

WHAT WE ARE WORKING ON NOW :

* Planning Circle

- bi-monthly meetings
- a gathering of community activists, residents, students professionals, and social service providers (to name a few) to discuss strategies to meet women's needs.

* Housing Circle

- bi-monthly meetings
- a place to come together to strategize and discuss women's housing needs and objectives from a feminist perspective.
- preparing new submissions for funding for co-operative housing.

* Review and Preview

- monthly information and general organisation meetings.

* We continue to encourage women to make use of existing channels for expressing their concerns publicly. We also advocate new tactics and strategies to exercise effectively the power of our united voices.

WPT is grateful for the financial support we receive from the City of Toronto, the Ontario Women's Directorate, the Women's Program, Secretary of State and the many individual contributors.

WHAT WE CAN DO FOR YOU :

* Do you or your group want to change something in your neighbourhood or in your city? We can give practical tips, and possibly hook you up with like-minded people.

* Do you or your group want to increase your media skills? We have a media list, and can give helpful hints, help you to find answers and/or facilitate a workshop.

* Do you or your group want to publicize an event? Our monthly newsletter is mailed to over 400 groups and individuals.

* Do you want to join a fun group of women who are working together on our common concerns?

* Do you want to know more about issues concerning women in the city?

We have a range of Publications:

Shared Experiences and Dreams

Our Needs, Our Communities

WPT: Resources List

Are These Your Stories?
City & Metro Elections booklets

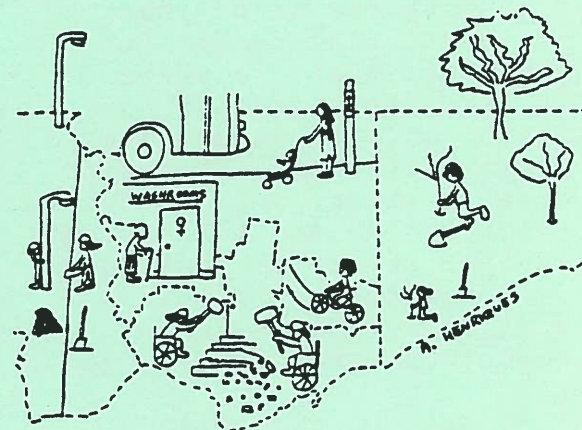
WPT T-shirts

Join Women Plan Toronto in our ongoing struggles for adequate affordable housing, safe and accessible transportation, and livable neighbourhoods and cities.

WOMEN

PLAN

TORONTO



736 BATHURST ST.
TORONTO, ONTARIO
M5S 2R4
588-9751

WOMEN PLAN TORONTO

WHO WE ARE :

* We are a group of women from all walks of life and with diverse feminist perspectives. We teach ourselves skills and confidence as we go along. We then make use of those skills to benefit other women and our communities. We encourage more women to join WPT in the process.

* We want to improve the quality of life in Metro Toronto. We can do that by making our voices heard, informing those in power about how existing circumstances do not meet our particular needs. Our concerns relate to where we live (housing and planning), how we get around (transportation), what kind of air, water, and food we need (health and environment), whether or not we feel safe, what services we need, and what kind of care and education our children need.

* We are in touch with a network of over 400 groups and individuals, in Metro and around the world.

* All women are welcome to share in our decisions and activities.

SOME OF WHAT WE'VE DONE RECENTLY :

* Planning Circle:

- deputations and submissions at the City, Metro and Provincial and federal level.
- worked with other agencies, including Metrac and the Safe City Committee, to improve safety in the city.
- fought for greater access for all women on the TTC.

* Housing Circle :

- helped organise carloads of women to attend an International Women's Learning Exchange, Cincinnati Ohio.
- participated with others to provide affordable & co-operative housing
- submitted an application for funding for a co-operative housing project for women and their families.
- made deputations to Toronto City Council about housing issues.

* Elections Subcommittee :

- published and distributed a booklet during the 1991 Municipal Elections to encourage women to vote.
- worked with People Plan '91 on an all-candidates panel discussion on women's issues.
- facilitated workshops with other women's groups
- participated in radio & other media interviews.

* We have also:

- facilitated close to 100 workshops with community groups, women's groups, planners' organizations ...
- organised two conferences which brought together women to share experiences and dreams.
- continued to have representatives in numerous advocacy groups around Toronto who keep us all informed.

HOW WE WORK :

- * How we work is as important as what we do.
- * We try to work openly, fairly, informally, efficiently, and sisterly.
- * We try to help women develop their skills.
- * We try to include and support immigrant women, women of colour disabled women, women with young children, older women ... all women whose needs have been neglected.



