

WAVE

Women's Advocacy Voice of Edmonton

Catalyst Towards Equity





MESSAGE FROM OUTGOING WAVE CHAIR, JACKIE FOORD

In its second year of operations, WAVE has continued to evolve and has extended its reach in the City of Edmonton.

This past year WAVE was focused on our strategic priorities. We advised the City on the Employee Child Care Policy and provided input on the long-term Transit Safety Strategy. Our public engagement included an event to mark International Women's Day and over 300 people attended the Women's Symposium in October. The entire committee took part in gender lens training and we made progress on the gender scorecard that will be used to measure the City's commitment to gender equality. WAVE also heard from a variety of community groups who taught us about issues of importance to them and explained why they are important to all of us. For WAVE this was a year of new learnings and a renewed commitment to serving the women of our city.

This is my last report as Chair of WAVE and I am grateful to have been a part of this important initiative. The women who serve on this committee are determined and thoughtful leaders. Their commitment to the work of WAVE and the women of Edmonton is inspiring. The support of City Council and the City administration is important and will ensure that the work of WAVE will result in a better city for all Edmontonians.

Jackie Foord
Chair

Who Is WAVE?

WAVE is comprised of 15 community volunteers from diverse backgrounds and experiences to provide City Council with advice on affairs relevant to municipal jurisdiction. In February 2014, the Women's Advocacy Voice of Edmonton Committee Bylaw was approved by City Council and the WAVE Committee was formally established in spring 2014.



Our Mandate is to:

- » make recommendations to Council about women's gender-based issues and opportunities in relation to Council policies, priorities, and decisions;
- » promote leadership to empower Edmonton women to fully participate in civic life; and
- » research and provide information on resources about women's gender-based issues and opportunities in Edmonton.

WAVE DIRECTLY SUPPORTS EDMONTON'S WOMEN'S INITIATIVE

Edmonton's Women's Initiative is a City of Edmonton initiative, supported and endorsed by City Council, which fosters and promotes equality, opportunity, access to services, justice, and inclusion for women in Edmonton. Among the first of its kind in Canada, it is helping to ensure the unique perspectives of women and girls are included in the conversations that shape the city.

WAVE and Women@theCity are the two key pillars under City Council's Women Initiative. WAVE is a community-based committee and Women@theCity is a committee of City staff.

The work of WAVE is an important piece in creating a movement for gender equality. WAVE elevates the conversation around the importance of all people working together to share the responsibility for a more just and equitable society. WAVE's work in policy reform, supporting women's leadership, and raising awareness and deepening knowledge about gender issues is critical. The City of Edmonton should be commended for its leadership in this area.

Emily, Outgoing WAVE team member



WHY WAVE AND THE WOMEN'S INITIATIVE ARE IMPORTANT FOR OUR COMMUNITY:

WAVE and the Women's Initiative significantly contribute to the struggle to eliminate systemic inequalities in Edmonton through participation in public decision-making. Gender is socially and culturally ingrained. It impacts both men and women, is a crucial marker of social inequality and an indicator of social progress that intersects with other social categories such as race, class, ability, sexual orientation, etc.

Gender inequity is a complex system of personal and social relations of domination and power through which women and men experience different access to power and material resources.

The gender lens provides the critical "spectacles" to bring things to focus. Through one lens of the spectacles, you see the participation, needs, and realities of women. Through the other lens, you see the participation, needs, and realities of men. By adopting a gender lens, WAVE seeks to address the gender inequities women experience and highlight the importance of women's contributions. Empowering women is important work that appreciates the crucial roles women play within and outside the family.



OUR DEDICATED WAVE TEAM FOR THE TERM 2015-2016

Jacqueline Foord (chair), Angelica Hernandez (vice chair), Claudette Rain, Cristina Stasia, Dawn Newton, Dilara Yegani, Emily Dietrich, Hendriatta Wong, Hersharon Sandu, Jennifer Jennax, Meghana Valupadas, Meheret Worku, Mia Norrie, Philomina Okeke-Ihejirika, and Sandra Woitas.

Thanks to outgoing members Emily Dietrich, Jacqueline Foord and Hendriatta Wong for their valuable contributions.

Congratulations and welcome to new members Debra Jakubec, Elyssa Teslyk, and Joyce LaBriola who joined WAVE in May 2016. They were selected from among 53 applications for three vacant positions.

