

Alone on the SkyTrain in Metro Vancouver, Canada: Women's digital stories help plan
safe public transit

By

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Abstract

Women's safety is a major concern worldwide in transit planning. In Metro Vancouver, the public has been questioning levels of safety on the public transit system TransLink. A blog, 'Harassment on TransLink', has compiled women's personal stories of harassment on public transit. The blog has acted as an informal reporting strategy for women to share and vocalize their fears about transit. The blog has now helped propel the development of a smart phone app (created by TransLink), which allows riders to report harassment on transit.

This case study analysis of the blog explores how social media can function as an alternative reporting tool for safety measures and policy on public transit. Through semi-structured interviews and a review of relevant literature and precedents, the voices of female riders have been analyzed to examine how social media has been and can be used to improve public transit planning for women's safety.

Keywords: Storytelling; Public Transit; Safety; Women; Social Media; Harassment;

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1 INTRODUCTION

“Sometimes someone needs to say, ‘tell us your story’, and change will happen.”

- Anonymous poster, via *Harassment on TransLink* blog, 2015

1.1 Topic Overview & Background

It happens all the time. You are sitting on the bus and you feel someone brush against your thigh. At first you think it was just an accident; the bus is packed as it is rush hour; it is inevitable you are going to touch someone else – right? But then it happens again. So you cross your legs and inch closer to the wall because it was probably just an accident. The third time it happens you begin to realize this is on purpose. But what can you do? Do you scream, do you call 911, do you get off the train early? Do you start dressing differently tomorrow to stop it from ever happening again? Do you buy a car or start to taxi or use a ride-share program instead? Or do you sit there, paralyzed and frozen in fear? Do you shout, scream, and confront the faceless and nameless harasser? Do you report it, or tell someone? But what if they brush it off, tell you it was a one-time thing, and not to worry about it. Or what if you tell someone and they say something along the lines of, ‘I’m sorry’ or ‘This has happened to me too, but what can we do?’ What if you report it, but it still happens again and again? Is it even worth reporting? As the Team Leader of the Vancouver Chapter of Hollaback! says,

“being a creep isn’t illegal, [and] this is the biggest thing we are up against. It is not illegal to make someone feel uncomfortable or be creepy. So because of this, there [are] very few channels to have these incidences [be] taken seriously or documented or shared. So social media is great for this” (Personal Communication, January 14, 2016).

This leaves women (and others) on transit fearful, hurt, alone, and alienated.

Sexual harassment can take on many forms. It can be defined as,

“verbal sexual suggestions or jokes, constant leering or ogling, ‘accidentally’ brushing against your body, a ‘friendly’ pat, squeeze, pinch or arm around you, catching you alone for a quick kiss, the explicit proposition backed by threat of losing your job, and forced sexual relations” (Benson and Thomson, 1982 p. 236).

In simpler terms, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women describes sexual harassment as “behavior that is unwanted” (1993). Some examples of sexual harassment on transit include: comments about someone’s appearance, gender or sexual orientation; sexually explicit comments; vulgar gestures, leering, catcalls, unwanted compliments, whistling, barking, making kissing sounds; following someone, flashing or exposing oneself, blocking someone’s path; sexual touching or grabbing; and public masturbation (BWSS, 2015). This is often labeled as ‘stranger harassment’ (synonymous for street harassment). “Stranger harassment is a serious form of sexual harassment that occurs on a daily basis in cities around the world” (Roenius, 2016, p. 832).

Although sexual harassment in public spaces is a relatively new concept, studies show sexual harassment of women has existed long before the Industrial Revolution (Fox et al., 1999). Despite its prevalence, research and literature on sexual harassment of women in public places, especially on public transit, is limited (see: Buckley, 2016; Lenton et. al, 1999; Gardner, 1995). There are many reasons attributed to this, including the fact that unless public harassment rises to the level of assault, it is not illegal. Presently, the legal system does not view stranger harassment “as an issue worthy of legal redress” (Roenius, 2016, p. 832). Additionally, some view the behaviour as insignificant or consider it as flattery. Since public places are seen as incidental areas, ones which often connect us to destinations, the ‘rules’ or social norms in streets and other public/semi-public places are not under the same scrutiny as the behavior in private

spaces like work, school, or home (Lenton et. al, 1999). Only recently has the attention begin to focus on the treatment of women in public spaces. This is credited due to the mass media coverage and national and international recognition of the mistreatment and harassment of women (Madan and Nalla, 2016).

There is a pressing need for planners to address harassment on transit. For everyone to experience the right to the city, cities must have safe and efficient public transportation, streets, and public spaces (Madan and Nalla, 2016). Public transportation, a basic function of a city, allows people to freely move within the city. Just as fear of crime in public spaces deters women from accessing the city, sexual harassment on public transportation has the same effect (Buckley, 2016). Fear limits one's ability to travel where they want, use public space, and feel a sense of ownership and belonging within their city (2016). As Roenius states,

“for some individuals, taking a walk is the last thing they want to do because walking down a city street evokes a sense of fear, inadequacy, and self-objectification due to the constant catcalls, sexual comments, and dehumanizing stares they are commonly forced to endure” (2016, p. 831).

Studies have connected the fear of sexual harassment in public spaces to the loss of “ownership” of the city due to avoidance of specific areas (Buckley, 2016).

Using social media to report and collect women's stories is a way to document and share the experiences women have on public transit – good and bad. We currently live in a digital world. The internet is at the fingertips of a large portion of the population. Digital methods are an effective tool for citizen participation and other outreach approaches (Mandarano et al., 2010). Planners can use social media as an informal method for enhancing public transit safety planning by using it as an informal reporting tool to collect women's stories. Stories are integral for change. “Stories in themselves

have the ability not just to talk about what is, but also about what ought to be” (Van Hulst, 2012, p. 300). Stories can provide insights, lessons, and recommendations for transit authorities and municipalities regarding women’s needs in public spaces. In short, stories help reveal what women are currently experiencing and what they need to recapture their right to the city?

In Metro Vancouver, transit officials have just begun to combat the serious issue of sexual harassment on public transit. This thesis explores how social media - specifically online narratives, can be used as an alternative reporting method for ensuring adequate safety measures in public transit planning. Through investigation of the blog ‘Harassment on TransLink’, the research examines how social media can be a tool for planning. Through use of a comprehensive review of literature and precedents and key informant interviews, the voices of victims of harassment are used to provide lessons and recommendations to inform safety policies for public transit planning in Metro Vancouver.

1.2 Problem Statement

This thesis focuses on the stories of female¹ riders on TransLink in Metro Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. TransLink is Metro Vancouver’s transportation

¹ The term ‘female’ or ‘woman’ in this thesis indicates either the sex and/or chosen gender of an individual. ‘Sex’ refers to the biological differences between men and women, whereas ‘gender’ refers to the social practices of femininity or masculinity (Hird, 2000). However, this thesis acknowledges the fluidity of gender and identity. Gender is made up of two parts. The first, identity acknowledges one’s internal sense of self, and then expression – how one identifies themselves to others (Bosse and Chiodo, 2016). Those who do not identify with the gender congruent to their sex are referred to as transgender. However, it is important to note that many individuals identify as not having a gender (agender) or having a nonbinary gender. Nonbinary (often synonymous for genderqueer) indicates those with a fluid sense of gender. This thesis acknowledges the flexibility of gender identity. For the sake of simplicity, the term woman or female is used to describe those who identify fully or partially as female, but uses the term nonbinary when clarification is needed.

authority, connecting 22 municipalities, one First Nation Treaty, and one electoral area (Metro Vancouver, n.d.). Currently, the general public is questioning perceptions of safety, and actual safety, for women on TransLink (Huffington Post B.C., 2013). In Metro Vancouver, British Columbia 58% of women surveyed in 2015 indicated they did not feel safe on transit (BWSS, 2015). In October 2014, sex crimes reported to Metro Vancouver Transit police were 28% higher than the six-year average (BWSS, 2015) Yet, only 10-20% of victims of harassment on TransLink report their assaults (Sinoski, 2016). Occurrences of harassment on TransLink have become so ubiquitous that it inspired two Simon Fraser University students to start a blog in 2013. ‘Harassment on TransLink’ is a forum for sharing stories of harassment from female public-transit riders across Metro Vancouver: <http://translinkharassment.wordpress.com> (Jackson, 2013). The stories range in intensity and detail, but “whether it’s ‘sexualized harassment, romantic harassment, physical intimidation’, or other incidents, these experiences affect how women – who may not be able to afford another means of transportation use the transit system” (Hui, 2013).

