lake and half the fish are floating belly-up dead, what should you do?

This time you've got to analyze the lake. Imagine the lake is the housing system and half the people can't find housing. This time we'd ask: Might the system itself be causing such consistent, unacceptable outcomes for people? If so, how?

Now...picture five lakes around your house, and in each and every lake half the fish are floating belly-up dead! What is it time to do? We say it's time to analyze the groundwater.

How did the water in all these lakes end up with the same contamination? On the surface the lakes don't appear to be connected, but it's possible, even likely, that they are. In fact, over 95% of the freshwater on the planet is not above ground where we can see it; it is below the surface in the groundwater.

This time we can imagine half the people in a given region are not able to find adequate and suitable housing, half the people suffer from ill health, half the people need mental health support, half are performing poorly in the criminal justice system, half are struggling in and out of the social assistance system, and it's often the same people in each system!

By using a "groundwater" approach, one might begin to ask these questions: Why are social/supportive housing systems creating the same inequity as health/mental health professionals, police officers, and social assistance workers? How might our systems be connected? Most importantly, how do we use our position(s) in one system to impact a structural arrangement that might be deeper than any single system?

To "fix fish", or clean up one lake at a time simply won't work - all we would be doing is putting "fixed" fish back into toxic water or filtering a lake that is quickly recontaminated by the toxic groundwater. It's this systems approach to equity that we are working with.

Truth and Reconciliation, UNDRIP and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

The following summaries on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls are intended to provide a starting point for cities.

We also encourage you to visit the Yellowhead Institute website for further information and learning. You can access the website **here**[16].

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION CALLS TO ACTION

Between 2007 and 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission travelled across Canada to hear from 6,500 witnesses about the impacts of Residential Schools on Indigenous Peoples and communities. The Commission also hosted seven public events across Canada to engage the Canadian public, educate people about the history and legacy of the residential schools system and share and honour the experiences of former students and their families.

The report of the Commission outlines 94 Calls to Action and 12 of them are specifically directed towards local governments. We outline them in this borrowed information from the **Alberta Municipalities**[17].

Table 1. TRC Calls to Action for Local Governments

Calls to action	Rationale
3 Fully implement Jordan's Principle to ensure First Nations children are not denied or delayed in accessing essential public services.	Municipalities can review all municipal services to children to ensure access is equitable and without discrimination. Where possible, municipalities can also support local healthcare, social and educational professionals to remedy systemic and institutional practices so that Indigenous youth can access the services and supports they need, when they need them.
17 Enable residential school survivors and their families to reclaim names changed by the residential school system by waiving any administrative costs.	Municipalities that charge a fee for any name changes are encouraged to waive this fee if it is for the purpose of reclaiming a family name.
40 In collaboration with Indigenous people, create Indigenous-specific victim programs and services with appropriate evaluation mechanisms.	There are opportunities for municipal governments to advocate, create, and expand victim services programs in partnership with the Government of Alberta and local organizations.

Calls to action	Rationale
45.iii Renew or establish Treaty relationships based on principles of mutual recognition, mutual respect, and shared responsibility for maintaining those relationships into the future.	Municipal government leaders can build relationships with local and regional Indigenous organizations and leaders to open space for conversation on issues of mutual interest.
57 Educate public servants on the history of Indigenous peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Indigenous rights, Indigenous law, and Indigenous–Crown relations.	Possibly one of the most impactful ways that municipal governments can support reconciliation is to update internal training programs to regularly educate staff about the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada, including the residential school system, and how that impacts relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people today. This training may include a focus on intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.
66 Establish funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation.	While this call to action is directed to the federal government, municipalities can also partner with local organizations to raise awareness and encourage conversations with youth about reconciliation.
69.iii Encourage libraries to commit more resources to public education on residential schools.	Municipalities can partner with libraries to host speaker events and sharing circles and promote literature that will increase awareness about the history and legacy of residential schools.
77 Work with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system. Municipalities can explore historical corporate and cemetery records to identify and deliver any relevant documentation to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. This may include partnering with the local museum(s).	Municipalities can explore historical corporate and cemetery records to identify and deliver any relevant documentation to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. This may include partnering with the local museum(s).
93 Create/revise information kits for newcomers to reflect the history of Indigenous peoples, including information about the Treaties and the history of residential schools.	Municipalities can develop a handout about the history and culture of Indigenous peoples in the region and share it with immigrant serving agencies as well as make it publicly available online. Consider developing the handout in multiple languages to better support newcomers to understand the cultural context.

There are additional actions if your municipality is located close to a former residential school site.

You can read about all 94 Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation report **here**[18].

Another excellent resource is Women Transforming Cities' report on The TRC Calls to Action in BC Municipalities. This report outlines the progress BC municipalities have made towards implementing the TRC Calls to Action to date, the barriers that municipalities have identified in implementation and suggestions on how municipalities can move forward. You can access the report here[19].