WOMEN PLAN TORONTO

Description of the Process

There are four (4) steps in this phase:

STEP 1: MEETING WOMEN'S GROUPS (September to November 1985)

On the basis of our preparatory work in Phase I (see app. I of Phase I report) we will meet with at least 20 more women's groups who are as closely representative of the full range of Metro Toronto's woman population as possible. The meetings are assisted by a facilitator, interpreter and child care where appropriate to ensure the best possible conditions for the discussions. Photos, sound tapes, drawings and notes are produced at these sessions, which will be developed into a mobile display (during Step 2). This process has proven effective in Phase I and will therefore assure us of excellent "rawmaterial" to base our further efforts on.

During this same period individual interviews will be held with some resource persons on the basis of their work and knowledge with specific groups of women.

STEP 2: CONSOLIDATION OF FINDINGS (December 1985 and January 1986)

During this time all the input of the group sessions and the interviews will be sorted and put together in an Interim Report which will be sent to all those participants who have expressed interest in attending the one-day workshop in March. It is hoped that some of the participants may even be ready to assist in this process of consolidation to ensure the structuring of the material does not distort the initially expressed views.

STEP 3: WORKSHOP INCL. ITS PREPARATION (Feb./ March 1986)

At each of the group sessions participants have been invited to indicate their interest to participate in the follow-up spring workshop. The response during Phase I has been excellent. A copy of the Interim Report and an invitation to come to the one day workshop will be sent to all interested persons. The purpose of this event is to convert the findings of the Interim Report into recommendations, guidelines and strategies for implementation. Facilitators childcare and interpreters will again be made available where appropriate. Some professionals dealing with particular sub-areas in which workshops are held will be invited to observe and participate without, however dominating or playing an expert's role.

Areas which the workshop will probably focus on are: 1. Residing in Toronto - housing availability, types, cost, design and location; 2. Moving around in Toronto - modes, their cost, flexibility, design, accessibility; 3. Feeling safe and good in Toronto - types of recreation, urban and park design, entertainment, location, costs; 4. Working in Toronto - finding work, getting to work and back, moving up at work; 5. Finding Help in Toronto - finding out about support sources, child care, emergency help, financial, social and other advise, health; 6. Growing up in Toronto - playing, feeling safe,

making decisions and finding support as a young woman;

A display based on the drawings and photos produced during the session will be exhibited at the workshop.

STEP 4 FINALIZING THE PROJECT (April / May)

During this step the final report will be put together and its content distributed to the target groups and agencies defined at the workshop. Likely recipients of the final report and the mobile display would be Metro planning agencies, the Social Planning Council, N.A.C., Canadian Institute of Planners, City Home, Ministry of Housing, Women Electors, etc. Also proposed is a smaller "poster" type summary to be sent to all participants to engender "double-loop-learnig" and to encourage their ongoing involvement. A preparatory session will be held to guide and assist women who expressed readiness to participate in either a lobby group or on one of the citizens bodies in their communities.

Co-ordination of Project

It is expected that as in Phase I, a full-time co-ordinator would administer the project. She will arrange and participate in the sessions and the Spring 1986 Workshop. She will also be responsible for ensuring the processing of reports, financial statements and communications necessary for the project.

The W.I.A.P. co-ordinating committee which has helped guide the co-ordinator throughout Phase I proved very effective and should be continue in Phase II. To ensure that this committee is as closely in touch with the women's groups it wants to reflect several leaders of such women's groups will be invited to participae on the co-ordinating committee for Phase II. Minutes of all the meetings will again be sent to all the contributing agencies.

WOMEN PLAN TORONTO: A Brief History

Who We Are

Women Plan Toronto is an innovative organization which seeks to enhance the quality of life in our city, by helping Metro women influence decisions and helping municipal decision-makers recognize women's gender-specific needs. We act as a resource/reference group, compiling and distributing information on women's planning needs, and as a voice for women's planning concerns by advocating creative alternatives. We are a group of women from all walks of life, representing Metro women from all walks of life, teaching ourselves the skills and confidence needed to inform others as we go along. We presently consist of approximately 35 active members, and network with over 300 groups and individuals in Metro Toronto.

What We Have Done

Phase One (May 1985 - June 1986): Women Plan Toronto met with 25 widely differing women's groups. We asked them to tell us what they considered good and bad about their urban environments, and what changes they would like to see. The concerns and ideas expressed by the women were grouped and published in our report Women Plan Toronto--Shared Experiences and Dreams.

Phase Two (July 1986 - November 1987): We increased our network of local and international women's organizations. The first printing of our report sold out almost immediately, and over 1000 copies of our report have been requested by groups from five continents. We have continued to facilitate workshops with tenants' groups, community groups, and planning associations. We have written submissions on many issues affecting everyone in Metro: neighbourhood stores in East York; basement apartments in East Toronto; daycare facilities in York and Scarborough, and the Toronto Transit Commission's night service. We co-sponsored Women in Safe Environments, a multi-media report on unsafe places in Metro and how to improve them.

