

Community Discussion: Transforming Public Awareness into Public Safety – Minneapolis Transgender Equity Council Public Awareness and Community Engagement Subcommittee (18 participants including two interpreters, two facilitators, a Zoom host, a captioner and a notetaker)

- Kick off from Alma and Hunta
- Gratitude to volunteers and participants for lending their voice to the project.
- Purpose of the session is to talk about the TEC's public awareness campaign and what would feel good to the T/GNC community on the topic of public safety.
- There is support from CVP Jenkins and the nonprofit community for this work.
- The initial goal was to start the project back in February and then COVID hit.
- It has been a bad year for violence against the T/GNC community.
- The TEC is positioned to advise the City on matters such as these.
- Participants are encouraged to share input into what a project of this nature would be.
- Recommendation that people aren't speaking over one another to support interpreters.
- This would be a citywide campaign primarily, if not exclusively, focused on Minneapolis.
- Having a strong foundation and a large campaign would have an impact elsewhere. Minneapolis is a center. If people aren't feeling safe, they are encouraged to let the TEC know.
- The Women's Foundation has worked on some impact areas. A citywide safety initiative tackling everything from basic needs to leadership and safety as they are all interconnected. A citywide initiative would need to have the basic needs of T/GNC community met before thinking of a higher realm. This is the 7th year of the Trans Equity Summit so Minneapolis is a good basis for a project like this.
 - Basic needs are considered areas like housing, employment, access to community spaces (*particularly for BIPOC T/GNC people*).
 - The capacity for those advocating and fighting for change in these areas is limited because they don't have access to some of these basic needs.
- Beyond bathrooms, what are some other areas of concern/threats to safety that come to mind?
 - Access to job stability, mobility and affordable housing.
 - Access to healthcare, especially in the era of COVID19
 - Access to interpreters. Many people don't know what it is like to have communication barriers daily. IT is important for people to understand that everyone has a fight that they are fighting.
 - Public education – larger within the context of central services and city government as well as organizations like that.
 - Public education – K-12 through higher education. If people don't know the experiences of T/GNC people, their ability to engage these communities is impacted.
 - All the public images of us and discourse about us are about bathrooms, and no one asks us our opinion. So, cis people don't afford trans people's existence in any other public spaces. So, I want more visibility for all different sorts of trans and enby folk because we can only truly feel like we belong in the spaces we see other folk like us. I can go weeks without seeing anyone who is my branch of trans queer. It's hard to feel safe and resilient when you feel so isolated and so invisible.

- Everything is all about bathrooms and it is frustrating. It would be nice if there was always a gender-neutral bathroom. Folks that are pregnant also have limited options. We shouldn't have to travel so far to get to a bathroom.
- I see the need for increased awareness of gender fluidity in schools. I also have observed how the culture isn't shifting fast enough when policies are created. This is a topic that people don't generally understand. There are only two options in MPS to report gender and individual schools make the adjustment but it's just for that school. If the student moves to another school, the policy may not be the same. Filling out the forms require parents and students to do a lot of due diligence to make sure the school has the right name and gender, but every school is different. Some schools are more inclusive, but there is a lot of variation.
- There could be multiple audiences for a campaign of this nature.
 - Government level, so internal in that respect. There is an impression of support, but still resistance. This could be Minneapolis as well as Minnesota state government.
- The campaign could have different tracks:
 - One focused on rest rooms – Perhaps there could be federal funding for bathrooms that combined needs for Trans/GNC and people with disabilities
 - One could focus on Black Lives Matter and retraining people with a trans educator
 - Regarding public safety, a campaign focused on feeling safe in their current space, especially with youth and the COVID—19 impacts.
 - One could focus on interpreter education, specifically.
 - Want to see messages that are affirming for T/GNC people.
- Sample projects to consider:
 - NYC Parity (<https://parity.nyc/>)
 - DC Safe (<https://www.dcsafe.org/>)
- Family Tree Clinic does have health services and offers ASL/services for those who are deaf/hard of hearing. They also have a community engagement branch and do work in schools around comprehensive sexual health education.
- Want to see a resource center providing assistance with housing, jobs, healthcare, food, clothing.
 - There is an Our Space project underway that relates to this need.
 - The MN Department of Health has a project focused on making sure transgender communities have the resources that they need. For example, with COVID-19 many T/GNC people aren't comfortable going for testing. Those who are also deaf need interpreters. Recommend shor salkas with the MN Department of Health as a resource.
- The TEC is shifting and making progress. The TEC wants to hear the feedback from people.
- When I think about translating our dignity publicly as trans people in a way that is digestible and effective with cis het people...I keep thinking about responsibility. Is the campaign begging people to see us as worthy of safety, or are we trying to expose the lack of services and resources that are offered to us? The people responsible for our lack of safety are the ones who need to be exposed.
- We are actively working against a system that is heavily invested in our erasure. For trans people, especially BIPOC trans people and trans people with disabilities, the system isn't set up with us in mind. The system is always arguing that it is too expensive to address the needs of our

communities. I don't believe it. Our society is highly capitalized, and this is an investment. They prefer to ignore us and erase us. I'm not thinking that systems wouldn't give us the power, but our society won't give us what we need. We must drag it out of them.

- We have the Trans Equity Council and they recognize us, but that is not the power.
 - CVP Jenkins and CM Cunningham...we have multiple Black trans people on the Council, but that is not enough. The world is full of barriers. We need to come together.
 - We do have power and need to recognize what power we have so they don't take it from us.
 - We don't recognize trans women have the power taken from them. They experience so many abuses. There are too many murders. This is an example of power being taken. We just need equity. What we have isn't equity. Equity would be power.
 - It's hard to imagine a system in which we don't have these issues.
- I feel complicated because the City of Minneapolis is hosting this space for us, right? It's a great summit, its wonderful that we have this, but we also know that local government needs to be held accountable for resource allocation. I think we as trans people can be empowered by shifting the conversation away from our sameness and humanity to a conversation about what we deserve as residents of the city. Local government needs to be held accountable.