City Council Sponsors

Mayor Don Iveson

Councillor Bev Esslinger

Women's Initiative Project Support Team

Marian Bruin

Kaylin Betteridge

Brenda Wong

What WAVE Accomplished in Year 2

1. WAVE'S STRATEGIC PLAN

In winter 2016, WAVE began developing a three-year Strategic Plan. Six goals were developed for the next three years and an annual work plan is being finalized.

- GOAL 1:** Apply an intersectional gender lens to policy and issues as well as provide recommendations to City Council and City Departments.
- GOAL 2:** Promote leadership opportunities for women.
- GOAL 3:** Communicate to and engage with Edmontonians on issues related to women's gender based issues.
- GOAL 4:** Increase the number of women running for City Council.
- GOAL 5:** Conduct research to ensure decisions are evidence-based.
- GOAL 6:** Employ best governance and organizational practices in our work.

2. WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK PAGE AND TWITTER PRESENCE)

WAVE's online presence continues to grow. WAVE members and women in the community began writing blog posts in the fall of 2015 and have contributed a total of nine blog posts to the Women's



Initiative website on a variety of topics, from leadership, to local politics, to body image, to safety on transit.

Social media engagements continue to grow rapidly as well.

In 2015 we had 2,476 fans on Facebook and as of April 2016 we have 5,487 fans. Twitter saw an increase to 1,814 follows as of April 2016, up from 629 in 2015.

3. GENDER LENS ON CITY POLICIES

Three policy areas were selected to support WAVE's mandate of recommending women's gender-based issues and opportunities to Council. They were Transit Safety, Child Care, and Poverty.

Other accomplishments included developing a process to review policies, recommend changes and identify policy priorities; policy review training for all WAVE members; and the creation of a WAVE policy data bank to identify related skills, interests, and expertise of committee members.

TRANSIT SAFETY

The Policy Working Group identified transit safety concerns; met with City's Transit staff; and presented transit safety information and recommendations to Council about stakeholder feedback, personal impacts of transit safety, examples of successful transit safety plans adopted by other major cities, and statistical information emphasizing the importance of understanding and incorporating women's needs into transit plans.

WAVE's recommendations were approved by Council, which resulted in a Transit Safety Committee comprised of Edmonton Transit, WAVE, and other community stakeholders. That work resulted in:

- » improved safety signage and security intervention on buses and trains;
- » sexual harassment training for transit staff/peace officers;
- » anti-harassment campaign;
- » better reach and identification of all women of Edmonton in online surveys; and
- » increased awareness of the high incidence of sexual harassment occurring to women while using transit.



HERSHARON

“ My involvement with WAVE's projects such as working on the ETS transit policy allowed me to see how crucial it is to have committees as diverse as ours look over City policy. Working with WAVE gave me a platform from which to share the voice and perspective of other young immigrant women and girls and helped me realize the importance of speaking out. Personally, working with WAVE has made me confident, outgoing, and fearless. It has given me the opportunity to learn leadership from some of the most accomplished leaders in the city.

Moreover, working with WAVE has allowed me to gain a sense of ownership in Edmonton. It speaks strongly that the more a person is involved in civic and municipal life, the stronger their connection with the City and its people. It fosters a feeling of community in Edmonton as a whole! ”

COUNCILLOR BEV ESSLINGER

“WAVE has demonstrated great value bringing the gender lens perspective to City Council, in particular this year to the Transit Safety Conversation and the Employee Child Care Policy.”

CHILD CARE

WAVE played an important role in advocating for access to quality, affordable, dependable, and inclusive child care and supporting the development of an Employee Child Care Policy for City employees and others. The City's Child Care Team worked with WAVE to develop a policy that was approved by City Council in March 2016. WAVE was instrumental in the following recommendations:

- » including criteria to review child care requirements when the City is retrofitting a building and when leased space is about to expire;
- » clarifying diversity to include opening subsidized spaces to accommodate a range of needs;
- » preference for not-for-profit operators; and
- » addressing the need to accommodate children with special needs and from special groups (i.e., indigenous and newcomers).

4. WAVE AND WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

The Leadership Working Group hosted a panel discussion at the Symposium to give an “Insiders’ View” of a political campaign with particular emphasis on the logistics of a campaign, from establishing the campaign team to getting people out to vote strategy.

In support of the Ward 12 By-election, all candidates were invited to provide written responses to the question, “What are the key issues facing women in Edmonton and how do you plan to address them if you are elected to City Council?” Written responses were received from 15 candidates and posted on WAVE's website.