I chose Metro Vancouver for this case study for a number of reasons. The Harassment on TransLink blog is a specific way that stories have been shared online to address concerns of safety on public transit. The blog gained a lot of attention; after receiving thousands of such posts, the blog was highlighted in the local media. This widespread attention helped to push forward TransLink’s already in motion reporting app (On Duty) and sexual assault awareness campaigns (Community Relations Officer, Personal Communication, December 15, 2015). The case study also makes use of alternative social media strategies, which offers lessons in creating safer public transit systems. In addition,

my past use and experience as a transit rider and established connections in the area also assisted in the decision.

Harassment on public transit is a collective experience of Metro Vancouver women that should not be shared by anyone. Every time women go out, “[they] make a set of complex calculations to avoid sexual harassment, assault, or worse” (BWSS, 2015). Vancouver is a fast-growing city and harassment on its transportation system is an urgent issue. Exploring the potential of using alternative online reporting strategies helps to further one’s understanding of how to best understand women’s perceptions of a safe public transit system and address their concerns to enhance public transit safety for all.

1.3 Key Research Questions

This thesis explores the use of blogging as a reporting method for safety measures in public transit planning. In the digital age, blogging and online platforms have become a central public forum; “the digital age, [is] a period in which digital technologies serve as the infrastructure of our communications” (Mandarano, Meenar, and Steins, 2010, p. 123). Taking this into account, it is clear new methods of reporting incidents of harassment and assault must be used in safety planning. Looking at the Metro Vancouver case study, at the time of the blog’s creation, no formal or informal reporting method was offered by TransLink or Transit Police. Shortly after the blog was published, an app was created which allows individuals to report their harassment directly to TransLink and Transit Police through their smart phone.

The case study in Metro Vancouver calls into question why women aren’t reporting their incidents of harassment directly to authorities, but are recording them on an online blog. It also questions how stories can be recorded and used on social media to

share sensitive and uncomfortable experiences that otherwise would not be told. The research questions include:

- 1.) What can we learn from women's online stories that may enrich our ways of understanding and addressing transit safety for women?
- 2.) How is alternative social media being used to encourage transit authorities to address women's concerns about transit safety?
- 3.) Are there any lessons for Metro Vancouver to learn from other jurisdictions responses to use of alternative social media for women's safety concerns?

The case study of the 'Harassment on TransLink' blog and subsequent initiatives by TransLink and Transit Police offers insights on how social media can help transit officials plan safer public transit systems. By examining this story, I deduce lessons for TransLink to expand on its current initiative and provide insights and examples for other jurisdictions and transit authorities.

1.4 Importance of Study

Sexual harassment towards women is a relevant global issue. In a 2011 survey of 143 countries, including Canada, it was found men are more likely than women to say they feel safe walking alone at night (Crabtree and Nsubuga, 2012). In America, 65% of women and 25% of men report being victims of street harassment (Roenius, 2016). Sexual assault statistics in Canada reveal a dire picture: of every 100 incidents of sexual assault in Canada, only 6 are reported to the police; 1 in 4 North American women will be sexually assaulted during their lifetime; and over 80% of sex crime victims are women (SASC, n.d.). A national sample of 12,300 Canadian women aged 18 and over in 2000, showed 80% of those surveyed had experienced male stranger harassment in public and these experiences had detrimental and lasting impacts on their perceived safety (Stop Street Harassment, 2016). However, despite its prevalence, stranger harassment on transit

research is limited. This research fills a gap in the scholarly understanding of the needs of women riding public transit (Modlich, 2012). Academic literature on the use of digital storytelling as a reporting method for safety is also minimal in public transit planning.

In Canada, media articles have recently focused on the relevancy of women riders experiencing sexual harassment on public transit. In Ottawa, 108 incidents of assault occurred over a one-year period, and 75 of those were against women, with nearly 70 occurring on buses (Spalding, 2014). Especially highlighted is the lack of information recorded in the assault reports (2014). In other Canadian cities (such as Edmonton and Toronto), media articles have shared stories of women's personal experience of sexual harassment (Warnica, 2014; and Dubois, 2015). It is estimated 1 in 3 Canadian women will experience sexual assault in their lifetime (Bryden, 2015). In the United States, media reports over the past few years show a similar concern for women's safety on public transit. A recent report in New York stated that 3,000 women were victimized over a five-year period ending in July 2013 (Keivom, 2014). In Los Angeles, 1 in 5 passengers on Metro trains and buses said they feel unsafe due to sexual harassment (Nelson, 2014).

These media stories are not just limited to North America, but are heard worldwide. In Europe, France's deputy minister for women's rights released a report in mid-April 2015 emphasizing the extent of harassment by women transit riders. The report surveyed 600 woman commuters, *all* of who said they had been sexually harassed on public transit at some point (Misra, 2015). A poll taken by the Thomson Reuters Foundation in 2014 in London revealed 32% of women say they have been verbally harassed on public transit and 19% of victims have experienced physical abuse (Villa, 2014). In India, sexual assaults on transit are still widely publicized, most recently that of

a 14-year-old girl and her mother (Victor, 2015). The growing media coverage about sexual assault highlights how prominent the issues are worldwide. The lessons derived from this research can inform transit planning in Metro Vancouver and other major Canadian cities. By highlighting the value of using alternative forms of reporting methods, the voices of female riders can inform safety policies on public transit. Additionally, insights on using social media as a platform for women to share their experience “discuss[es] and acknowledge[s] and validate[s]” their stories, so they can help “bring light to the problems that women face today” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015).

1.8 Outline of Chapters

After outlining a brief overview of the Metro Vancouver case study and supplemental information on sexual assault, the thesis begins with a brief literature review (chapter 2). The review of the relevant literature is integral in defining the scope of research of the thesis topic. The literature review summarizes and evaluates various bodies of writings about the theoretical framework of the study. This method “create[s] a firm foundation for advancing knowledge” (Webster and Watson, 2002, p. xiii) by constructively informing the reader about patterns discovered within the literature through extensive summary and evaluations (Knopf, 2006). Through examining what is a gendered city, the literature creates a background for the context of women’s perceptions of safety on public transit. It also reveals how stories (particularly digital or online) can help provide insights and ideas on how to create a safer public transit system. Chapter three reviews the various research methods used in collecting and analyzing data, and the biases and limitations encountered. The fourth chapter provides a brief overview of the

site area (section 4.1) and summary of the case study's timeline (section 4.2). It includes specific lessons derived from key informants on the case study (section 3.2). Chapter five highlights specific themes arising from the analysis of the data. The sixth chapter concludes the thesis by reflecting on the research findings to synthesize lessons for TransLink, Metro Vancouver planners, and other transit planners nationally and potentially internationally. This chapter also highlights ideas for further study. The appendices include supplementary information on the Metro Vancouver case study, sample interview questions, and consent forms.

2 Literature Review

A literature review is “a work of synthesis” (Knopf, 2006, p. 127). This method requires a review of prior and relevant literature to create, “a firm foundation for advancing knowledge” (Webster and Watson, 2002, p. xiii). The literature review develops the thesis’ theoretical framework, closes gaps within the existing knowledge, and discovers areas where research is needed (Webster and Watson, 2002). This is accomplished by dividing the method’s process three-ways: selecting, reading, and writing. This literature review has two key elements. It summarizes the findings and claims found in prior research. Secondly, it reaches a conclusion about the accuracy and completeness of past research. The literature review provides insights into what is right, wrong, inconclusive, and missing in past research (Knopf, 2006). In summary, the literature review should answer the research questions posed by uncovering new insights about theories examined.

