

Moving Through the City

How do City services touch women's lives?

Women who live in Toronto are affected daily by the decisions made by the City. This includes sorting and taking out the garbage, walking with their children in the park, riding the bus to work, accessing essential services like transit, community centres, housing, and much more.

In 2010, the TWCA released a research report on women's experiences of City services.

In Toronto, women outnumber men in their regular use of public transit to get to and from work. According to the 2006 Census, public transit is the regular mode of transportation for 28% of women with paid employment to get to and from work, compared to 17% of men. However, for women of all ages and backgrounds it is often too expensive and inhibits mobility. For some women, the geographical coverage and frequency of buses is inadequate.

Availability and Affordability

"TTC is very expensive so we walk all the winter. Because it's very cold, I used to pay only for my two girls, so they used to take the bus. Me & my son we used to walk. Because it is very expensive, I cannot pay \$10 daily just to go to the school. This is affecting us a lot." - Mother living in a women's shelter

Public transportation is incredibly important for women. Women are struggling to afford the costs

of public transportation, and sometimes must choose between transit fares and food or going to medical appointments. Part of the problem is that 70% of TTC costs are covered by riders through fares - the highest percentage in North America.

This means that the increasing costs of the transit system fall disproportionately on the shoulders of riders, the majority of whom are female.

Physical Accessibility

"Getting around the city is different for an older person, older woman. They often may not have a car or not have access to a car. They're almost totally dependent on either walking or public transit." - Older Woman

Access to public transit and safety on transit is a problem for many women, including those with babies and strollers, and those with mobility devices. Many subway stations are not equipped with elevators. Many women reported that the elevators that do exist are often not working and the TTC's information line does not provide updated information on the status of elevators, leaving many women with health problems, mobility devices or strollers stranded.

Geographic Accessibility

"It takes me an hour and a half to get from home to downtown where I work and two hours to get home. If I'm coming home late and I miss my bus, it's a 20 minute wait in the cold or a 40 minute walk through dark streets." - Young working woman

Many women and girls living away from the city centre face long commutes to the downtown core. For individuals who rely on public transit, it is essential that transit is available close to their homes, workplaces, and schools.

Recent cuts to bus routes will impact many students and late night workers who rely on night-time routes to get them to work or school and back home safely.

Safety

"I wear fitted caps and hoodies and so my appearance would be that I am a male even though I am a female. Sometimes I go and request a stop... (and I'm told) you're not a lady kind of thing. So I'm like 'excuse me sir can I please get off here... I take off my stuff and show them my face, sometimes I undo my jacket to

show that I have cleavage in order to get a requested stop and that's a safety issue....I shouldn't have to dress a certain way just to request a stop." – Young racialized woman from Scarborough

Safety on transit is a major problem, particularly for women. The 'Request Stop' program is designed for women's safety but many women report that not all bus drivers are willing to let them out between designated bus stops.

On a daily basis, women and girls face sexual harassment and assault while travelling on transit. Often times, these incidents go unreported. Transit planning and management needs to include the voices and experiences of women and girl transit riders so that its design, lighting, routes, scheduling, stops, etc. reflect their safety concerns.

Women want:

- Re-establishment of TTC bus routes that have been cut.
- Continued implementation of Transit City and the involvement of women and girls in its development.
- Increased affordability and accessibility to public transit.

TORONTO WOMEN'S CITY ALLIANCE

Making Equality Matter...

TWCA calls for the establishment of a Toronto Women's Equalities Office that could spearhead the development of an action plan for equality for women in all their diversity. This office could monitor city services, create recommendations to end the systemic discrimination against women, prepare a Report Card and connect with and provide support to organizations working with women across the City.

Email: info@twca.ca
Phone: 647-235-8575

Web: www.twca.ca

For the complete research report, go to:
http://www.twca.ca/TWCA-publications/uploads/TWCA_June_2010a.pdf