



Druh Farrell - Ward 7 Councillor  
Office of the Councillors,  
PO Box 2100 Stn M,  
Calgary AB T2P 2M5

December 7, 2020

Dear Councillor Farrel,

I would like to express support for your Notice of Motion regarding Street Harassment.

Sagesse believes that violence can be understood within the structure of coercive control, a pattern of behavior which seeks to take away a person's freedom and to strip away their sense of self. Street harassment is a structured pattern of behavior that occurs in society that is often targeted towards women and marginalized group. It is important to note that street harassment is a form of coercive control because it can and does erode Calgarians sense of safety, even if they have not been personally harmed or threatened. The fear of the harm or threat is enough to take away an individual's sense of safety in their city.

As a society we cannot underestimate just how pervasive a lack of a sense safety on the streets is for women, 2SLGBTQ individuals and marginalized groups. This lack of a sense of safety can relate to all aspects of an individual's life. An individual's sense of safety on the streets is related to their general sense of safety in society. Street harassment can make targeted people rethink the choices they make about where they choose to live, if they access public transportation, where they work and where they play.

Perpetrators of coercive control may use these tactics on the streets, in the workplace or even in their home. We need to hold them accountable in all places that they perpetrate coercive and controlling behavior.

It is important that governments realize that it can play a role in helping all citizens feel safe, a bylaw addressing street harassment is a piece of this puzzle.

Sincerely,

Andrea Silverstone, RSW, Q.Med  
Executive Director

Office of the Councillors  
The City of Calgary  
800 Macleod Tr. SE  
Calgary, Alberta T2P 2M5

**Re: Notice of Motion regarding street harassment**

Dear Members of Council:

On behalf of the Women's Centre of Calgary, please accept this letter as an expression of support for the Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Farrell on the issue of street harassment. The Women's Centre is a community organization that provides a safe and supportive space to thousands of women in Calgary each year. We offer women opportunities to both receive and provide support, connect with others, and build community through a variety of programs. While the Centre is open to all women, three in ten of those who access our services and volunteer their time have experienced gender-based violence at some point in their lives.

As research has demonstrated, street harassment has significant, often invisible consequences for women. The City of Calgary's own *Survey on Safety in Public and Private Spaces* showed that unwanted sexual behavior in public spaces results in women avoiding certain places, changing their routines to avoid people or situations, and carrying items to defend themselves or alert others. These forced adaptations are often disruptive to the everyday lives—and livelihoods—of women, and harmful to their overall quality of life.

We are supportive of the recommendation that City Administration engage with Calgarians and the Social Wellbeing Advisory Committee on the topic of street harassment, in addition to exploring the possibility of enacting a bylaw to address the issue. Working towards a change in social norms and values around gender, harassment, and violence through education and public awareness campaigns is a preventative measure that aligns well with the overall goals of the City's Gender Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, as well as its Social Wellbeing Policy.

The Women's Centre also believes that policies and programs both aimed at eliminating violence, as well as supporting women experiencing violence, must be grounded in an understanding that gender intersects with other aspects of identity to shape an individual's experience of public space and their ability to access services. Accordingly, we recommend that those advancing work in this area bring an intersectional lens to both issue analysis and policy and program development.

We are encouraged by Councillor Farrell's presentation of a Notice of Motion on street harassment, and look forward to being engaged in resulting discussions on the issue so that all Calgarians can live lives free of threat of violence in public spaces.

Sincerely,



Susan Gillies

Executive Director, Women's Centre of Calgary



1715 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, Calgary, AB T2G 5J1  
ywcalgary.ca

December 8, 2020

Mayor Naheed Nenshi and City of Calgary City Council  
City of Calgary  
P.O. Box 2100, Stn. M  
Calgary, AB  
T2P 2M5

Dear Mayor Nenshi and City of Calgary City Council,

**RE: Street Harassment Notice of Motion**

I would like to share our support for the Notice of Motion regarding Street Harassment. The YWCA Calgary's mission is to create a City where women can thrive in a safe and equitable community. Put simply - street harassment prevents women, girls, two-spirit and gender-diverse people from feeling safe and included in our community.

As a provider of domestic violence shelter and supports we have seen the severe impact of the pandemic on our clients. Statistics show that the impact of stressful psychological events like the pandemic and economic-slow-down can increase the hostility of individuals. Incidents of harassment, domestic and sexual violence continue to occur at high rates and disproportionately impact women, girls, two-spirit and gender-diverse people.

We should no longer tolerate harassment as part of public life and now should work towards addressing and ending this behaviour. Bringing awareness to the topic of street harassment will be crucial to building a safer more inclusive city that welcomes all Calgarians to the City's public spaces. To discuss this topic further please do not hesitate please reach out to Nesreen Ali, YWCA Calgary Government Relations Manager at 403.827.5719 or via email at [nali@ywcalgary.ca](mailto:nali@ywcalgary.ca).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sue Tomney', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Sue Tomney  
Chief Executive Officer  
YWCA Calgary