The literature review analyzes larger topics to provide a better understanding of themes present in the research. The theoretical framework helps to ground our understanding about how alternative reporting strategies can better inform safety policy in public transit planning. As a literature review should not simply summarize relevant sources, it should evaluate the current state of knowledge (Knopf, 2006); the literature review fulfills its role in the thesis as a whole by providing a clear analysis of how cities have been constructed for men and how this has negatively affected women and their safety on public transit. The literature review seeks to “be memorable and provide answers to why. [It] should explain, predict, and delight” (Webster and Watson, 2002, p. xx).

The project is framed by the work of several scholarly sources about safety measures in transit planning for women. The project is highly influenced by Leonie Sandercock's emphasis on the importance of narrative in planning, as storytelling is seen as a powerful tool in advocating for change. To derive lessons informing safety policies for women, the following chapter provides an overview of the gendered city, perceptions of safety in urban environments, and the potential of digital narratives in planning as a framework for the thesis.

2.1 Examining the Gendered City

"To walk freely at night" (Plath and Kukil, 2000) was Sylvia Plath's poetic description, describing the dichotomized use of cities by gender. Her personal fear, based on identifying as a woman, embodies the ideology of the gendered city. Plath's yearn to travel, talk, and walk with no fear of harm, is inhibited by her desolate and dark geographical urban surroundings. This notion of fear and anxiety around cities is still common. Women are filled with stories of danger and mistrust of the metropolitan. Phrases of "dress down" and "watch your back" are instilled in the minds of female adolescents. But are these perceptions unwarranted? From a theoretical perspective, it can be argued, "women have never explicitly demanded or enjoyed the *droit de la ville*, the medieval right to the freedom of the city that distinguished urban citizens from feudal serfs" (Hayden, 2002, p. 151). This concept is built into the understanding of the inherently gendered city.

The characterization of urban space as gendered is connected to how space is used and seen through power relations and meanings. Gendered spaces refer to the opportunities, symbols, design, physical structures, authority structures, and regulation of

urban spaces that favor and support a specific gender over the other (Fortuijn, Horn, and Ostendorf, 2004). Historically, cities have been constructed *by*, and consequently, *for* men. Cities have also been designed primarily for nuclear families, where the father works outside of the home – in public space, and the mother works in the home – the private space (Hayden, 2002). This traditional arrangement has led to the division of private and public spaces, in which men dominate the public and women are confined to the private realm. This division has allowed for “dwellings, neighbourhoods, and cities [to be] designed for homebound women constrain[ing] women physically, socially, and economically” (Hayden, 1981, p. 171).

Understanding that men and women experience the city in different ways, can help planners anticipate the consequences of gendered space and design. The gendering of spaces refers to the characteristics of space and characteristics of people-in-spaces. Some examples include certain areas of the city being more attractive to women than men; men and women using the same spaces in different ways; certain areas of the built environment giving feelings of comfort and belonging to women while men feel excluded (or vice-versa); and areas where men exert authority or women exert authority (Fortuijn et. al, 2004). This separation of space by gender has a profound effect on men and women’s lives. As the ‘public’ is historically the domain of the white, upper-middle-class heterosexual male (Fenster, 2006), women are often excluded in the use of public spaces. This exclusion limits one’s rights to the city. Space is the product of social and power relations in society. As McCann argues, politics around public participation in citizenry are conditioned by the urban built environments in which they take place (2002).

Therefore, if a city is built *without* women in mind, it helps perpetuate a power imbalance between men and women.

Women's status in society is a result of religious, cultural, and socioeconomic influences. As Chaudoir and Quinn argue, our patriarchal social system helps ensure that women occupy lower-power statuses than men. Subjection to social phenomena such as stranger harassment and job discrimination helps maintain this group-based hierarchy (2010). In addition to the influences of "cultural, religious, and socioeconomic factors, the physical separation of women and men also contributes to and perpetuates gender stratification" (Spain, 1993, p. 137). Only recently, with the advancement of feminism, have women begun to hold influence in society. Feminism first emerged in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century. The first-wave of feminism focused on equal rights for women. It concentrated on the opposition of legal inequalities due to patriarchy² and women's involuntary dependence on men. First-wave feminism argued the struggles of women were based on their individual and collective exclusion from the public sphere (Borden et al., 2002). The 1960s and 1970s brought rise to second-wave feminism. This subset "placed more importance on understanding why women were different from men, rather than on how women could gain equal status to men" (2002, p. 16). Third-wave feminism, beginning in the early 1990s, expands upon the ideas of first- and second-wave feminism but brings an intersectional approach. It addresses ways in which racism and other inequalities contribute to the oppression of all women – not just white upper-class females (Coleman and Ganong, 2014).

² Patriarchy, a term popularized by sociologist Max Weber, describes the power relations derived from a male dominated household, where the father holds power over younger males and females in the household (Borden et al., 2002). Through time it has been refined and defined as "a system of social structures, and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women" (Walby, 1989, p. 214).

The design and use of space are influenced by social practices. As people are not neutral, the space they occupy is socially produced. Consequently, space services a specific gender over the other. As space serves either males or females, it is “key to understanding the particularities of women’s right to the city” (Buckingham, 2010, p. 60). The everyday experiences of women in cities are directly related to the social construction of space by gender. An analysis of gender helps discern the inequalities existing in urban space (Buckingham, 2010). The gendered dichotomy of design has turned many urban areas into ‘male spaces’, perpetuating inequality in cities. Public washrooms are a primary example of spaces that are sexed. Whereas the home kitchen is seen as a feminine space since cooking is traditionally tied with females. Yet, a restaurant kitchen is viewed as a male space because it is outside of the home (Borden et al., 2002). As space is innately divided by gender³, cities and rural areas are “a mosaic of domains that are exclusively or predominately either male or female” (Fortuijn, et. al, 2004, p. 215). This division helps solidify patriarchal views on women’s place in society. Borden et al. argue, “the kinds of spaces we have, don’t have, or are denied access to can empower us or render us powerless. Spaces can enhance or restrict, nurture or impoverish” (2002, p. 4).

The spatial division and power imbalance of men and women have contributed to a social stratification by gender. This inequality has allowed the needs and wants of women of the public realm to be ignored by planners and architects (Jo Beall, 1996; Wilson E, 1991; Spain 1993). As Jo Beall states,

³ ‘Sex’ refers to the biological difference between men and women. ‘Gender’ refers to the socially, culturally, and historically produced differences between females and males that change over time and place (Borden et al., 2002).

“fragmented cities often make it difficult for people, and particularly women, to manage the tasks of daily life. Women often need to travel outside of rush hours, and to different destinations from those of men, for example, to shops, schools, and clinics. Yet cost cutting inevitably involves a reduction in off-peak services, and private operators are reluctant to take on routes and times that are not so busy. The problems women face are due to the fact that transport systems have invariably been designed around the man’s journey to work; and because the current focus of transport planning is on mobility, rather than accessibility” (1996, p. 12).

Buildings and structure of cities, long outlast the social norms of the time. “Architecture, urban design, land-use planning and infrastructure are left to future generations by past eras” (1996, p. 11). Consequently, public spaces have been built for the needs of men, ignoring women and other minority groups’ needs to make a city inviting, accessible, and safe.

Plans and policies have been created around the presumed needs of the public, which women have historically been excluded from (Greed, 1994). This division of space by gender has been a major determinant in how cities are designed, constructed, and planned. Marxist geographers David Harvey and Edward Soja, emphasize the importance of the relationship between society and space. They claim space is socially produced, but also a condition of the environment and culture (Harvey, 1993; Soja, 1989). As plans and policies have left out the voices of women, the design and functions of public spaces have as well.