UNDRIP + THE DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ACT ACTION PLAN

The Declaration is a comprehensive statement addressing the human rights of Indigenous peoples. It was drafted and formally debated for over twenty years prior to being adopted by the General Assembly in 2007. The document emphasizes the rights of Indigenous peoples to:

- live in dignity
- maintain and strengthen their own institutions, cultures and traditions
- pursue their self-determined development, in keeping with their own needs and aspirations

The British Columbia Legislative Assembly unanimously passed the **Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) (Declaration Act)**[20] in November 2019.

This made BC the first jurisdiction in Canada to adopt the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration)**[21]. The Declaration Act was developed jointly with Indigenous leaders and legal staff and was introduced through **historic ceremony**[22].

The Declaration Act established the UN Declaration as the Province's framework for reconciliation, as called for by the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission**[22]. Section 4 of the Declaration Act requires development and implementation of an action plan, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, to achieve the objectives of the UN Declaration. The UN Declaration is a "universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the Indigenous [P]eoples of the world and it elaborates on existing human rights standards and fundamental freedoms as they apply to the specific **situation of Indigenous [P]eoples."**[24] The provincial government is committed to upholding these human rights in its institutions, laws, policies and practices to advance reconciliation and address the legacy and harms of colonialism on Indigenous Peoples. The Province reaffirms its intent to achieve government-to-government relationships based on respect, recognition and exercise of Aboriginal title and rights and reconciliation of Aboriginal and Crown titles and jurisdiction.

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act contributes to the implementation of the UN Declaration in B.C. by:

- requiring the Province, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples to take all measures necessary

to ensure the laws of B.C. are consistent with the UN Declaration (section 3);

- requiring the development and implementation of an action plan, in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, to achieve the objectives of the UN Declaration (section 4);

- requiring the Province to report annually on progress made toward alignment of laws and achievement of the goals in the action plan (section 5); and

- enabling agreements with Indigenous governing bodies, including joint or consent-based decision-making agreements that reflect free, prior and informed consent (sections 6 and 7).

This action plan outlines significant actions the Province will undertake in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples over the next five years. The Province will continue to demonstrate commitment and ensure accountability to implement the UN Declaration and the Declaration Act Action Plan through collaborative annual reporting.

Resources:

- **Declaration On The Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan 2022-2027**[25]

- **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**[26]

- **City of Vancouver's motion to implement UNDRIP**[27] (p. 8)

MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

The **National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls** began ran from 2015 to 2019. Its mandate was is to:

- look into and report on systemic causes of all forms of violence against Indigenous women and girls

- examine the underlying social, economic, cultural, institutional and historical causes that contribute to ongoing violence and vulnerabilities of Indigenous women and girls in Canada

- look into and report on existing institutional policies and practices to address violence

"The National Inquiry's Final Report reveals that persistent and deliberate human and Indigenous rights violations and abuses are the root cause behind Canada's staggering rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people. The **two volume report calls for transformative legal and social changes to resolve the crisis that has devastated Indigenous communities across the country."**[28]

The two volume final report, "Reclaiming Power and Place" was released in 2019 and talks about: human rights, gender oppression, right to culture, right to health, right to security, right to justice, wellness and healing. It also includes the following **Calls for Justice**[29], which are outlined in the next page.

A Focus on Substantive Equality and Human and Indigenous Rights

- Recognizing that Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people are holders of inherent Indigenous rights, constitutional rights, and international and domestic human rights.

A Decolonizing Approach

- Aims to resist and undo the forces of colonialism and to re-establish Indigenous Nationhood. It is rooted in Indigenous values, philosophies, and knowledge systems. It is a way of doing things differently that challenges the colonial influence we live under by making space for marginalized Indigenous perspectives. The National Inquiry's decolonizing approach also acknowledges the rightful power and place of Indigenous women and girls.

Inclusion of Families and Survivors

- The implementation of the Calls for Justice must include the perspectives and participation of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people with lived experience, including the families of the missing and murdered and survivors of violence.

Self-Determined and Indigenous-Led Solutions and Services

- Services and solutions must be led by Indigenous governments, organizations, and people. This is based on the self-determination and self-governance of Indigenous Peoples, as defined per articles 3 and 4 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Recognizing Distinctions

- Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people come from diverse First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities. The Calls for Justice must be interpreted and implemented in an equitable and non-discriminatory way, addressing the needs of distinct Indigenous Peoples, and taking into account factors that make them distinct.

Cultural Safety

- Cultural safety goes beyond the idea of cultural "appropriateness" and demands the incorporation of services and processes that empower Indigenous Peoples. The creation of cultural safety requires, at a minimum, the inclusion of Indigenous languages, laws and proto-cols, governance, spirituality, and religion.

Trauma-Informed Approach

- Incorporating knowledge of trauma into all policies, procedures, and practices of solutions and services is crucial to the implementation of the Calls for Justice. It is fundamental to recognizing the impacts of trauma and to responding appropriately to signs of trauma.

