

Good morning/afternoon... My name is Jason Kingsley (spell name). I use He/Him pronouns. Thank you for providing the opportunity to speak on the Gender Equity and Diversity Strategy today. I am the Chair of the Social Wellbeing Advisory Committee, in addition to having served on the Board of Directors for Calgary Pride for the past eight years advocating for gender equity, diversity, and inclusion from a gender and sexually diverse (or LGBTQ2S+) perspective.

In reviewing the Gender Equity and Diversity Strategy it is important to draw focus to the purposeful and specific use of language within the strategy. "All genders" are consistently referenced throughout, rather than a typical binary of "male and female." One cannot speak of gender equity without an understanding of gender and the spectrum of gender identity and gender expression – which encompasses intersex, transgender, and non-binary individuals. Not only does the Gender Equity and Diversity Strategy align with the new Social Wellbeing Policy, it is also a strategy that has personal significance to me as someone who saw first hand the impact that a lack of gender equity and diversity has had on a community. From challenges that individuals face with names and pronouns in public service and employment to accessing public spaces, feeling a sense of belonging, and actively participating in citizenship in Calgary.

While not a lot of published research currently exists regarding gender diverse individuals in Alberta, there is a fair amount coming out of Ontario. According to Bauer and Scheim (2014), "58% of trans individuals could not get academic transcripts with the correct name/pronoun, 31% of those who changed their legal names and lived genders have not changed sex designations on any legal ID, 20% have been physically or sexually assaulted for being trans, and 13% were fired for being trans" (with another 15% also being fired but being unsure if it was due to their gender identity). One report on the avoidance of public spaces by trans individuals (2014) draws attention to the wide-ranging impacts that fears of harassment and violence have on the everyday lives of gender diverse persons – specifically in the reported negativity or avoidance associated with accessing shared or public spaces, public transit, washrooms, schools, gyms etc. Bauer and Schiem (2014) further highlighted this by stating "Approximately two-thirds of trans people in Ontario have avoided public spaces or situations" and that "Of those who had experienced physical and/or sexual violence due to being trans, 97% report avoiding at least one public space." Furthermore, as it relates to workplace discrimination and employment challenges for Trans people in Ontario (2011), "While 71% of trans people have at least some college or university education, about half make \$15,000 per year or less." This is stated to be due to a "Lack of trans-positive attitudes as well as trans-inclusive

policies within workplaces” which “Presents access barriers to employment and creates unhealthy and unsafe working conditions.”

The four focus areas and their respective key strategic actions acknowledge the barriers faced by gender diverse persons in Calgary, and work towards creating a city representative of, and accessible to, all genders. Tools such as GBA+ have been identified as a means of advancing gender equity in Canada, and one which facilitates an awareness and understanding of diverse gender identities and gender expressions. Through an analytical process, GBA+ assess how diverse groups of women (including trans women), men (including trans men), and non-binary people may experience policies, programs and initiatives. The “plus” in GBA+ acknowledges that GBA goes beyond biological (sex) and socio-cultural (gender) differences, which speaks to the intersectional principle of the strategy (as well as the intersectional focus of the Social Wellbeing Policy). As to my knowledge at present there is no data related specifically to gender diverse persons in Calgary, and in disaggregating and collecting data specific to all genders, the City will be equipped for data-informed decision making in the assessment of city services, and representation on Boards, Commissions, and Committees and with the City workforce. While I have been speaking to you today there may be different levels of awareness and understanding regarding the topic of gender identity and gender expressions within City Council, Boards, Commissions, and Committees, and the City Workforce. The educational focus of the Gender Equity and Diversity Strategy will play a critical role in the successful development and understanding of the spectrum of gender representation beyond that of a typical binary understanding. This is clearly iterated in the final focus area to address barriers key strategic action to “Continue to develop and implement approaches to addressing barriers to participation of transgender and gender nonconforming participants in programs and services.”

In supporting the Gender Equity and Diversity Strategy you are enabling a strategy which will empower the City of Calgary to develop and implement equitable services, representative governance, and a diverse and inclusive workforce for all gender identities and gender expressions, especially those historically erased, made to be invisible, or simply invalidated, such as intersex, transgender, and non-binary identities. It is the spectrum of gender identities and gender expressions and the intersecting identities and vast lived experiences of the citizens of Calgary that contribute to the vibrancy of our great city.

Thank you for supporting equity and diversity in Calgary.