When women are perceived as having little to do with public space, they face physical and cultural barriers. Such examples in which women are pushed out of public spaces and back to the private realm, include a woman with a child in a stroller trying to get through a revolving door or subway turnstile, or being unable to find a seat or area to feed or change one’s baby. (Borden et al., 2002). For transit, the fear of potential

harassment can deter women from riding, restricting their mobility. As transit has been designed to best serve peak rush hour travel it ignores the needs of many female and non-female riders using the train at off-peak hours (Khosla, n.d.).

Issues in safety planning will never be solved until cities become welcoming to all. Women currently feel unsafe on public transit. Their voices are not part of plans, policies, and campaigns created by planners and transit authorities. To provide feelings of safety and inclusivity in cities, planners need to address the consequences of the gendered city. By planning with women in mind they can create “a meaningful environment [which] is necessary and essential to a meaningful existence” (Borden et al., 2002).

It is important to note that although women are disadvantaged in comparison to men, subsets of women experience more challenges than others. White, cisgender⁴, and straight women have privilege that others do not. Privilege is “a right, immunity, or benefit enjoyed only by a person beyond the advantages of most” (Flexner and Hauck, 1993). The American Heritage Dictionary defines privilege as a special advantage, permission, right, or benefit granted to or enjoyed by an individual, class, or cast (1996). Ewing states, ‘white privilege’ is an institutional (rather than personal) set of benefits given to individuals with white skin by those in positions of influence and power (2001). Institutional privilege, such as white or male privilege is hard to acknowledge by those who have it. As Kendall states, “privilege, particularly white or male privilege, is hard to see for those of us who were born with access to power and resources. It is very visible for those to whom privilege was not granted” (2002, p. 1).

⁴ Cisgender refers to individuals who are non-transgender

McIntosh argues, privilege is “an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I am meant to remain oblivious” (1995, p. 1). Such entitlements include the acceptance into a new neighbourhood with ease, shopping in a store without suspicion, or taking transit without fear.

Groups of women experience greater consequences of the gendered city than others. It is easy, but arrogant to state that the gendered city affects all women negatively. Audre Lorde, calls out this arrogance in the discussion of feminist theory. She claims women are often painted with the same brush, ignoring their differences. Particularly those of “poor women, black and third world women, and lesbians” (p. 53 qtd. in Borden et al., 2002). Privilege and status set individuals – or groups of women, ahead of others. Third-wave feminism focuses on this through intersectionality⁵. It pushes for inclusivity, but recognizes differences in power. When discussing the gendered city,

“one can present a simplistic model of a dualistic situation in which all men are to blame, and all women suffer equally. . . [However] the situation is [more] complex, as neither men nor women are unitary groups. Each is composed of a range of ages, classes, income groups, and ethnic types, with differing degrees of power” (Greed, 1994, p. 33).

A person views the world based on their life experiences. Diversity, worldview, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, gender, age, and health/ability all contribute to a person’s experience of urban life (Greed, 1994). For example, a child views a city much differently than a middle-aged adult - who views the city contrarily than an elderly person. Additionally, Asian women would experience the consequences of xenophobia

⁵ Intersectional feminism is the belief that women experience oppression in varying ways and degrees of intensity. That cultural patterns of oppressions are related, bound together, and influenced by systems within society. Examples of this include gender, race, class, ability, and ethnicity. (Collins, 2000 and Ritzer, 2007).

on public transit while white women would not. It is important to recognize the different needs of women in planning for a safer public transit system.

A diverse representation of voices must be included in the creation of policies which shape the built environment. Jo Beall argues, “to make the built environment less like an assault course or a danger zone, and to make it more user-friendly, safe, and secure for everybody. . . [we] need to integrate the concept of social diversity into public policy” (1996, p. 12). As street harassment is a symptom of inequality it helps to keep disadvantaged individuals from fully participating and thriving in their city, especially non-white and LGBTQ⁶ individuals. In addition to feeling unwelcome due to their race and/or sexual orientation, there is a serious danger of personal harm from systemic racism and homophobia (Roenius, 2016). In the design and function of transit and its services, it is critical that we create an environment which addresses the needs of all.

Harassment in public is arguably a consequence of a gendered society. Stranger harassment and fear of crime are connected - likewise, street harassment and gender inequality are connected (Logan, 2013). Stranger harassment is a reminder of the importance and relevance of one’s gender. When street harassment occurs, it is as if the assailant is communicating to the victim (woman) that the street belongs to him (and not her). She is not free to do what she wants and go where she pleases. This dominance and ownership of the city may even be proven by sexually violating her (Logan, 2013). As Gardner writes, “public harassment reinforces the basic division between the sexes and prescribes the conduct or mere presence of some while punishing others” (1995, p. 9). It

⁶ LGBTQ is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer. It designates a community of people whose gender or sexual identities create shared political and social concerns (Liberate Yourself, 2011).

is nonexistent (primarily for men), or a limitation of movement in public space due to fear due to one's status, gender, race, age, class, sexual orientation, ethnicity. This fear – real or perceived, of sexual harassment on public transit influences a women's use of transit (Hsu, 2011). Transportation is critical as it provides access to activities and allows individuals to participate in and enjoy a substantive urban citizenship (Levy, 2013). Whether it is participating at a council meeting, going to work, having access to the public library, or loitering in a public space; the right to the city affords everyone the ability to enjoy all aspects of public life with the absence of violence and fear (Whitzman et. al, 2014).

2.2 Perceptions of Safety in Urban and Transit Environments

Women's fear of violence and use of public space is a major issue for women's right to the city. Women's safety is a concern for a variety of academic disciplines (Pain, 1997), specifically in design and city planning (see Hayden, 2002; MacGregor, 1995; Loukaitou-Sideris, 2005; Whitzman, 2007). "Wide-ranging discussions of women's everyday life in cities most often indicate their safety as being a key issue" (Buckingham, 2010, p. 60). Women experience a much higher threat of sexual violence than men (2010). When examining the public realm, women use shopping centres, trails, parks, and public transit more than men. All of these areas are considered more vulnerable to crime (Bell, 1998). However, this does not mean women are always at risk in public spaces, but rather validates the fear that the potential of crime is present.

Empirical studies show that certain environmental factors in public settings are associated with the increase of women's fear. These aspects include desolation, lack of opportunities for informal surveillance, darkness, lack of maintenance, and poor

environmental qualities (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2009). Such characteristics can be found on public transit systems. Environmental features which increase levels of fear are higher traffic flows, evidence of social disorder, signs of physical and social decay, minimal street activity, and disorderly and drunken individuals (Bell, 1998). In transit, design can also induce fear in passengers. “People are mostly fearful in places where they do not have a clear line of sight of their surroundings; where there are many nooks, corners, or other objects behind which someone can hide; and where they may feel trapped with no possibilities of escape” (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2009, p. 555).

Train travel is one of the most fear-inducing activities. Riders often feel confined within the transit system and restricted in their ability to cope with a dangerous situation (Walsh, 1999). Research shows women’s fear of public space and public transit limits their freedoms and enjoyment of public life by restricting their mobility (Deegan and Hill, 1987; Day et al., 2003; Loukaitou-Sideris, 2005). Crime, and fear of crime affect many aspects of our lives in cities (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1996). Fear and anxieties about security are primary detractors from using public transit (Needle and Cobb, 1997). Consequently, safety is an integral part of encouraging transit ridership, particularly for women (U.K. Department of Transport, 2002).