Case studies

CASE STUDY:
COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAMS

Community grant programs typically provide small amounts of funding to non-profit and community serving organizations for community-based projects and services. Usually these are projects and services that improve quality of life for residents.

Although many municipalities offer community grant programs, a scan of several Metro Vancouver municipal grant programs revealed areas for improvement.

Most grant programs have an application and evaluation process. It is important to provide clear and easy to understand information to ensure your granting opportunities are reaching a broad audience and reaching them fairly. For example, some applicant organizations may be under-resourced or in high demand and stretched for resources; other applicant organizations' employees may not speak English as a first language.

Here are some things to consider for your community grant program:

- Provide a detailed and easy to understand description of the grant program, the projects it does and does not fund, and the types of organizations who qualify for funding.

- Clearly outline how much funding is available (the total pot of money) and what applicants might expect for a grant amount (e.g., grants will range from $500 to $3,000).

- Offer an information session and a recorded version people can watch on their own time.

- Provide staff contact information so people can ask questions or request assistance with completing the application.

- Review applications and follow up with organizations who may not have fully completed the application to help clarify any issues they had.

- Clearly define evaluation criteria and consider moving away from evaluation criteria based on the number of people impacted, and evaluate based on the quality of impact or improvements the grant recipient might make.

- Consider minimizing criteria for history of the organization, as this makes it difficult for newer organizations from benefiting from grant support; and do not tie the success of the application to other sources of funding the organization may receive (or not).

- Clearly define deadlines and consider rolling deadlines to help more organizations apply.

- Have an appeals process and provide instructions to appeal a decision.

- Consider accepting applications in forms other than a paper or electronic submission (i.e., video, interview, artwork, etc.).

- Translate materials into the major languages spoken in your municipality beyond English and accept responses in those languages (translate back into English for evaluation purposes) so more organizations can access grant opportunities.

- Clearly define evaluation criteria and consider moving away from evaluation criteria based on the number of people impacted, and evaluate based on the quality of impact or improvements the grant recipient might make.

- Consider minimizing criteria for history of the organization, as this makes it difficult for newer organizations from benefiting from grant support; and do not tie the success of the application to other sources of funding the organization may receive (or not).

CASE STUDY: TORONTO'S INTERSECTIONAL LIVED EXPERIENCE ADVISORY GROUP

A Lived Experience Advisory Group was established as part of an accountability structure for TO Prosperity, the City of Toronto's poverty reduction strategy, to ground the action plan in an understanding of the needs of residents with intersectional lived experience of poverty. Lived Experience Advisory Group members inform the development, implementation and monitoring of TO Prosperity. Members represent the diversity of identities in Toronto, including gender diversity, racialized people, new immigrants, people with disabilities, Indigenous people and people with experience in the justice system.

Members were nominated through an open call for applications that clearly laid out the type and duration of commitment requested, including training, orientation, monthly meetings and community engagements. The application identified benefits that participants would receive, including honoraria, recognition, food, bus tickets, child care and attendant care.

The Lived Experience Advisory Group was created through a robust community engagement and co-creation process. At the core of its success is long-term commitment, transparency and continuity through a commitment to the group for the entirety of the poverty reduction strategy (20 years), with long terms held by each cohort (four to five years for the first cohort). This process also includes thorough onboarding to build rapport and to collaboratively create the code of conduct and safer spaces agreement.

You can learn more about Toronto's Lived Experience Advisory Group **here**[30].

CASE STUDY: NEW WESTMINSTER DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ANTI-RACISM FRAMEWORK

The **DEIAR (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism) Framework**[31] is intended to be a starting point for culture shift that aims to work towards equity and a better world for all.

The development of the DEIAR Framework was guided by a steering committee of staff at the City of New Westminster, together with the Mayor and Council.

The DEIAR framework has five steps (see Figure 1). Listening, learning and reflecting are important throughout all steps.

Figure 1. Steps in the DEIAR framework.

The Framework has four goals and seven action areas.

Goals:

- Inclusive public service: To ensure diverse, inclusive, and equitable access to and benefit of, municipal services, programs, and facilities.

- Safe, respectful and inclusive work environment: To have a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace free of harassment, discrimination and systemic barriers.

- Equitable employment: To attract and retain a skilled workforce that reflects the diverse residents of the municipality.

- Inclusive decision-making: To ensure that decision-making is based on diverse, inclusive, equitable, and anti-racist policies, plans, practices, and measures.

Action areas:

- Leadership and accountability

- Building capacity

- Policy and practice

- Staff engagement and communications

- HR policies and practice

- Education and training

- Monitoring and evaluation

"Frameworks, policies, and trainings themselves will not lead to an equitable environment. There is a need for people to bring a relational, compassionate, humble approach to doing this work. The ability and space to listen, learn, and reflect is necessary before responding with potential "solutions". In addition, there is a need to make room for new ways of doing things which may mean giving up old ways of doing things and letting go of the status quo."

