

WAVE: WOMEN'S ADVOCACY VOICE OF EDMONTON

Supporting Diversity and Inclusion

**YEAR 5 REPORT:
MAY 2018–APRIL 2019**

Citizen Services



Edmonton

Message from WAVE Chair, Sandra Woitas

"The WAVE Committee is excited about the year ahead as we further support leadership opportunities for women, continue to be a voice for women's needs and continue to support gender equity in Edmonton."

Sandra B. Woitas
Chair, Women's Advocacy Voice of Edmonton



In the #1 New York Times Bestseller, "Dear Girl" by Amy Krouse Rosenthal (2017), the author encourages young girls to find people like and unlike them to help them learn that colouring outside the lines is cool, too. It's really about unlikely friendships and the profound power that comes from building them. This certainly has been our experience in outreach activities in the community as we enrich our work.

WAVE enjoyed a busy and exciting year with many accomplishments, and we continue to champion and support women in Edmonton.

Some key highlights included the support of GBA+ training within the City of Edmonton and the fact that the GBA+ lens is being applied to services, plans and policies. We reached out to and were contacted by many diverse groups, such as the Edmonton Region Immigrant Employment Council Connector Program, SkirtsAFire and Africa Centre. We look forward to continuing to learn about their ideas, hear about what is important to them and find meaningful ways to partner with them.

WAVE's policy work has increased and is making an impact. Two examples include increased safety

with construction hoarding sites and increased funding and revised service principles to improve the Disabled Adult Transit Service (DATS). WAVE's profile continues to grow, and the group is becoming known as an important, credible resource to consult. I continue to be impressed with the skills, collaboration and work ethic of WAVE members. They are role models for how a supportive, high-performance team can operate.

As the year concludes, I'd like to thank our members for their significant contributions to WAVE and women in Edmonton. I would like to especially thank outgoing members Tanya Edison and Carrie Vos for their work in raising awareness of the needs of women working in the trades, engineering, technology and science sectors. We look forward to welcoming several new members to WAVE in 2019.

The WAVE Committee is excited about the year ahead as we further support leadership opportunities for women, continue to be a voice for women's needs and continue to support gender equity in Edmonton, which will benefit everyone!

Why is Edmonton's Women's Initiative Important?



"Wave represents the diversity of women across Edmonton and brings their perspectives forward in City policy development and decision-making to ensure women's voices are represented."

Councillor Bev Esslinger,
Sponsor of the Women's Initiative

The Edmonton Women's Initiative is a Council initiative that addresses gender equity through two programs, Women's Advocacy Voice of Edmonton (WAVE) and Women@theCity. WAVE is comprised of 15 community volunteers from diverse backgrounds and experiences who provide Edmonton City Council with advice on policy and affairs relevant to municipal jurisdiction. Women@theCity is a corporate program that brings together employees from across the corporation, focusing on information sharing, communication, networking opportunities and supporting the work of the City of Edmonton to be an inclusive employer for women.

The City of Edmonton affirms its commitment to municipal leadership on women's issues, engagement and leadership. Edmonton's Women's Initiative explores and advances these issues and opportunities by advocating on behalf of women in municipal life and providing leadership on gender-based issues. This Council initiative aims to foster and promote equality, opportunity, access to services, justice and inclusion for women in Edmonton. Among the first of its kind in Canada, the initiative is helping to ensure the unique perspectives of women and girls are included in the conversations that shape the city.

Who is WAVE?

WAVE is a key program under the Women's Initiative and is a community-based committee that reports directly to Edmonton City Council. In February 2014, the Women's Advocacy Voice of Edmonton (WAVE) 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 gender-based issues and opportunities in relation to Council policies, priorities and decisions
- promote leadership development to empower Edmonton women to fully participate in civic life
- research and provide information on resources about issues and opportunities for women in Edmonton



OUR DEDICATED WAVE TEAM 2018–2019

(Left to Right) Dilara Yegani, Tanya Edison, Beatrice Ghattuba, Kristina Midbo, Sandra Woitas (chair), Bailey Dawn Coty, Elyssa Teslyk, Meghana Valupadas (vice chair), Jennifer Jennax, Joyce LaBriola, Councillor Bev Esslinger, and Kourtney Boucher. Absent: Debra Jakubec, Hersharon Sandhu, Angelica Hernandez, Carrie Vos.