5.





WOMEN'S SYMPOSIUM WAS A BIG HIT!

On October 3rd, 2015, the third Edmonton Women's Symposium: Building Leadership & Community was held at Edmonton Coast Hotel. Over 400 women registered for this one-day conference, which brought together women from various business, political, community, and cultural backgrounds.

The Symposium's goal was to open up wider conversations on how women can find opportunities for leadership, engagement, and policy development through discussion on child care, poverty, transit safety and gender-based violence. Through target marketing and extensive outreach, WAVE ensured that symposium delegates included women from diverse backgrounds, including intercultural, indigenous, seniors, youth, and lower-income representation. By networking, learning, and sharing, WAVE and the City of Edmonton had an opportunity to really listen to local women and use their feedback in their next phase of work.

Other Symposium sessions and highlights included the keynote presentation by Mayor Don Iveson; sessions on Gender Lens Training, Leadership and Community, and Leadership and Career Advancement; Women in Words (two Poet Laureates); and a Closing Session with Sandra Woitas on "How You Can Make a Difference."

The Symposium evaluation indicated that 93% of the participants were satisfied with the Symposium and 84% of the participants felt that WAVE and Women's Initiative are making a difference. Women's Symposiums will continue to be offered as biennial events.



“I'm so happy to see the City throwing together a celebration for women to get together and network amongst each other. It promotes support amongst women and fosters a feeling of sisterhood I felt was lacking in my own life.”

Symposium attendee





6. WHAT DOES “GENDER LENS” MEAN?

The Gender Lens Working Group developed a Glossary of Working Terms, which is now posted on WAVE’s website, to promote better understanding of what terms such as feminism really mean. Work has been initiated on a Gender Scorecard to further understand the needs of women in Edmonton.

INTERSECTIONAL GENDER LENS TRAINING WAS A PRIORITY FOR WAVE

Workshops were offered for all Women@theCity and WAVE members, and three sessions were held in 2015/2016. Training was well received and fostered great discussion.

Two sessions were offered over the lunch hour for City Councillors’ Executive Assistants and Constituency Assistants.

Citizen Services’ Community Inclusion and Investment Branch coordinated a half-day Gender Lens Training Session for over 100 City Employees and are implementing lessons learned into their work.

7. WAVE WAS ACTIVE IN THE COMMUNITY!

To reach out to groups and people not effectively being reached through social media, WAVE and the Women’s Initiative engaged with school-age children through City Hall School and presented to seven elementary school classes and one high school leadership class. WAVE and the Women’s Initiative also engaged with 35 University of Alberta Students at the U of A’s International Development Week and approximately 30 immigrant women at the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN). Future engagements being planned include connecting with indigenous teens and women, continuing to work and partner with the EMCN and City Hall School, and meeting with new groups and communities as identified in the 2016/2017 work plan.

Two successful Empowering Women Leaders sessions were hosted at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Conference on June 5 and 8, 2015. Jackie Foord co-hosted the panel presentations with Councillor Esslinger. Other panelists included Marliiss Weber of Parodos Communications and representatives from Women@theCity, WAVE and the City of Edmonton.

MEGHANA

“As a young girl growing up in Edmonton, the WAVE committee gives me hope that our generation, and future generations, are taking the goal of gender equity seriously. There is so much potential in the world, and if we can encourage people to be more than stereotypes, more than stigmas, and more than statistics, we can unlock a world of possibility that will benefit everyone.”

WAVE and the Women's Initiative hosted an event to mark International Women's Day. The theme of this event was gender parity. WAVE's presence, support, and engagement in International Women's Day illustrates that the City of Edmonton is committed to hearing the voices of women and addressing the needs and challenges, as well as celebrating the successes. Over 200 people attended and hundreds made commitments to work to create gender parity in their lives and places of work.

OTHER EVENT HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDED:

- » Councillor Bev Esslinger provided welcoming remarks and presented City Council's 2016 International Women's Day Declaration to WAVE and Edmonton Transit.
- » Minister Stephanie McLean, Status of Women, brought greetings from the Province of Alberta.
- » Rachelle Venne from the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women spoke to the importance of creating a better society for all women and the injustices and inequity facing indigenous women in Canada.
- » Dr. Cristina Stasia, current WAVE member, provided an inspirational keynote about gender parity and its benefits for a more equitable workplace, community and household. All participants were challenged to move beyond talk to action to creating gender equity change.
- » Ten community organizations provided resource tables to showcase how they are supporting women and gender parity in Edmonton.