—*New Westminster Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism Framework*

Some external (community) facing actions within the Framework include "embed gender-based analysis plus (GBA+) throughout the organization", developing an equity lens tool, an equity-focused audit and an accessibility strategy.

Council motion and staff report examples

A sample Council motion to direct staff to embed equity in the work of your municipality has been included. It incorporates an outline of some of the steps your municipality might consider actioning based on the recommendations outlined in this guide.

In addition, a fictional staff report on a municipal climate action plan has been included to help contextualize how social equity can be included across multiple plans and strategies in your city.

Sample council motion: embedding equity at your city

INTRODUCTION

[This section should include information about local municipal context (e.g., what you know about the need for equity in the community) and the reason for this motion.]

BACKGROUND

[This section should include detailed and contextual information supporting the reasons for the motion (e.g., through engagement and data collection activities you've discovered how different communities are impacted because of a lack of institutional awareness or approaches to embedding equity in your work).]

MOTION TEXT

Whereby the [insert municipal name] understands that social inequities exist and they disproportionately impact the most marginalized residents in our community, we propose the following actions to create a more equitable city for all residents of [City name]:

- **Create an equity office** to oversee internal and external activities of the [City name] to embed equity in our daily work.

- **Conduct an organization-wide assessment** to determine what social equity issues are most pressing in your city.

  - Use this assessment to determine content for training programs and to support identification of targets and metrics to report out on the implementation of embedding equity in our work.

- **Pilot a project using an equity methodology** to guide staff in operationalizing equity in programs, services and policy development.

- **Establish mandatory training programs** through our [insert name of relevant human resources department], informed by the outcomes of the organization-wide assessment, to address gaps in knowledge and awareness about equity and make training available to all staff levels of the organization as well as Council.

- **Establish a community of practice** with internal change teams with representation from each department to help support the work of the equity office.

  - Communities of practice can also help identify new and more inclusive and equitable ways of doing things that are more respectful of our relationships with community members and responsive to their needs.

- **Identify targets and metrics**, based on the outcomes of the organizational-wide assessment, to measure our success at embedding equity in our work.

  - Establish regular reporting schedules to senior leadership and Council about our implementation efforts.

- **Establish terms of reference and create advisory committees** composed of a diversity of community members across race, age, gender and ability.

- **Ensure annual departmental and municipal budgets provide sufficient financial resources** to support equity efforts across the organization.

- **Create [or update] our public engagement framework** to ensure we are reaching all groups impacted by our work. The framework should also address:

  - Paying stipends or honoraria to participants for their time and knowledge,

  - Reducing and eliminating barriers to participation (e.g., childcare, transportation, access to technology, etc.),

  - Making commitments to reporting back on what we heard and how that information is being used and included in project outcomes.

- **Create an equity framework** to guide the equity work of [City name].

Sample staff report template – climate action plan

Using the fictional city of Hemlock, British Columbia's Climate Action Plan, the following template outlines how city staff can report to Council on how a project responds to and embeds equity.

To: **Date:**

From: **File #:**

Subject:

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve the Carbon Free Hemlock Report.

BACKGROUND

In 2016, Mayor Diana Hu signed the Hemlock Climate Mitigation Commitment, pledging to make Hemlock carbon neutral by 2050, and asked the Hemlock Green Ribbon Commission (GRC) to establish a Working Group to support the City in the development of strategies to achieve carbon neutrality. In response to the Mayor's request, the GRC collaborated with the Institute for Sustainable Energy at Hemlock University to develop Carbon Free Hemlock, a long-term framework that also supports short- and medium-term actions.

To ensure meaningful and actionable outcomes, we looked across scales and considered opportunities and challenges associated with specific actions at the city, provincial and regional levels. We also addressed disparities in communities' capacity both to mitigate climate damages and to benefit from the transition to a carbon-neutral city.

Many communities experience climate change on a local level and have come up with innovative solutions to manage daily impacts. Marginalized communities are exposed to the greatest risks from new action taken to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. They also have the most to gain from those actions.

Members of marginalized communities often struggle to find a seat at decision-making tables because of a wide variety of barriers, from financial to institutional. Hemlock staff sought to elevate the voices of impacted communities at decision-making tables, and in community-government partnerships.

We provide an overview of the process, outcomes and our learnings in this report.

PROCESS

The Carbon Free Hemlock Report assessed policy and existing technology options to decarbonize Hemlock's buildings, transportation, waste and energy sectors by 2050. The report presents pathways to carbon neutrality for the four sectors, as well as a framework to approach carbon offsets. The report includes a companion social equity report and sector-specific technical reports.

The final Carbon Free Hemlock Report includes specific actions under "Designing for Equity" for each policy in the Plan.

Carbon Free Hemlock Report

The Carbon Free Hemlock Report engagement framework was developed through a community-driven process where leaders of frontline communities developed the goals and guided the priority areas for climate action based on community values and climate justice concerns.