CITY COUNCIL SPONSORS

Mayor Don Iveson
Councillor Bev Esslinger

WOMEN'S INITIATIVE PROJECT SUPPORT TEAM, CITIZEN SERVICES, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Marian Bruin
Kaylin Betteridge
Brenda Wong

What WAVE Accomplished in 2018–2019

1 WAVE'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2019–2021

In 2018, WAVE developed its 2019–2021 strategic plan and the annual work plan was finalized. Six goals were identified:

GOAL 1

We will apply an intersectional gender lens to policy and issues and provide recommendations to City Council and City departments.

GOAL 2

We will promote leadership opportunities for women.

GOAL 3

We will see an increase in the number of women running for public office.

GOAL 4

We will communicate to and engage with Edmontonians on issues related to women.

GOAL 5

We will gather and analyse research to ensure decisions are evidence-based.

GOAL 6

We will employ best governance and organizational practices in our work.

Five ongoing WAVE Working Groups were established to implement the work plan: Executive, Engagement/ Communication, Leadership and Research, Policy, and a new Reconciliation focus area, each with strategic goals.

2 WAVE WORKING GROUP UPDATES

Executive Working Group

This working group interviewed and selected new members for the WAVE Committee in spring 2018. The executive team and administration provided an orientation package for new members on their roles and responsibilities, and new members were partnered with existing WAVE members to act as mentors.



Policy Working Group

During consultations at WAVE meetings this year, we provided feedback on nine City plans or initiatives and City Council reports. These included:

- GBA+ Strategy and Implementation (for City employees)
- LGBTQ2+
- Vision 2050
- Bus Redesign / Transit Strategy
- Disabled Adult Transit System (DATS)
- Diversity and Inclusion Framework
- Recruitment Process Update Council Report
- Civic census form (revised to be more inclusive and incorporate more diverse gender options)
- Vehicle for Hire Council Report



The Policy Working Group also reviewed and provided revisions on four policies:

- Accessibility and Universal Design C602
- Designing New Neighbourhoods C572
- Transit Service Standards C539
- Finalizing Construction Hoarding Standards for Building Permits C580

The WAVE Policy Working Group selected the Policy C580 Construction Hoarding for review in 2018. Using a GBA+ lens, it was clear that lighting, accessibility and signage expectations needed to be more clearly defined and regulated to avoid safety concerns at construction sites for women and the general public. Meetings and discussions with WAVE representatives, Safety Codes, Permits & Inspections and Network Operations determined that the best approach would be changes to the hoarding guidelines. To be more impactful, these new standards will be included within the City of Edmonton building permit process. When a construction project requires construction hoarding, these new standards will be outlined and checked when the hoarding is inspected. This is a more positive outcome for the public, as it is more enforceable and immediate, compared with making changes to the policy.

Research and Leadership Working Group

The Research and Leadership Working Group's mandate is to promote leadership development and empower Edmonton women to fully participate in civic life.

This year the working group reviewed and updated the Women's Initiative glossary of terms, which was then shared with the City Clerk's office and distributed to all civic agencies, boards and committees.

The Women's Leadership Award process and criteria was revised, with an intent to ensure that "everyday" women leaders who may not currently be in roles of leadership or serve as elected officials are included in the annual nomination process. WAVE oversees the award promotion, nomination and selection process.

Engage and Outreach Working Group

A key focus for the engagement and outreach working group continues to be outreach to the community, focusing on reaching targeted groups not fully aware of WAVE and its mandate. This year WAVE reached out and partnered with many diverse groups, such as Edmonton Next Gen, Pride Center and SkirtsAFire, to support or host various events.

WAVE created a database of junior high and high schools to whom it could offer presentations on leadership. To enhance engagement practices, the working group reviewed all symposium comments and feedback as well as the 94 Truth and Reconciliation calls to action.

