

I am speaking on behalf of Women & Politics London. We are a citizen led organization committed to engaging women in politics and making connections to how government impacts women's lives

We support the London Plan and commend City Staff and Council on their extensive work in engaging Londoners in the process and in creating this very forward thinking plan for London. There is much to like about the plan and the vision it sets out for London over the next 25 years. I am going to speak to a few of the highlights we see for women. There is a strong commitment to Diversity and Inclusiveness embedded throughout the plan. Recognizing that our city thrives best when we have a city where everyone feels welcome & all people's needs are considered, is a real strength of the London Plan.

The focus on cohesive neighbourhoods with access to amenities is a really important one for women. Given that women still carry the bulk of the load of domestic responsibilities, having neighbourhoods with good access to shopping, banks, day care etc. is extremely important to the quality of life of women and families. In addition, having a section and focus on housing and homelessness recognizes the importance of secure and stable housing to the health of all people, including women.

The London Plan includes and emphasizes improved transit and active transportation, which is vitally important to the realities of women's lives and the need for them to be able to move efficiently through the city. Being connected to major areas of our city allows the greatest access to jobs, healthcare, childcare and community connections. Women who are low-income will also benefit greatly from the value in creating local, vibrant food system where food is readily available and located close by. As I said there is much to like about the London Plan and these are just a few of the highlights that relate to women.

Despite these strengths and many others in the plan, we do think that gender and the way women and men use a city differently, hasn't been considered enough in the London Plan. For those that are unfamiliar, the Fair Shared City concept, also called Gender Mainstreaming is public policy strategy that makes women and men's concerns and experiences an integral part of any planned actions or policies. In a municipal setting the goal is to have cities that meet the needs of everyone.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities and many cities have included fair shared city planning or gender mainstreaming into their decision making processes and policies.

Some examples of cities using a gender lens in policy and planning are on the screen. Montreal's Women and City program led to the building of new metro stations surrounded in glass so women could be seen more easily as well as buses that let women off between stops at night and the training of 200 small businesses with signs in the windows to indicate safe spaces for women. These and other initiatives are a large part of the reason that Montreal was ranked the 4th best major city to live in for Women in Canada.

Vienna has prioritized gender mainstreaming and is often used as a global example of a city that is designed well to meet the needs of both men and women and the City of Ottawa has included a gendered lens in many of its initiatives.

So in looking at the London Plan some of the statistics that helped shape the plan are on the screen. There were no statistics on how many men and women make up our city or how they may use our city differently. And although we know that the City has been very inclusive in their Rethink process and that gender is likely assumed in the intent of many of the policies, unless gender is explicitly looked at, the default is that men and women are the same. The United Nations and others recognize the importance of using a gender lens in planning & policy making and so should London.

We have a few examples of items in the London plan where gender differences do matter. These are just a few examples, but we urge that a gendered lens be used overall in the London Plan strategy.

In terms of Active Transportation, for every 3 men who cycle there is just one woman doing the same. In study of why women don't bike, women cited safety as major concern. Both being hit by cars and where bike lanes/pathways are. Another reason given was the inability to bring children or cargo. Given women carry the burden of childcare and household responsibilities - how and where cycling infrastructure is built, impacts whether they will use them or whether men will continue to outnumber women in cycling in our city.

We fully support the idea of transit villages. How they and other transit links are built will impact if and how women use them. Women tend to multi-trip when using transit. So they stop and pick up things along the way instead of going point to point and they also are more likely to have children with them. And of course safety is a concern for women when taking transit. Where and how transit is designed needs to incorporate these needs and realities of women's lives and it can't be assumed that they are the same as men's needs. The process needs to be deliberate.

Women and Politics supports the London Plan. But we do think that the perspective of gender has not been included in the strategy & directions of the plan and that this is an

oversight that we wanted to bring to your attention. The potential for the London Plan to enhance the lives of all residents of London is huge, but we need to ensure that we are meeting the needs of women and men. We at Women and Politics are happy to talk more about this and provide any input and support to staff or council that would be helpful. We can be reached at the above email and thank you for your time in allowing us to bring these concerns forward

Shawna Lewkowitz - Founder & Member

email: info@womenandpolitics.ca

website: www.womenandpolicitis.ca

twitter: [@fempolildn](https://twitter.com/fempolildn)