1. RESEARCH

We conducted a detailed analysis of the social equity implications of the pathways to carbon neutrality, including in each of the City's key emissions sectors – buildings, transportation, waste and energy – and identified how intentional policy design can avoid unintended consequences and use the City's emissions reduction strategies to address historical social inequities.

2. ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement efforts focused on building partnerships with community organizations, supporting and investing in community leadership development, collaborating on co-created translated climate communications materials, conducting youth workshops and building capacity both internally and externally around community-driven climate policy-making.

A Climate Equity Community Task Force was convened. The task force included 24 people representing many different frontline communities, including Black, Indigenous and people of colour (BIPOC), immigrants and refugees, people living with low incomes, communities experiencing disproportionate pollution exposure and other climate-vulnerable groups, women and gender non-conforming, LGBTQ2S+, those with existing health issues (like asthma and heart disease), people with limited English skills, people with disabilities and those experiencing pregnancy.

This Climate Equity Community Task Force was responsible for developing the goals and guiding the priority areas for individual climate actions based on community values and climate justice concerns. Orientation for the Task Force was delivered in two-parts:

The first meeting focused on getting to know the participants and staff, as well as establishing shared understanding of the group's role and the expected outcomes. Because participants were not expected to have a background in climate change, staff

provided an overview of both the scientific context and the policy framework for large-scale carbon emission reduction.

From there, the group used the Targeted Universalism framework as a guide to create their own Equity Alignment Tool. Staff adapted to the needs of the group and redesigned the engagement process to be more responsive to the conversations the community wanted and needed to have. This also meant extending the review time for the Task Force to ensure they had enough time to digest information and provide feedback on it.

The Task Force met bi-monthly over two years, using an interactive, collaborative visioning process that valued long-term and transformative relationships, acknowledged power dynamics, worked to remove barriers to participation (e.g., we provided transit passes, child minding, translation and interpretation services, meals, etc.) and compensated community members for their time and expertise.

The Task Force defined three principles to guide our work:

- **Avoid unintended consequences.** The selection and design of specific initiatives require careful evaluation to avoid unintended consequences.

- **Intentional design.** An intentional design to promote equity was made with awareness that socially vulnerable communities have the most to gain from action taken to reach carbon neutrality and are simultaneously exposed to the greatest risks.

- **Inclusivity.** This means that socially vulnerable communities have meaningful participation in decision-making, policy planning and design, implementation, evaluation and an enduring role as these policies evolve over time.

The task force developed recommendations on climate actions and priorities across the Carbon Free Hemlock Report with a focus on climate equity that recognizes agency for frontline communities, mitigates environmental injustices, ensures equitable distribution of environmental benefits and recognizes intersections with other social issues.

3. OUTCOMES

Community Climate Profile

We created a community climate profile that looked at factors of inequity across Hemlock and mapped them to visually identify where different groups of people are experiencing climate inequities. Indicators in the community climate profile included:

- **Climate exposure:** extreme heat days, air quality, sea level rise

- **Socioeconomic factors:** lower-income households, new immigrants, non-English speakers, racialized residents, single parent households and renters

- **Adaptive capacity:** tree canopy, impervious cover, age of buildings, access to low-emission transportation

The community climate profile helped to identify climate inequities, prioritize climate actions and will be key in implementation and budgeting moving forward.

Equity Alignment Tool

As part of our evaluation of potential climate actions, the Task Force helped develop, and staff used, an Equity Alignment Tool to evaluate and prioritize strategies and actions to reduce GHG emissions. Strategies were examined to determine their implicit equity considerations, challenges and opportunities.

The Equity Alignment Tool looks at five dimensions of equity:

A. **Structural.** When we talk about structural equity (institutions), think of polices, practices, programs, cultural representations, and other norms of the City as an organization that perpetuate inequity.

B. **Procedural.** When we talk about procedural equity (agency and power), think about the degree of involvement around decision making you are giving to communities who are impacted (especially disproportionately impacted) by your work (policies, strategies, regulations, etc.).

C. **Distributional.** When we talk about distributional equity (distribution of resources, financial or otherwise), we are talking about the costs (both literally and figuratively) and the burdens, benefits and rights that are derived from policies, strategies, regulations, etc.

D. **Transgenerational.** When we talk about transgenerational equity we are looking at impacts across generations. This speaks to the responsibility we all have to move forward with decisions that do not cause harm for future generations. Transgenerational equity ensures that those who are currently benefiting from the service are paying for its upkeep versus placing the financial burden on future generations.

E. **Redress.** Redress looks at the previous harm caused, analyzes it, takes accountability for it and repairs the harm and relationship with affected people and communities.

Emissions Policy Areas

In the Report we provide a detailed analysis of the current social equity issues in each of the City's key emissions sectors – buildings, transportation, waste and energy – and identify how intentional policy design can avoid unintended consequences and use the City's emissions reduction strategies to address historical social inequities.