The working group also coordinated the development of blogs for the Women's Initiative website and supported a new GBA+ video, which was finalized and released. This video provides general information about what GBA+ is and why it is important to the City of Edmonton.

Reconciliation Working Group

The September 18, 2018, WAVE committee meeting was hosted at the Amiskwaciy Academy. Elder Francis Whiskeyjack provided WAVE members with an orientation ceremony and information on Indigenous culture. The ceremony emphasized the importance Indigenous people place on people's relationship to nature and how that connects to Indigenous culture and protocol. The WAVE committee was extremely grateful for the opportunity to meet with Elder Francis Whiskeyjack and for this invaluable learning ceremony. As a result of this experience, WAVE established a new working group and has begun incorporating an Indigenous lens in its work.

This new working group will focus on applying and implementing plans to include cultural training for WAVE members, incorporating Indigenous messages in presentations, and engaging with Indigenous women's groups to foster and develop relationships.



Elder Francis Whiskeyjack and Sandra Waitas

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WAVE'S COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS

Social Media

Women's Initiative's social media accounts had a particularly strong performance in 2018. From February 1, 2018, to February 15, 2019, more than 70,000 people engaged directly with the Women's Initiative accounts, with an audience of nearly 1.6 million reached.

 **110,000**



Facebook saw a strong recovery this year. Due to a harsh political climate in 2016 and 2017, the Women's Initiative Facebook reach significantly declined. However, due to changes that Facebook has made as a company to increase trust, and a strategic approach to keep local audiences engaged, this year saw unprecedented growth in the monthly reach—frequently reaching 10 times the size of page audience every month, averaging 95,000 to 110,000, more than double last year's average monthly reach.

Facebook has been a very powerful platform for driving change-making conversations in the past year.

 **80,000**



Twitter is also performing well, with similar reach and a slightly larger audience than last year. Average monthly reach is 70,000 to 80,000 people/accounts, with some months topping 100,000. Twitter growth tends to be organic, with slow and steady increases. Qualitatively, some key champions have been developed on Twitter, both locally and nationally, and there is increased engagement from other advocacy groups who are sharing Women's Initiative messages on a broader stage.

Blogs

WAVE members and women in the community began writing blog posts on womensinitiativeedmonton.ca in the fall of 2015, and in 2018/2019 authored seven blog posts on a variety of topics. These blogs provide WAVE members, champions and other community leaders with a visible platform to share their ideas and stories and to generate dialogue about gender equality and women's leadership in Edmonton. These include:

- The ABCs of Volunteering on Agencies, Boards and Committees (Carrie Vos)
- Muriel Stanley Venne, Human Rights Defender (Women's Initiative)
- Technologists and the Princess Syndrome (Carrie Vos)
- Tailor-Made Learning and Creative Learners (Tanya Edison)
- 10 Effective Strategies for Enhancing Your Next Women's Empowerment Event (Anita Khakh)
- What's Privilege? (Hannah Tighe)
- Telling the Story of Alberta Settler Women's History through the Art of Marlena Wyman (Women's Initiative)

Presentations at WAVE meetings

A variety of organizations presented and exchanged learnings at WAVE Committee meetings this year, discussing a variety of women's needs, interests and potential collaborative opportunities to inform WAVE's policy work and its advisory role. They included the following:

- Alberta Women Entrepreneurs (AWE)
- Vision 2050
- Anti-Racism Strategy
- Ribbon Rouge (Rouge Foundation)
- Pros and Babes
- Edmonton Public Library
- City of Edmonton Citizen Services (Council Report on LGBTQ2+)
- Next Gen Men
- Edmonton Historian Laureate
- Disabled Adult Transit System (DATS)

Community Outreach

WAVE was active in the community in 2018–2019, connecting with over 2,000 people. By reaching out to various organizations and groups, we increased dialogue about and awareness of women's issues and concerns. These groups included:

- Concordia High School class
- MEAET event (Next Gen and Women's Initiative)
- UN Safe Cities for Women and Girls presentation to delegates
- Women's Initiative group at the Africa Centre
- City Hall School classes
- Pride Centre of Edmonton
- Edmonton Public Schools leadership classes

2018/2019 WAVE Participation and Support of Events

The Women's Initiative Project team and WAVE partner with, support and attend various diverse women's events to connect with the community and to promote awareness of the Women's Initiative.