What We're Doing Now

Phase Three (November 1987 - November 1988): Allied with a network of groups, we want to place 'women's issues'--like affordable housing, safe transportation, and the provision of services in the suburbs--on the front burner of the November 1988 Metro and municipal elections. We also want to increase the number of women involved in municipal politics, by being a resource for women who want to run for office but lack the skills or confidence to do so effectively, and by facilitating workshops and providing resource materials to help neighbourhood groups make their issues heard by the candidates.

Organizational Chart:

This organizational chart tentatively outlines how Women Plan Toronto/Metro could be structured once it is underway.

Staff

- Runs the operation, implements instructions of the Action Committee.
- Represented on Action Committee and The Other Metro Council.

Action Committee

- Consists of four to five women elected by The Other Metro Council.
- Responsible for day-to-day operation of the coalition.
- Accountable to The Other Metro Council for staff operations, day-to-day actions, administration, responding to media and short-notice deputations.
- On day-to-day call for each other, and staff

Networking, Membership and Issues Committee

- Established and responsible to The Other Metro Council.
- Researches and develops recommendations for policies and actions on issues and concerns to Metro women.
- Develops ways membership can more effectively co-operate and communicate with each other.
- Helps strengthen the membership.

The Other Metro Council

- Consists of 10 to 20 women, including delegates of groups, elected by membership
- Meets monthly or bi-monthly to review and guide decision-making of the Action Committee. It also ensures priorities and needs of the membership are followed.
- Strives to reflect membership
- Open to members and issue/networking subcommittee representatives for submissions.
- Ensures that the Action Committee is refurbished.
- Rotates meeting locations and times for access to different areas and groups
- Acts as Board of Directors for incorporation purposes (as a non-profit corporation).

Membership

- Women's groups, including established women's groups within mixed organizations, and individual women.
- Provides material support for the network.
- Develops process to fairly represent individuals and groups of women and minimize hierarchy and bureaucracy.
- Meets annually to establish new policies, set priorities on issues and actions, review operation and elect "The Other Metro Council".

WOMEN PLAN TORONTO METRO

Mission Statement:

The mission statement provides the goals of the proposed coalition. The coalition is tentatively being called Women Plan Toronto/Metro.

Mission 1

Women Plan Toronto/Metro will work as a network to encourage and provide support towards achieving the priorities and activities of the many groups, who are also concerned that the needs of women are heard and acted upon by municipal governments.

Mission 2

Women Plan Toronto/Metro will, as appropriate, organize such events and activities as are needed to draw public attention to women's issues and areas of concern on municipal matters, or on the need for local action in areas of provincial or federal jurisdiction.

Mission 3

Women Plan Toronto/Metro exists to:

- monitor the activities of municipal governments
- develop policy positions
- create awareness of issues that affect women
- advocate for positive change at the municipal level

Action Areas:

The action areas represent the priorities Women Plan Toronto/Metro will address when it becomes a reality. These action areas were prioritized at a meeting on September 13, 1989.

Priority 1

Support and Taking Stands

- Achieve a stronger voice for all groups through the coalition; develop a common stand whenever possible, perhaps by adopting N.A.C. policies and positions as a basis.
- Combine effort on priority issues such as children, housing, poverty, abuse, human rights, peace, and the environment.
- Recognize our counterparts at the provincial (O.W.A.C.) and federal (N.A.C.) levels, and establish priorities in dealing with common issues at the local and Metro level; wherever possible we will support campaigns at the provincial, federal and even international levels.
- Work on becoming proactive instead of reactive.
- Enable our spokespeople to respond to issues in time.
- Respect our differences.

Priority 2

Communication

- Develop outreach to all women's groups to ensure representation.
- Putting direct service and advocacy groups in touch with each other.
- A metro-wide conference of Women's Centres has been suggested.
- A computer-based communication network similar to the Ontario Environment network could be implemented, if enough resources are available.

Learning, Referral and Sharing

- Fundraising
- Communication with the media and our communities.
- Resources, resource people and groups
- Lobbying

Priority 3

Inventory of Shared Resources

- Photocopiers, fax machines, computers, electric staplers, accessible meeting spaces, media lists, mailing deadlines, etc.

Directory of Metro-wide Groups

- Share ideas with the Y.W.C.A. on improving their directory

Calendar of Upcoming Meetings and Events

- Using a publication such as the WEB, we could avoid conflict and share information with listings of women's groups and events.

Maximize our Energies and Resources

- Bulk buying, piggyback mailing
- Sharing the tasks of monitoring, and responding to the decisions made by agencies that affect women's lives
- Strive towards a shared media through which we can channel our own communications