As an example, we provide findings of equity considerations and barriers for five dimensions of equity for building retrofits using the Equity Alignment Tool in Table 1.

Table 1. Equity alignment for building energy retrofits

Dimension of Equity	Considerations	Response
Structural	• How did your understanding of structural inequity (i.e. historical and current lack of opportunities, access to resources, etc. for equity -deserving groups within the systems and the City) inform the development of the project/policy/program, etc.? • In what ways does the project/policy/program, etc. challenge structural causes of inequities? • Does the project/policy/program, etc. acknowledge and/or address harm that has been done to marginalized communities? If so, how?	We learned that: 16,183 of Hemlock's 70,000 buildings are in renter-occupied, multifamily homes in census tracts with a median household income below Hemlock's median household income. These are classified here as "harder to retrofit." This classification is based on the assumption that the retrofit of a residential building can be represented by three factors: household income; type of ownership, or agency, (renter vs. owner); and type of building (single vs. multi-unit). Harder = renter occupied, multifamily unit and less than median income. Easier = owner occupied, single-family unit and greater than median income. Lower income neighborhoods have greater concentrations of buildings that pose obstacles for retrofitting than the wealthier neighbourhoods. Many socially vulnerable families live in buildings that are harder to retrofit. The ones who need it most are the hardest to reach. Buildings with the fewest barriers to retrofit are concentrated predominantly in middle- and high-income neighborhoods. Existing retrofit and electrification programs often take the form of rebates, and are limited to owners who live in single-detached houses who have the income to spend on retrofits up-front. This results in government spending - and the co-benefits of retrofits (such as a healthier and more comfortable living environment) - going towards the least vulnerable people.

(Table Continued)

Dimension of Equity	Considerations	Response
Procedural	• How were community members traditionally excluded from planning processes engaged with the project/policy/program, etc.? • How was the community included in decision-making? Where did they have decision-making abilities (e.g., community meetings, key actor groups, increased outreach, etc.)? • How did the project/policy/program, etc. build community capacity and power in communities most impacted by inequities? • How did the project/policy/program, etc. build on my department's capacity to engage with and include communities most impacted by inequities (e.g., improved leadership opportunities, advisory committees, targeted community meetings, key actor[1] groups, increased outreach, etc.)?	In the past we conducted broad public engagement via open houses where residents had to come to us. This limited our contact across the community to the people who were able to attend events. We created a frontline task force of community members with lived experience across intersectional identities, provided them with training on content, and worked with them to develop goals and priority areas for individual climate actions based on community values and climate justice concerns. We provided materials in four different languages in addition to English and had interpreters available at all meetings to help support full participation of the task force members. We provided transit passes for the duration of the engagement activities and provided meals and child minding services at all meetings. Task force members were also paid a living wage (currently $25 per hour for Hemlock). We hosted a celebration at the end of the project with the Task Force to thank them for their work on the project. Each member was also gifted a blanket from the [host] Nation. We will continue to check in with the Task Force members to see how the implementation of the climate actions are impacting their lives and we will work to adjust where there are negative impacts.

(Table Continued)

Dimension of Equity	Considerations	Response
Distributional	• What communities are most impacted by the project/policy/program, etc.? Who will benefit from it? Who may be burdened by it? (e.g., racialized communities, low-income communities, people with disabilities, people experiencing homelessness, newcomer communities, LGBTQ2S+ community, women, single-parent families, etc.) • How did the project/policy/program, etc. prioritize communities that have been traditionally misserved or underserved? • If applicable, how did the project/policy/program, etc. create contracting opportunities for those who have been marginalized, racialized people, women and emerging small businesses?	We pursued policies to develop retrofit pathways specific to those 16,183 households, including financing solutions accessible to low-income households and pathways for renters and multi-unit residential buildings. This will include: • Incorporating on-bill repayment or low-cost financing • Establishing requirements for developers to incorporate energy efficiency and green features in affordable housing • Streamlining rebates and incentivize in-unit measures to overcome split incentives • Integrating direct installation and rebate programs • Providing a one-stop shop for program services • Doing outreach and education specific to low-income households and renters • We established a working group of skilled residents across those households to identify specific areas of concern in each building and are hiring in-community residents with expertise to conduct the retrofits.
Transgenerational	• In what ways did the project/policy/program, etc. centre equity for future generations? • In what ways did the project/policy/program, etc. solve a problem today that will not be passed onto future generations?	This building retrofit program will result in a healthier and more comfortable living environment for all residents, especially those who are more marginalized. These health and living quality benefits will continue for future generations.
Redress	• In what ways was harm caused previously? • How did we repair that harm (e.g., through taking accountability, material change, reparations)?	Previously we were seeing an overrepresentation of lower-income, renter households experiencing health and mental health issues due to the quality of their indoor living environments. Hemlock has formally apologized to these communities and, with the Climate Action Plan's policies on building energy retrofits, we are prioritizing communities who carry the heaviest home energy burden so they suffer no longer.