Fear is associated with specific behaviour modifications of individuals. These include not going out alone, not traveling at night, and avoiding certain areas of the city deemed unsafe (Yavuz and Welch, 2010). When cities appear to be unsafe, the transit system also appears to be unsafe. This insecurity impacts the rights of vulnerable groups within cities. Research has proven women, children, the elderly, and the physically handicapped are found to be most fearful of a bus stop and subway settings (Wekerle and

Whitzman, 1995 and Patterson and Ralston, 1983). This can be attributed to fear of vulnerability which occurs in places where one has little to no control, such as a confined subway car or bus (Yavuz and Welch, 2010). “Public concerns over safety may be one of the most important reasons why many choose not to use transit” (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1996, p. 3), restricting one’s rights to the city.

As women limit their mobility due to fear, they are unwittingly reproducing masculine domination over space (Koskela, 1997). The fear of public spaces and public transit prevents women from their right to the city. This “fear and safety can be seen as a social as well as a spatial issue connected . . . to the design of urban spaces” (Fenster, 2006, p. 69). Research on crime and gender in public transit show that women, when compared with men, are more likely to avoid walking after dark due to fear. Women also prefer to drive or take a taxi over walking or public transit because of personal safety concerns (Yavuz and Welch, 2010). Women report higher levels of insecurity at night in train stations, parks, bus stops, and platforms (Lynch and Atkins, 1988); women report high levels of fear of empty trains (U.K. Department of Transport, 2002). Past experiences as a victim of crime and observations of crime influences one’s perceptions of safety in transit environments (Yavuz and Welch, 2010). Age, ability, and socioeconomic status also contribute to vulnerability on transit and increase levels of fear (2010). Additionally, the prospect of long wait times is enough to deter a user because of the potential that a crime could happen (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2009). As perceptions of safety is a detractor of public transit use for women, safety must be ensured in public infrastructure and transportation.

Design has a major influence on women's sense of safety. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) uses specific design modifications to reduce incidences of crime by removing potential opportunities for criminals. CPTED has three main principles: natural surveillance, natural access control, and territorial reinforcement (CPTED Ontario, 2014). In public transit, CPTED can be applied at bus stops and subway stations through proper lighting and good maintenance of physical and environmental structures (Bell, 1998). The three principles of CPTED also ensure bus and train stops are located, designed, and managed to promote safety by being situated in areas of high activity that are surveyed by CCTV cameras, bystanders, and police (Bell, 1998). Despite its prevalence in the literature, CPTED is largely critiqued in regards to gender issues in public spaces. Thus, it should not be the only factor considered when examining design and women's safety.

Fear plays a large role in how women use public space. Fear has many implications for planning and designing the public realm (Bell, 1998). Research shows darkness, poor lighting, the existence of 'hiding spots' along a path, the presence of groups of men loitering, and isolation are factors that strongly contribute to women's fear of crime in public (Yavuz and Welch, 2010 and Whitzman, 1992). For public transit, desolate bus stops, unstaffed train stations, and pedestrian subways are noted as areas that instill fear (Yavuz and Welch, 2010). In addition, service reliability – or how often trains and buses are provided as promised, greatly affects feelings of security of transit users. Service that is frequent, on-time, and provides accurate schedules supports feelings of safety (2010).

In regards to design measures, Valentine specifies 10 other major strategies which could be adopted by planners in regards to women's safety on transit:

1. Location: car parks (kiss and go stations) and entrances should be positioned so there is no tunnel prior to the transit station to walk through.
2. Lighting: Bright white lighting should be used instead of yellow lighting to maximize visibility.
3. Visibility: Stairwells, escalators, and communal entrance doorways to elevators should be visible and glazed so that women can see through them at all times.
4. Painted Walls: Walls should be painted white to improve visibility and make spaces appear more open.
5. Foot-bridges: Foot-bridges should be constructed rather than subways if deemed plausible.
6. Alleyways: These should only be created if necessary in subways. They should be short and as wide as possible, with nothing overhead to maximize visibility and surveillance.
7. Landscaping: There should be no trees or shrubs near pathways or bus stops. Fences and walls should also be minimized so public areas are visible to surrounding houses.
8. Ground floor development: Shops and leisure facilities should occupy ground floor offices to increase foot traffic and ensure empty streets are not created.
9. Infill: Empty spaces, waste areas, and derelict areas in-between developments should be filled.
10. Corners, dogleg bends: Straight site lines are preferred in design. If blind corners are needed, mirrors should be installed to increase visibility. Doorways should open out onto the street, rather than created areas where people can be concealed (1990).

However, it should be noted that design measures can only go so far in creating a safe and friendly urban space. Social relations within a space, specifically the users who control a space, have a greater influence on how people feel within a space than design (Valentine 1990). For example, in unfamiliar environments, signs of social and physical dismay such as vacant buildings, empty parking lots, run-down areas, loiterers, graffiti, and litter also contribute to fear one has about the urban environment (Yavuz and Welch, 2010).

There are many other strategies to create safer public spaces. One idea is the segregation of transit cars and buses by gender. However, studies reveal women's reactions to these are mixed (Yavuz and Welch, 2010 and Loukaitou-Sideris, 2008). Fairchild and Rudman correlate images of separate cars – now used in Tokyo, Japan and Rio De Janeiro, Brazil with the alternate society in Margaret Atwood's (1986) novel, "A Handmaid's Tale". The novel presents a society where women live in isolation, protected from men and the male gaze. The researchers argue although separated transit cars are not as extreme of a separation as situations in the novel, they still exasperate the idea that women cannot be active participants in life due to men's inability to control themselves in public (2008). A strategy proven to be quite effective in increasing the general perceptions of safety on transit is the use of request-stop programs. This program allows women to exit the bus at locations closer to their final destination during the evening (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2008).

For improving safety on buses, three specific strategies have been deemed most effective. These include installing additional security hardware, having uniformed officers on buses, and improving CCTV. The three strategies most effective for trains include having uniformed officers on trains, having non-uniformed officers on trains, and improving CCTV (2008). Other strategies, such as community patrolling, outreach programs (Yavuz and Welch, 2010), and safety audits are proven as beneficial by garnering attention towards women's safety in the city (Whitzman, 2007). In summary, it is evident women particularly feel safer on public transit systems when transit officials (clothed and non-clothed) are visible on public transit. CCTV is proven to be helpful, but only after an attack has taken place (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2008). Additionally, levels of

safety increase when transit officials take measures to prevent harassment, such as a bus driver refusing to allow intoxicated individuals to board a bus (Yavuz and Welch, 2010).

Women’s perceptions of safety while using public transit is an important topic for urban planners. Buckley argues, “by better understanding how fear of sexual harassment influences travel behavior, planners can more effectively address women’s transit needs” (2016, p. 1). Figure 1 clearly communicates all the different factors affecting women’s perception of safety:

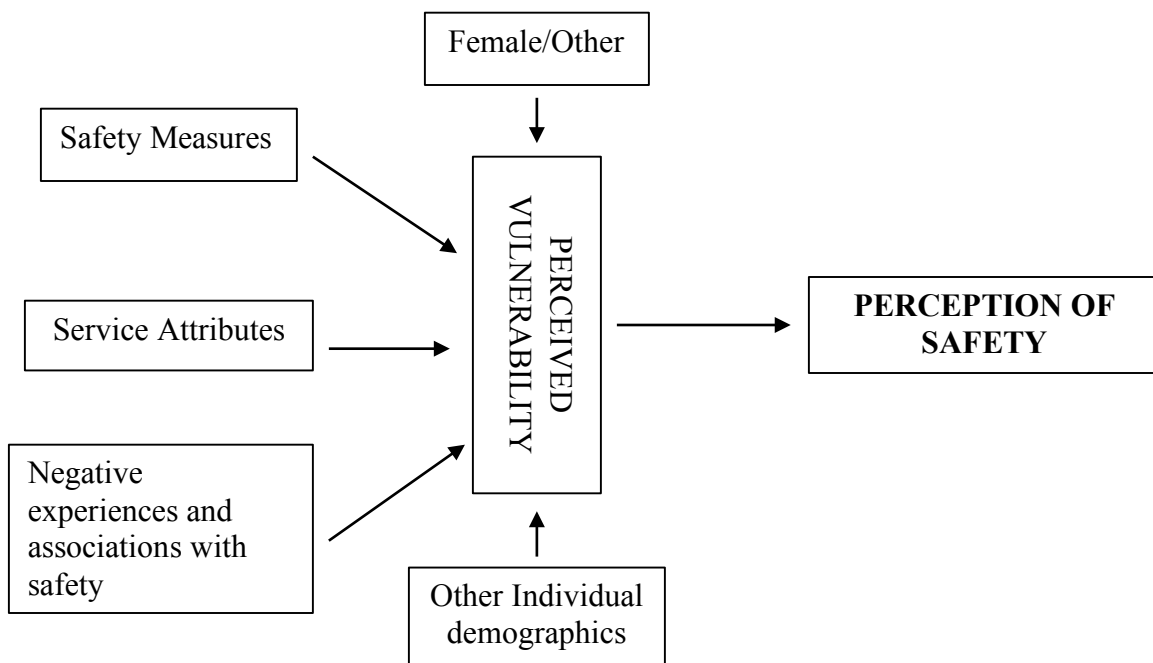


Figure 1: Model of Perceived Safety (Yavuz and Welch, 2010, p. 245)