- Women's March Forward YEG
- Blue Stockings Production, written by Jessica Swale and directed by Laura Ly (*Walterdale Theatre*)
- An Evening with Arlene Dickinson (*Edmonton Public Library*)
- Daughters Day
- Mogul Book Event (*Stantec*)
- UN Safe Cities for Women and Girls Conference (*United Nations*)
- Women's Initiative Scorecard Release Event (*Women's Initiative*)
- AfroQuiz
- International Women's Day (*Women's Initiative*)
- Gradual Rising of Women (GROW)
- Voice for the Voiceless: A Speaker Panel on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (*Edmonton Public Library*)
- Artists for Life
- Terra Centre Event
- Parity X Party Dashboard; Alberta 2019 (*ParityYEG*)
- Next Gen Career Development Event
- Beyond #MeToo: Equality for Women Event
- Origin of the Species play (*Northern Light Theatre*)
- Vital Signs Launch Event (*Edmonton Community Foundation*)
- Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism with Dr. Safiya Noble (*Edmonton Public Library*)
- The Represent Forum: Women's Edition (*Highlands/Norwood community*)

WAVE's Focus 2019–2020

Policy

- **Provide input** to the 2050 City Plan
- **Policies selected for review** in 2019–2020 are:
 - **C466** – Integration of Persons with Disability
 - **C509B** – Naming Development Areas, Parks, Municipal Facilities, Roads and Honorary Roads
 - **C581** – Open City Policy
 - **C438** – Social Housing Capital and Operating Subsidy

As well as **providing input on new city policies** currently being developed.

Leadership and Research

- Oversee and host annual **International Women's Day** event and the **Women's Leadership Award**.
- Develop a **communication plan** to encourage women to **become involved in the upcoming provincial election** through supporting women, voting, volunteering on campaigns and asking candidates questions.

Reconciliation

- Move forward on actions such as **cultural training, incorporating an Indigenous message in presentations, and a leadership event for Indigenous women.**

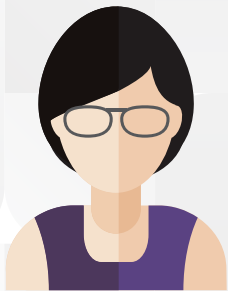
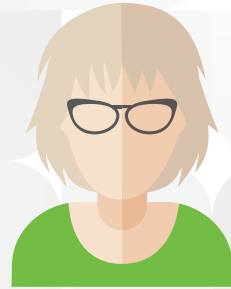
Engagement and Networking

- Support or host a **Women's Speaker Series** in partnership with community groups.

How WAVE is Making a Difference

*“Each one of the members at WAVE works hard at being **the woman who fixes another woman’s crown, without telling the world that it is crooked.** It’s certainly not about advancing one’s self. **It’s about advancing WAVE** and serving those who need our gifts, our leadership and our purpose. **That’s what makes a team.**”*

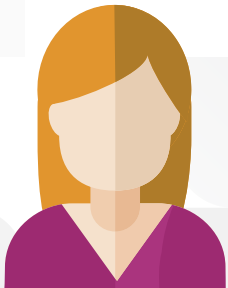
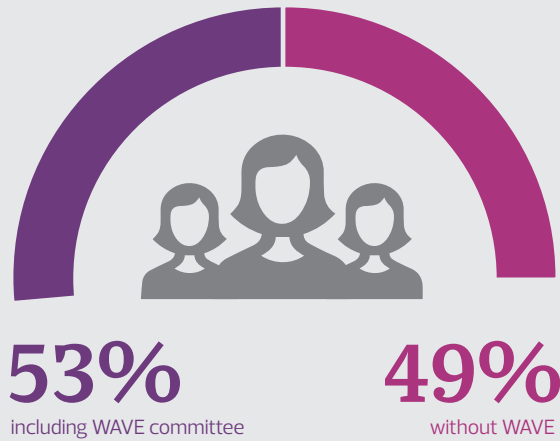
—SANDRA WOITAS