4. WHAT WE LEARNED

We share the following lessons from this project with hopes that other Hemlock departments and jurisdictions can learn from our work.

A. **Include socially vulnerable communities in decision-making.** Enable historically, persistently and systemically oppressed communities to have influence over critical decisions and processes. Ensure they have access to information and resources, and provide opportunities for these communities to contribute more fully and effectively.

B. **Set priorities in the context of inequities in policies.** Prioritizing the order and timing of policy implementation in ways that seek to avoid potential pitfalls is necessary to reduce negative impacts on historically, persistently and systemically oppressed communities and all Hemlockians.

C. **Focus workforce development efforts on job quality.** The benefits of job creation are enhanced by a commitment to job quality, including living wages and benefits and job health and safety standards, to ensure that workforce development is beneficial for all Hemlockians.

D. **Training today and tomorrow's workforce for green careers.** Hemlockians need green career training throughout their career pathways, from high school to four-year colleges and continuing education, that provides the new skills and knowledge to capitalize on the opportunities that arise on the path to carbon neutrality.

E. **Sustainability education for all.** Public outreach and education to provide all Hemlockians with the knowledge, skills and opportunities needed for sustainability are critical to successfully and inclusively implementing carbon-neutral strategies.

F. **Avoid displacement.** Intentional design and inclusive decision-making will avoid or reduce the displacement of Hemlock's most marginalized and oppressed households and communities.

G. **Increase access to credit and community wealth.** Action that builds community wealth and makes gains in individual household wealth accessible to as many Hemlockians as possible will increase access to energy efficiency and clean fuels and electricity.

H. **Allow for/prioritize neighbourhood planning for equity and sustainability.** Climate action is a prime opportunity to leverage changes in neighbourhoods' design to address historical disparities and to build the capacity of historically, persistently and systemically oppressed communities.

I. **Address historical disparities in transportation equity.** Changes in the transportation sector are an opportunity to make public, private and active modes of transit work—and work better—for all Hemlockians, particularly those facing barriers to access.

J. **Improve energy security and access to clean energy.** Access to affordable, clean fuels and electricity reduces GHG emissions and has wide-ranging benefits to historically, persistently, and systemically oppressed communities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

[Where the funding is coming from in the city's budget, government grant, or what the recommendation will cost and how it will be funded.]

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

[Identification of how the work aligns with the City's strategic plan.]

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN ALIGNMENT

[Identification of how the work aligns with the City's OCP.]

OPTIONS

[Defines what council's options are with the recommendations.]

APPROVALS

[This is about who internally approved the staff report to council.]

Positionality statements

YWCA City Shift engaged Lisa Moffatt and Alix Krahn of Resilience Planning to support writing this resource guide and it's important to be transparent about their social positionality as writers of this resource.

Lisa Moffatt is a settler who is a white, straight, cis woman, and currently abled. She is of Irish and English ancestry, and was born and raised on the territories of the Beothuk People and the ◁σᓯᐷᐯ (Anishinaabeg) Peoples (what are colonially known as St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador and Ottawa, Ontario). She currently resides on the self-governing territories of the ɬəʔamɛn (Tla'amin) First Nation.

Alix Krahn is a white, trans, queer settler with ancestry from Germany, England, Ireland and the Netherlands. They were born and grew up as a settler in amiskwaciwâskahikan in Treaty 6 territory, and has lived on the territories of xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skxwú7mesh and səl̓ilwətaʔɬ since 2014.

Lisa and Alix live, work, and learn with gratitude to the self-governing territories of the ɬəʔamɛn First Nation, and the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skxwú7mesh, and səl̓ilwətaʔɬ Nations.

RESILIENCE PLANNING

Guide reviewers

This guide has been reviewed by City Shift's Community Advisory Council and Strategic Advisory Council.

We would like to specifically thank our policy subcommittee members for providing guidance and feedback on the guide: Amina Yasin, Fancy C. Poitras, Katie Fitzmaurice, Mandy Bhullar, Miley Leong, Rebekah Mahaffey and Renee de St. Croix.

We would also like to express our thanks to the following Community Advisory Council members for acting as reviewers: Beatriz Salinas, Kaiya Jacob, Kimberley Wong, Sara Sagaii and Thivya Shanmuganathan.