Sexual harassment in public spaces diminishes a woman’s right to the city. As perceptions of fear limit one’s ability to freely move within their city and access public benefits, women lose their sense of ownership and belonging within their city (2016). As

Fenster argues, fear of sexual assault is not solely an issue of crime and public safety, but one of access to urban space (2005).

2.3 The Use of Digital Narratives in Public Transit Planning

Storytelling is integral to human nature. As Gottschall writes, “we are, as a species, addicted to story. Even when the body goes to sleep, the mind stays up all night, telling itself stories” (2013, p. 1). Narratives help us engage with public spaces by sharing personal experiences. Storytelling in public transit planning is a way riders can share their daily narrative of commuting and their negative or positive experiences. By examining stories, and how they can be used by transit authorities, women’s voices provide comments and understanding on the apparent fear women have of crime in public space (Loukaitou-Sideris and Fink, 2008).

There is a current disconnect between urban planning practices and the needs of women riding public transit (Modlich, 2012). Professional practitioners appear to not be undertaking the appropriate participatory processes on social media to address this. Despite the fact public transit is created for public use, “public engagement is less common in transportation” (Quick and Zhao, 2011). Forms of citizen participation should be incorporated in transit planning as “reaching out and engaging citizens and stakeholders is not just a fact of life for planners but a cannon of good and ethical planning practice” (Seltzer and Mahmoudi, 2012, p. 3). Public participation (or public engagement) in transit planning not only includes using social media as a tool to engage with the public to garner feedback and insight, but exploring ways on how it can further integrate the public within the planning process.

Public participation took an active role in planning in the 1960s due to the motivation to increase citizen participation. This new school of thought “embraced the view of a planner as not so much a technical expert. . . but more as a facilitator of other people’s views about how a town or part of town should be planned” (Taylor, 1998, p. 161-162). Arnstein’s “Ladder of Citizen Participation” (1969) identified eight categories of participation and their authenticity in relation to public engagement. These include citizen control, delegated power, partnership, placation, consultation, informing, therapy, and manipulation. The concepts range from degrees of citizen power, degrees of tokenism, to non-participation. Arnstein criticizes the lower levels of the ladder as menial tasks to complete to push ahead an agenda while praising the higher levels’ genuine involvement of citizens within the planning process.

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) created a spectrum of public participation that also focuses on authentic collaboration in planning. The spectrum focuses on informing, consulting, involving, collaborating, and empowering citizens through public engagement. An adaptation of the model is seen below:

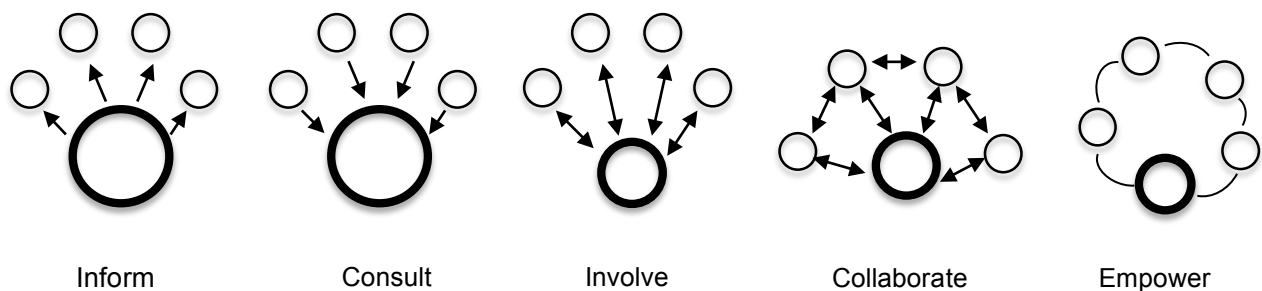


Figure 2: Spectrum of Public Participation (City of Vancouver, 2012).

In this concept, planners inform the community to put, as Arnstein would say, ‘the power’ back into the citizen’s hands – emphasizing citizen control. Consultation then occurs to further gain an understanding of the community’s wants and needs. Thirdly, it strengthens citizen involvement in the planning process through activities such as open houses, community workshops, surveys, interviews, and focus groups to gain additional viewpoints and considerations. Next, collaboration is sought through initiatives such as partnerships, councils, stakeholder groups, and advisory committees to involve the public in all aspects of decision-making. By collaborating with the public, the community is empowered and integrated into the planning process. The concept of direct citizen participation helps to create social capital (Mandarano et al., 2010). Social capital encourages connections among individuals through social networks. These relationships create reciprocity and trust, in which mutual understandings begin to arise. Subsequently enabling participants to effectively move towards a shared objective due to better facilitation of information sharing, increased conflict resolution, more effective decision making, more resourceful coordination, and a thinking-forward outlook (2010).

Public participation and the formation of social capital within public transit planning is key for transit to meet the needs of riders. Thus, “public involvement [in public transit planning] cannot be seen simply as a routine issue, to be addressed using generic tools and approaches. Transport planning is perhaps one of the most complex policy domains, where the place of public involvement is far from straightforward” (Booth and Richardson, 2001, p. 146). Successful strategies used are often bottom-up, facilitating a genuine two-way dialogue between the public and planners. True public engagement includes the community in real decision-making. Participatory techniques

adopting collaborative and transactional approaches prove particularly useful in complex policy areas, such as transportation (Booth and Richardson, 2001). Whitzman et al. (2014) use the metaphor of ‘four legs for a good table’ to discuss the four categories of actors involved in a collaborative planning approach. Elected officials function as ‘champions’; public servants as ‘enablers’; community-based groups as ‘advocates’; and researchers as ‘information brokers’. This combination of influential actors mobilizes adequate information, power, resources, and action to create urban social change fostering gender equality, diversity and improved social inclusion. This style of engagement can be seen on community councils or participatory advisory committees, where individuals act as champions for the larger community to share their needs, wants, and ideas on specific ideas. Social media can be used in this sense to gain additional insight on what these desires and suggestions may be.

Public engagement is a crucial component in the planning process. Therefore, it is important all avenues are explored in reaching out to citizens. Currently, “digital methods are starting to be embraced and lauded as effective tools for citizen participation and outreach approaches” (Mandarano et al., 2010). As the availability of mobile computing devices has become popular, so has their use in the engagement of public citizens. Presently, over 2 billion people worldwide use social media websites and almost 6 billion use mobile phones worldwide. Additionally, the use of smart phones is increasing at a remarkable rate (Ghosh and Lewis, 2015). Wireless access to the Internet has dramatically increased, just as the ordinary citizen’s expectations for quick and easy access to information. “In short, we are becoming digital citizens” (Mandarano, Meenar, and Steins, 2010, p. 123). Social media is a new medium allowing immediate interactions

through images, texts, documents, and videos to create, share, or exchange ideas or experiences (Ghosh and Lewis, 2015). This is a, “comparatively new arena for public agencies seeking to influence how people think about public services such as transit” (Schweitzer, 2014, p. 219). As digital citizens, the way “we live and interact with others” (Mandaró et al., 2010, p. 123) is dramatically changing.