8. WAVE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY

Five agencies made presentations to WAVE and brought their issues to the attention of WAVE members, seeking advice. WAVE listened and responded to the organizations with ideas and suggestions.

WOMEN'S INITIATIVE EDMONTON

Tuesday, March 8
10 a.m.
City Room, City Hall

International Women's Day

We have much to celebrate, but more work is required to achieve gender parity.

Join us for an inspiring event with keynote speaker **Dr. Cristina Stasia** and make a **Pledge for Parity!**

International Women's Day is a global celebration of the inspirational economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future.

Admission is Free

www.edmonton.ca/women
f/womensinitiativeedmonton | e/equalityyeg

Edmonton

Where Will Our Focus Be Next Year?

SYMPOSIUM 2017

A planning committee for the next Women's Symposium, tentatively scheduled for fall 2017, will be forming in fall 2016. Engagements throughout the year leading up to the symposium will inform the topics and focuses of the event.

LEADERSHIP/2017 MUNICIPAL ELECTION

WAVE has identified increasing the number of women running in the 2017 Municipal election as a priority. Work has begun to encourage more women to vote, voice their opinions with government representatives, volunteer on campaigns, and run for Council.

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS/PARTNERSHIPS

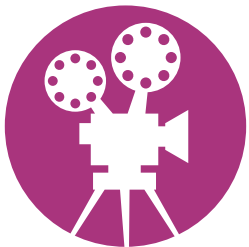
In addition to the engagements planned, WAVE has begun planning an event with the goal of bringing together other organizations with a similar mandate to encourage collaboration and coordination. WAVE also plans to further support the work of Women@theCity.

WAVE has identified key events, groups, and stakeholders to connect with in the 2016/2017 year and will continue to plan and reach out to increase their networks and partnerships.

WAVE HAS SELECTED FOUR POLICY AREAS FOR REVIEW NEXT YEAR:

- » Public Involvement
- » Agencies, Committees and Boards
- » Council Orientation/Training
- » Family and Community Support Services Program

Other work will include developing policy review guidelines (i.e., gender-neutral language, representation of diverse women, equity vs. equality, focusing on equal opportunity and access, not restricting specific gender either directly or indirectly).



SOCIAL MEDIA PLANS

In addition to the ongoing maintenance and presence on the website and social media, WAVE and the Women's Initiative are in the process of developing three short videos to explain why Edmonton has a Women's Initiative, "Feminism 101," and "What is Intersectionality?"

How WAVE Is Making a Difference



PHILOMINA

“Surrounded by a diversity of highly talented women, well rooted in various causes and the communities they serve, I have grown as a scholar, researcher, and community leader. WAVE has taught me many professional skills, exposed me to organizations and resource persons, and opened the door to a vast array of collaborations that enriches my teaching, research, and service to Edmonton’s communities.”



DILARA

“Being a catalyst to bring change and finding solutions to women’s challenges has been very rewarding. Working as a group of professionals with vast backgrounds, skills, and capabilities in a collaborative approach brings innovative new perspectives, maturity, and a wider scope to our thinking and ability to find solutions. Access to networks, resources, and knowledge has expanded for all WAVE members. Generational and cultural collaboration in the team has provided tremendous gains and experience for our individual development and building empathy across generations and cultures. Gaining knowledge of City practices and policies and working with many City personnel up to Council level has been very insightful and valuable for all of us individually and opened up opportunities to participate in different capacities of civic life in the future.”

HENDRIATTA

“The passion and dedication of the women on the WAVE committee is absolutely inspiring. We explore critical issues, recommend solutions, monitor progress, and work unitedly with the City of Edmonton as well as the community to tackle real issues and concerns that affect the lives of women and their families. Together, we are making Edmonton a greater home for women, men, and children from all walks of life.”



CRISTINA

“WAVE’s policy work has benefitted the community. An inclusive approach is maintained to ensure women of all ages, ethnicity, income levels, and sexual orientation are represented for decisions impacting the community at large. City managers and departments are better informed of women’s issues and challenges and equally prioritizing the needs of all Edmontonians into decision-making. Equitable access to services and opportunities versus equality (applying the same principles for all citizens) was emphasized to ensure unique needs are addressed.”