*“Being a part of WAVE over the past two years has given me a glimpse into **the complexity of building a city that can meet the needs of all of its occupants and visitors.** It has allowed me to ask questions and have input into policies and plans that directly affect how I live, work and raise my family here. **My experience and expectations are valued at the table, where the diversity of each member’s voice equals strength and empowerment.** I felt comfortable speaking to policies that dealt with business, transportation, housing, safety and inclusivity, and many other issues from a gender-applied lens. This experience helps me practice **better seeing the world with a diverse perspective,** imagining how others will be impacted by our city’s growth. **I feel proud to have had a small but integral part in building the future of my city, Edmonton.**”*

—TANYA EDISON

The percentage of women on Council-appointed civic agencies. This includes advisory boards, quasi-judicial boards, standing committees, decision-making boards, external boards, and intergovernmental boards.



*“WAVE is making a difference by **finding strategic ways to identify and remove intersectional barriers for Edmontonians**, and measuring the impact of grassroots action through examples such as the Women’s Symposium, conducting research, updating the Quality of Life Scorecard, collaborating on networking events, and supporting local initiatives around the city.”*

*“**We are showing Edmontonians that we hear them** and that the circumstances impacting their well-being will not go unresolved. The engagement work that is being done with DATS and accessibility policies is very important because **individuals with physical or cognitive differences deserve to live a life where they have an opportunity to reach their fullest potential.**”*

*“**Engaging young women in leadership** and in politics helps to create space, support women, and **show them how they can influence positive change one action at a time.** It is life-changing for women in the city who didn’t realize they could engage in such impactful ways.”*

—ELYSSA TESLYK

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OTHER KEY WOMEN'S INITIATIVE PROJECTS

The Women's Initiative led some projects with support from WAVE in 2018–2019:

Women's Initiative Quality of Life Scorecard

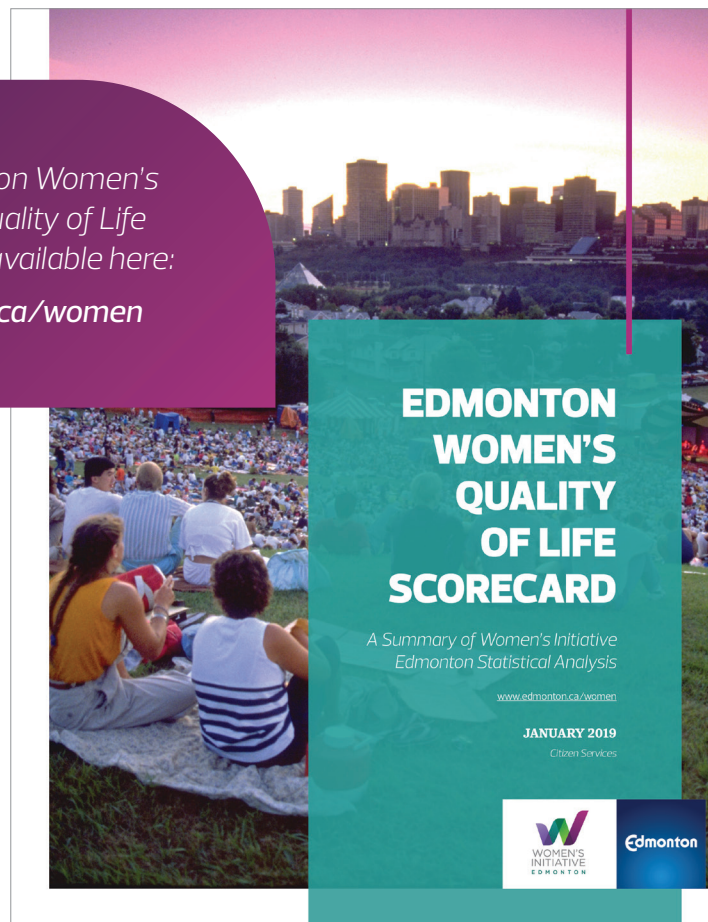
On January 25, the City hosted an event releasing the Edmonton Women's Initiative Quality of Life Scorecard. This is the second biannual report card released by Edmonton's Women's Initiative. The scorecard tracks and monitors progress on gender equity in our city as it relates to five goal areas:

- Finance & Economy
- Leadership & Empowerment
- Education
- Health & Wellness
- Safety

This year's report showed that Edmonton women are improving in areas related to leadership, continuing to do well in health and education, and need ongoing work and attention to issues of gender-based violence in the city, as those numbers continue to be higher than the national average. Work on gender-based violence prevention is the focus of the City's Gender Based Violence Council Initiative.