The shift to “e-communication” is a trend planners have begun to use in various strategies. Recently, planners have gravitated to the Internet and its wide and asynchronous reach to engage a larger group of stakeholders (see Evans and Mathur, 2005; Evans-Cowley, 2010; Evans-Cowley and Hollander, 2010). Through websites, blogs, forums, geolocation applications, wikis, media and document sharing sites, social and professional networks, and Twitter accounts, the internet has enabled citizens to become virtual participants with the help of real-time reporting and distribution. If planners want to create strong, equitable, and sustainable public transit systems, they should be encouraging transit agencies to use interactive social media approaches (Schweitzer, 2014). Bregman argues social media provides transit agencies with numerous opportunities to directly connect and engage with their riders (2012). Whether through timely updates, public information, citizen engagement, employee recognition, or simple entertainment, there are many ways planners can capitalize on social media for public engagement (Bregman, 2012). Social media is a way to gain feedback on safety issues and new projects, but it also can facilitate a greater connection between the public and an organization through specific outlets or platforms. Such examples include “hashtag” campaigns on specific questions or broadcasting live interactive board/council meetings.

Using the Internet as a means of communication allows planners to engage with users of public transit to hear their stories, voices, and concerns. Bregman's survey of transit agencies provides advice and lessons on the use of social media in planning. These include keeping social media in perspective to the demographic it services, identifying associated and unseen costs with using social media when creating a budget, considering organizational impacts, finding the right voice to use on social media, willingness to listen to riders, understanding the strengths and limitations of social media, understanding that different platforms provide different services, having fun, and just trying it out (Bregman, 2012). In summary, transportation agencies can use social media to reach out to riders to help facilitate participation, build support, and create social capital. Every person who has access to the internet, "has the capability to become a citizen journalist, create advocacy groups, organize public gatherings, connect with people across the globe, and accomplish tasks without face-to-face interaction" (Mandarano et. al, 2010, p. 125). The rich possibilities for engagement through social media are astonishing.

Although social media provides many opportunities for transit planning, there are many limitations to consider. Mandarano et al. (2010) argue despite technology having many enabling qualities, it creates many inequalities – specifically in relation to the digital divide and dual city. Not everyone has a connection to the internet, or wants to. The concept of digital divide refers to the division between those who have ready access to computers, the internet/social media, and smart phones – and those who do not. Thus, ensuring social media applications and campaigns accessible in addition to social media platforms is important. Additionally, content management and strategies for addressing online criticism; estimating resource requirements for managing staffing around social

media; and ensuring legal and security concerns for online security, privacy protection, and compliancy with transparency are other issues to consider when using social media as a planning tool (Bregman, 2012).

Storytelling, is another important tool in planning practice (van Hulst, 2012). Stories allow individuals to share and vocalize uncomfortable and difficult experiences. “There is an abiding recognition that existence is inherently storied. Life is pregnant with stories” (Kearney, 2002, p. 130). These plurivocal narratives capture and represent a number of voices, allowing for differences in perspective, storyline, and experience to be heard. Stories permit different sectors of a community to share how they do – or do not, belong to the city in their own voice (Goldstein et al., 2013). Using stories as a reporting method allows women to vocalize their experiences and thoughts on safety in public transit. A collection of stories provides a platform to ‘the voiceless’, ‘muted’, or those traditionally marginalized. Narratives offer a safe place for women to share their experience. As stories “transform places into spaces or spaces into places” (Certeau, 1984, p. 23), they help cities contest patriarchy. For safety measures, stories become a resistance to gendered spaces. Storytelling provides a “repertory of tactics for future use. It is in the stories of our everyday being, in our trying to live well with the challenges of being that we may engender some insight or percipience” (Lewis, 2011, p. 506).

Digital storytelling (when stories are told through platforms online) is a bottom-up approach planning method. As it is a ‘user-generated’ media practice, digital storytelling is used by ordinary people through digital tools (Lundby, 2008). Stories shared online illuminate a problem otherwise not seen. Gaffney and Pollak state, “the power of story brings us clarity, and hopefully, motivation to make changes in the world.

At the very least, we are inspired to making changes in our own lives” (2006, p. 96).

When we share our story, we allow others to see our perspective. Others are able to see and share our hurt and fear. Lundby argues narratives are a cultural tool. They are part of our living, they connect the past, present, and future (2008). Narratives also offer us a way of understanding characters in our environment; stories allow us to form an understanding of the national identity, the collective memory, and the individual self (2008). Stories provide an insight into the everyday workings of a city. Stories are an opportunity for planners to engage with citizens to discover their wants and needs. Stories “are powerful tools of a democratic, progressive planning practice” (van Hulst, 2012, p. 304). By using social media as a platform for stories, planners gain insight and can integrate public voices in the planning process.

The art of storytelling is a tool used in healing trauma. Reyner claims, “art is a language that gives voice to how we feel inside. . . art is a safe way to express our feelings” (n.d., p. 1). Stories can be told with or without words. They can be symbolic or literal (Blanch et al., 2012). For the purpose of this research, factual stories of past experiences are discussed. Dyer explores the importance of sharing and listening to story as a psychologist. She states, “many find solace in sharing their experiences with others, knowing they are not alone” (2001, p. 1). Stories help one heal, especially from traumatic events such as harassment or sexual assault. When we go from ‘what is wrong with you’ to ‘what happened to you’, we lay the foundation for new stories about what the future can hold (Blanch et al., 2012). In addition, the anonymity of the Internet creates a safe space for women (and others) to share and feel comfortable reporting their story. By “telling and listening to stories, actors in the present not only make sense of the past, but

also prepare for the future” (van Hulst, 2012, p. 300). Stories discuss what is, but also share insight into what could be – or rather, what ought to be.

There is currently limited scholarly research about how storytelling - specifically online stories, can influence transportation planning and policy for women’s safety. It is evident stories are integral in creating change and providing insight into the use and perception of urban spaces. Stories potentially act as a powerful catalyst for change (Forrester, 2009). As van Hulst argues:

“Thinking through story-telling as a model for planning makes us aware of the ways in which planning could be more inclusive, more democratic, if citizens are offered space to tell their stories. It encourages us to imagine how we can go from a shared community (core) story or a set of rival community stories to a credible plan” (2003, p. 303).

When planners use stories in planning, they draw the voices of ordinary citizens into plans and policies. “Narratives are a way to express the subjective and symbolic meaning of resilience, enhancing our ability to engage multiple voices and enable self-organizing processes” (Goldstein et al., 2013, p. 1), they offer opportunities for both planners and others (non-profits, transit authorities, municipalities, etc.) to garner change. As the world has shifted towards a digital format, planners can use online narratives to connect to the public. By garnering stories to explore the needs and wants of transit riders, one can gain insights to create better policies and plan for a safer and brighter future.

3 Research Methods

The next section outlines the methods used within the Metro Vancouver case study. The methods of data collection, including precedent review, narrative analysis, and key informant interviews are summarized and explained in their use and role within the thesis. Finally, limitations and biases are discussed.

The human being is a story-telling animal (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Stories are an integral component of human identity and culture. They allow us to share our experiences, history, ideas, and feelings in creative ways. As story is central to human meaning, one can question why, in the research world, is there not more storytelling (Lewis, 2011)? If you change the story, you can change the city (Sandercock, 2003), exemplifying the influence storytelling has on human culture and city planning. Thus, this thesis capitalizes on the stories presented in the online blog to examine the current narrative in Metro Vancouver and explore ways in which it can be changed in the future. Through narrative analysis, a precedent review, and key informant interviews, this thesis examines how digital stories are used as alternative reporting strategies to create safer spaces and experiences on public transit for women.

