

September 12, 2017

Chair and Members
Community and Protective Services Committee, 4pm

RE: Partnership to Establish London as a UN Women's Safe City

As City Council, we are committed to ensuring public spaces are safe for everyone.

Despite that, we know that 1/3 Canadian women will experience sexual assault in their lifetime, and this number is even higher for LGBTQ+, differently abled and Indigenous populations. We also know that locally, sexual violence is common. ANOVA has a counselling waitlist of over 50 sexual assault survivors and still last year, served over 750 sexual assault survivors through counselling while answering over 1,000 calls on the sexual assault crisis line.

On March 10, 2017, ANOVA approached the Mayor's office to discuss the possibility of collaborating on an initiative to address the prevalence of sexual assault and violence against women. The idea was to investigate the possibility of designating London a "Safe City", as prescribed by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equity and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

The UN Women Safe Cities initiative strives to address the universal issue of sexual violence perpetrated on women and girls in public spaces. Sexual violence reduces women's and girls' freedom of movement, and their ability to study, work, access essential services and enjoy recreational opportunities, resulting in negative impacts on health and well-being.

ANOVA has provided quantitative and qualitative data, which clearly illustrates the need to address sexual violence and women's safety with an innovative, multi-sectoral approach. This initiative has support from a number of community partners including, ANOVA, London Police Service, Women and Politics and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. Other community partners and academic researchers have also expressed interest in collaborating on this initiative.

For this reason, on April 24th, 2017, the Mayor's Office wrote a letter expressing interest in participating as a champion city in the UN Women's Safe Cities Initiative with ANOVA as our key community partner. A number of specific criteria for participation in this initiative were outlined in materials received from the United Nations, including a one-pager, which briefly describes the overall strategy (Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces).

On June 27, 2017, the Mayor's Office and ANOVA received notification of acceptance to the start-up phase of the UN Women Safe City Initiative. ANOVA is a well-positioned community partner to lead on this initiative, given that they are the Ministry mandated sexual assault service provider in our region and they have over 40 years of experience

working with and for sexual assault survivors. Yet, ANOVA is only one of the many local organizations that provide support in a variety of capacities to London's survivors.

We know that post-secondary students are at an even greater risk of experiencing or perpetrating sexual violence. Western University and Fanshawe College have given serious attention to this issue—their Sexual Violence Coordinators have expressed support and see the value of this initiative.

Under the United Nation's requirements for Safe City designation, the City of London must conduct an initial scoping study that draws on the UN Women's Safe Public Spaces Global Guidance Notes and Tools.

As we move forward, I am asking that the following actions be taken:

- i) Council appoint ANOVA as the lead organization in developing a five-year Safe Cities plan for London
- ii) ANOVA creates a Steering Committee of sexual assault and research experts to explore how we can make London a safe space for everyone
- iii) The Steering Committee reports back to Council, within a year, with a list of recommendations to work toward a UN Safe Cities designation

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MAB', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mayor Matt Brown