The Edmonton Women's Initiative Quality of Life Scorecard is available here:

edmonton.ca/women





2019 International Women's Day

The Women's Initiative hosted an event on March 8 to recognize 2019 International Women's Day, with the theme Balance for Better. The event celebrated women's contributions, showcased resources and encouraged everyone to be part of the solution and to help address women's needs and create positive change.

Event highlights included:

- Welcoming remarks by Councillor Esslinger and presentation of City Council's 2019 International Women's Day Proclamation to Women's Initiative in the Africa Centre
- Third Annual Women's Initiative Leadership Award presented by WAVE to Dr. Ania Ulrich
- Keynote address by Wanda M. Costens, Ph.D., Dean of the School of Business, MacEwan University
- Poetry by Nisha Patel
- Music by Cindy Paul



Women's Initiative Leadership Award

To recognize and celebrate women leaders in Edmonton, the Women's Initiative was pleased to present the third Women's Leadership Award to Dr. Ania Ulrich on International Women's Day.

Dr. Ania C. Ulrich is a Professor in Civil and Environmental Engineering and Associate Dean in the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Alberta.

Dr. Ania C. Ulrich,
Associate Dean

Professor, Civil and
Environmental Engineering
Faculty of Engineering,
University of Alberta



*“Dr. Ulrich exemplifies the **best traits of a leader, mentor and engineer**, and she continues to pave the way in the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Alberta for women to feel **included and successful** throughout their program,”*
said WAVE vice chair Meghana Valupadas.

Her work as Associate Dean focuses on inspiring the next generation of engineers, and improving student and professor success through compassionate leadership, which she calls Engineering with Decency. She is passionate about giving a voice to underrepresented groups—especially women in engineering.

Edmonton Shares Expertise Globally

Edmonton is one of the few Canadian cities that has a Women's Initiative. Edmonton is a leader in ensuring a gender perspective is incorporated into City decision-making and when developing policies or programs.

The City of Edmonton is also a member of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), which represents over 2,000 municipal governments in Canada. Edmonton is one of 15 Canadian cities that mentor and support other cities in the areas of economy, solid waste, democracy and gender.

In February 2018, City of Edmonton staff provided an update on outcomes and policy changes initiated by the City of Edmonton's Women's Initiative to the Mayors of the Association of Ukraine municipalities in Kiev.

In September 2018, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) asked the City of Edmonton to provide best practices and learnings in Amman, Jordan. Through Federation funding, a Women's Initiative staff lead traveled to Amman in September to help the municipality build the capacity of its new gender staff team by providing inclusivity training (GBA+) and sharing insights and learnings from the Edmonton's Women's Initiative. Amman is now setting up a training institute and training municipal officials and employees in GBA+.

On September 28, 2018, City of Edmonton staff provided an update on insights and outcomes of the City of Edmonton's Women's Initiative to the FCM Vietnamese delegation in Edmonton.

In 2018 and 2019, the City Of Edmonton, City of Calgary, Government of Alberta, Status of Women, AUMA and the Federal Government met to share learnings and discuss initiatives that will help to impact and improve gender equity. These networking meetings increased knowledge and coordination throughout Alberta. WAVE and the Women's Initiative benefitted from participation at these meetings.

The Women's Initiative presented at the Together 2018: The Alberta Council For Global Cooperation on November 5, 2018.



Video

A short video was produced to explain the GBA+ lens and how it can impact and benefit the City of Edmonton.

Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) is a tool to look at how different genders and diverse people experience policies, programs and initiatives.



Watch the
video online here:
bit.ly/2NzruLt

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