

**Women's Perspectives on Inclusive Municipal Governance:
Peach Paper Re-Visited
City for All Women Initiative – CAWI- Initiative: une ville pour toutes les femmes**

**Deputation presented to Corporate Services and
Economic Development Committee
June 2009**

Good morning members of the City Council. My name is Irene Mlambo; I am joined by Christine Santele. We are here representing women in the network of CAWI, City for All Women Initiative.

Over the past few months, women, from across the city, have met to review the city's "White Papers" and our response is this "Peach Paper Revisited". It is peach to represent the diversity of voices in our network. It is revisited because we are building upon a "peach paper" we presented to Council at the previous Governance Review.

Our aim is to assist Council in achieving Objective 3 of the Municipal Strategic Plan

Commit to and develop a democratic, engaging and visible process to maximize input from residents in the work of Council in policy development, while ensuring that seniors, new Canadians, women and the economically disadvantaged are included.

Here we would like to highlight a few of the recommendations in the Peach Paper.

It is our experience that women in many of our communities find it difficult to bring their views to City Council.

Recommendation #1: Be proactive

- Establish mechanisms to put the Public Participation Policy into action
- Create opportunities for public input at the initial stages of proposals

Recommendation #2: Make the process more accessible

- Post staff reports 2 weeks prior to the consultation, in both official languages, and in different mediums.
- Use a variety of tools to maximize input, if the city relies only on computer technology to reach the public, many women in our communities will not engage.

- Include an allotted time for each agenda item in public meetings and standing committees.

Recommendation #3: Inform Public on How to Participate

- Educate residents about how the system works – including the significance of key documents and decision points, like the Strategic Plan, Fiscal Framework, and how the public can inform decision-making.

We offer several recommendations for strengthening Advisory Committees.

For decision making to be inclusive, there must be structured processes that are ongoing, transparent and well identified. Advisory Committees offer residents a forum, which is often less intimidating than some formal public consultation processes, to raise concerns and share perspectives. We believe that these committees should strive to be more representative in their membership to reflect the diversity of our City.

Recommendation #4: Improve selection process

- Utilize an application where specific information can be requested.
- Develop guidelines for selection panels that encourage them to consider people from diverse backgrounds to create committees that are reflective of the City's demographic composition.

Recommendation #5: Train all members of Advisory Committees.

Recommendation #6: Strengthen lines of communication between Standing Committees and Advisory Committees.

Finally,

Recommendation #7: Establish a budget process that starts from the bottom-up and addresses community needs.

- Create opportunities for public to inform draft budget at the outset and when the Draft Budget is prepared.
- Hold public consultations at Standing Committees rather than Committee of the whole where there can be better dialogue between officials and the public.