Endnotes

[1] Aboriginal title refers to the inherent Aboriginal right to land or a territory. The Canadian legal system recognizes Aboriginal title as a sui generis, or unique collective right to the use of and jurisdiction over a group's ancestral territories. This right is not granted from an external source but is a result of Aboriginal peoples' own occupation of and relationship with their home territories as well as their ongoing social structures and political and legal systems. As such, Aboriginal title and rights are separate from rights afforded to non-Aboriginal Canadian citizens under Canadian common law. Source: UBC. Indigenous Foundation.arts.ubc.ca. Available online: <**https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/aboriginal_title/**>. Further, Aboriginal rights are inherent and protected under the Constitution Act, 1982. Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, affirmed that aboriginal title, and the rights that go along with it, exist whether or not there is a treaty. Source: BC Treaty Commission. Available online: <**https://www.bctreaty.ca/aboriginal-rights**>

[2] Hogan's Alley Society **https://www.hogansalleysociety.org/**

[3] Equality, Equity and Justice Source: Tony Ruth from Maeda (2019) **https://onlinepublichealth.gwu.edu/resources/equity-vs-equality/**

[4] Four of these dimensions of equity (structural, procedural, distributional, transgenerational) are from the Urban Sustainability Directors' Network (USDN) definition of equity. See: USDN. A Guidebook on Equitable Clean Energy Program Design for Local Governments and Partners. (September 2018). Available from: **https://www.usdn.org/products-equity.html**. The fifth dimension (redress) was developed by Resilience Planning with inspiration from Dr. Destiny Thomas and Thrivance Group's work on Reparative Planning: **https://thrivancegroup.com/reparativeplanning**

[5] Time Magazine Article by Katy Steinmetz: She Coined the Term 'Intersectionality' Over 30 Years Ago. Here's What It Means to Her Today **https://time.com/5786710/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectionality/**

[6] Centre for Global Inclusion. (2021) Global Diversity Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks: Standards for Organizations Around the World. For more information: **https://centreforglobalinclusion.org/**

[7] Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) **https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-analysis-plus.html**

[8] Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) **https://chatrlab.files.wordpress.com/2022/12/gba-plus-report-reach-cities-2.pdf**

[9] Targeted Universalism **https://belonging.berkeley.edu/targeted-universalism**

[10] Racial Equity Toolkit **https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/RSJI/RacialEquityToolkit_FINAL_August2012.pdf**

[11] For a detailed history of how zoning contributed to segregation, consider reading *The Colour of Law* (Richard Rothstein, 2017) and *Fight the power: Redressing displacement and building a just city for Black lives in Vancouver* (Stephanie Allen, 2019).

[12] City of Edmonton. (July 2021) Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative: GBA+ & Equity Toolkit Story Document. Available online from: **https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/urban_planning_and_design/equity-and-the-zoning-bylaw**

[13] Equity and the Zoning Bylaw **https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/urban_planning_and_design/equity-and-the-zoning-bylaw**

[14] For more information, visit the White Supremacy Culture website: **https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/**

SCAN FOR DIGITAL ENDNOTES

[15] Bayard Love and Deena Hayes-Greene of the Racial Equity Institute **https://racialequityinstitute.org/**

[16] Yellowhead Institute **https://yellowheadinstitute.org/**

[17] Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA). (July 2021.) A Municipal Guide to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. Available from: **https://www.abmunis.ca/sites/default/files/Advocacy/Programs_Initiatives/WIC/a_municipal_guide_to_the_trcs_calls_to_action_july_2021.pdf** Last accessed: October 6, 2022.

[18] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action **https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls_to_action_english2.pdf**

[19] The TRC Calls to Action in BC Municipalities **https://www.womentransformingcities.org/trc-calls-to-action**

[20] Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (2019, SBC, C.14). Retrieved from the BC laws website: **https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/19044**

[21] UN general Assembly. (2007). United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Retrieved from United Nations website: **https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf**

[22] Note: this information is taken directly from the Declaration On The Rights Of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan.

[23] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. Retrieved from government of British Columbia website: **https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls_to_action_english2.pdf**

[24] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (Indigenous Peoples). (n.d.) United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Retrieved from United Nations website: **https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html**

[25] Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act of Action Plan 2022-2027 **https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/ministries-organizations/ministries/indigenous-relations-reconciliation/declaration_act_action_plan.pdf**

[26] United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples **https://social.desa.un.org/issues/indigenous-peoples/united-nations-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples**

[27] City of Vancouver's UNDRIP Strategy **https://council.vancouver.ca/20221025/documents/p1.pdf**

[28] National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Website. Available online: **https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/**. Last accessed: December 6, 2022.

[29] Calls for Justice **https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/**

[30] Lived Experience Advisory Group — Poverty Reduction Strategy **https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accountability-operations-customer-service/long-term-vision-plans-and-strategies/poverty-reduction-strategy/lived-experience-advisory-poverty-reduction/**

[31] City of New Westminster. (May 2022.) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Framework. Available from: **https://pub-newwestcity.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=10961**. (See pp. 280-311 of the agenda for the June 27, 2022 Council meeting.) Last accessed: October 6, 2022.

SCAN FOR DIGITAL ENDNOTES

Connect with us

✉ cityshift@ywcavan.org

⦿ @ywcavan

f @YWCAMetroVancouver

🐦 @YWCAVAN

🌐 ywcavan.org/ywca-city-shift