The qualitative research featured in this thesis offers a way to explore and understand “the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2003, p. 22). In this case, examining women’s perceptions of safety on public transit. Qualitative research seeks to understand the personal involvement and influence in a research problem, such as providing answers to how and why rather than whom, when, and where. The qualitative narrative approach examines why women feel unsafe or have experienced harassment on TransLink are or are not using official or alternative

reporting strategies. It is also used to understand how alternative reporting strategies are, and can be used to encourage reporting of harassment.

By exploring the importance of social media as a tool for planners, the research grounds personal online stories and insights from semi-structured interviews with an extensive review of pertinent literature and precedents. The literature review in chapter 2 provides a theoretical context to create a foundation towards the understanding of the thesis' research questions. The analysis of similar precedents garners an understanding of how social media is used for safety measures in transit planning. The qualitative research provides an understanding of the rider's and transit official's experience to answer the research questions posed. This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the perceptions of safety on public transit and how online and alternative reporting strategies can be used for transit and social planners within Canada.

3.1 Narrative Analysis

Narrative analysis is based on the study of discourse and the textual representation of discourse (Gray, 2004). What makes narrative analysis distinct is that it deals with dialogue and text extracted from varying sources, in this case, online narratives posted anonymously on a grass-roots online blog entitled: "Harassment on TransLink". These stories were complimented by key-informant interviews to further the researcher's understanding of the metanarrative's potential to influence potential policy and plans.

To better understand the issues of safety for female transit riders in Metro Vancouver, the research analyzed the stories of female riders and proponents involved in the online blogs to document and examine how to increase reporting and combat sexual assault on transit based on personal experiences. When a good narrative is finished, "it






should be unthinkable for a bystander to say ‘So what?’” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 240).

Through interweaving the multiple stories of sexual assault from the online database, the research explores the larger issue of urban safety which identifies how the design of cities, their policies, and transit campaigns can affect the way women use and perceive a city and its components.

This method of narrative analysis, in which “stories describe human experience and action” (Oliver, 1998, p. 244) helps provide context for and give meaning to the situation of unreported incidents of sexual assault on public transit in Metro Vancouver. There is no single method for narrative analysis; rather, it has to do with how the individual interprets things and, in this case, how I, the researcher interpret the experiences presented (Riessman, 1993). The research uses the methods of thematic analysis and inductive reasoning as a guide for interpretation and to create research that is valid, reliable, and consistent. As narratives signify storied ways of knowing and communicating, the research compares these experiences to the campaigns and strategies in place to discern possibilities and further potential for the case study and other cities.

Through thematic analysis, “emphasis is on the context of a text” (Riessman, 1993, p. 1), focusing on *what* is said rather than *how* it is said. Thematic analysis is a useful approach when analyzing a large number of stories, by helping to find common themes about a single event or topic. Following this ideology, after I inputted all the stories to Dedoose, a qualitative coding program, I read through each one to get an overall understanding of larger issues each story speaks to. I then created “parent codes” applicable to specific messages. I went through each individual story and applied codes (and possible “child codes”) to each story. These codes can be found in Appendix 1-a.

The coding software used, Dedoose, automatically creates specified colours for each parent code and a similar shade for the child code. This is an example of how it was categorized, reflected in Microsoft Office.

Story	Parent Code	Child Code
The bus was standing-room only, so touching was unavoidable. However, the man standing behind me, who I believe was white, in his 30s (?) and sadly, heading to the same destination as I, deliberately stood right behind me so he could press his erect penis into my lower back.	 - Transit Service Components	Crowding
	 - Harassment	
I would have reached for the report bar, but they were watching us for reaction	 - Transit Safety Design Features	Panic buttons
I feared the guy would follow us off the bus and the area is not very well lit and right next to a large school and playing field	 - Perceptions of Safety	
	 - Land Use Features	Visibility

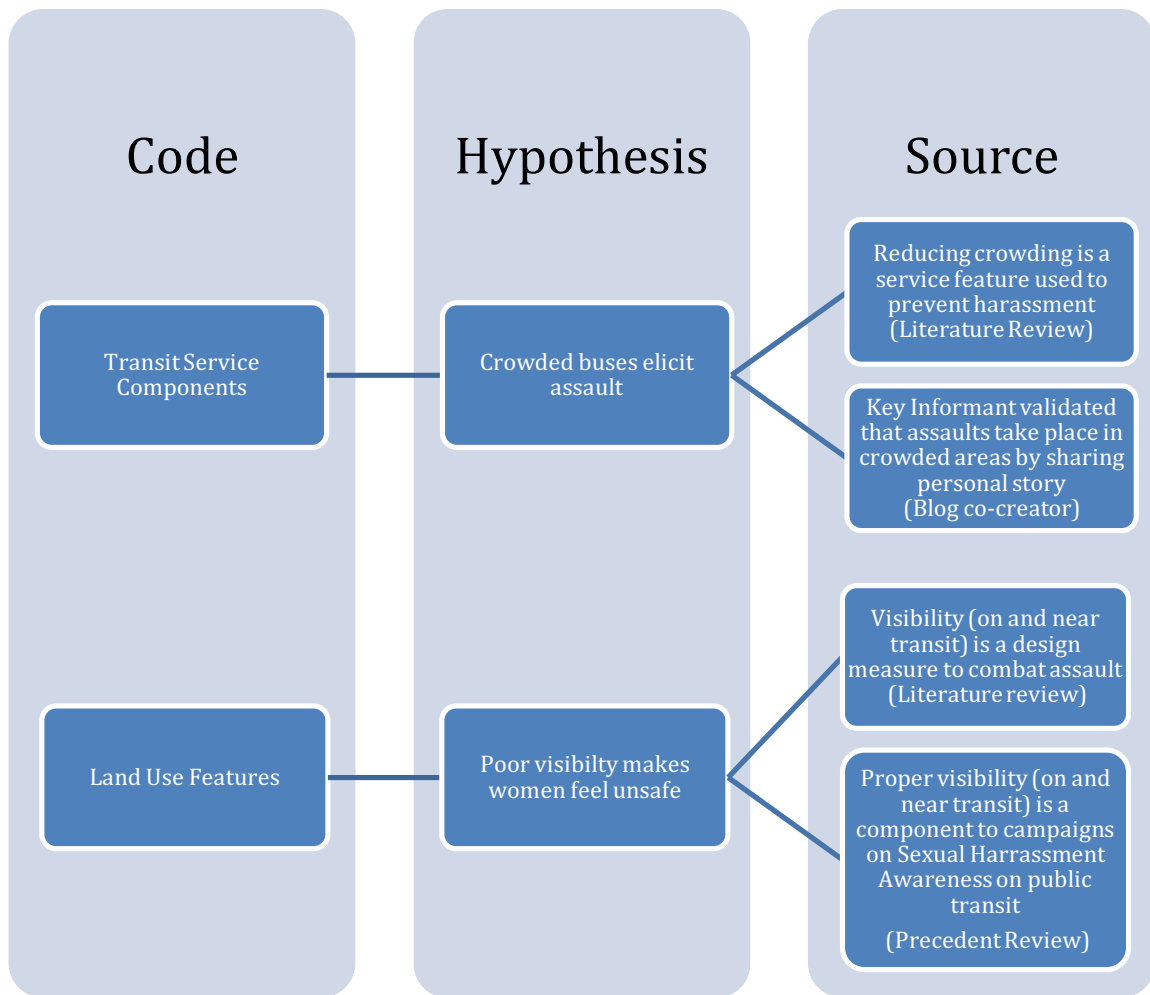
Child codes were only added if there was a need to be more specific, as I was using inductive reasoning. In this method, as you work from the bottom up, it requires specificity to help better define themes reflecting the metanarrative. Therefore, I applied child codes to large topics (such as transit safety features) that have many facets.

Once the codes were themed and categorized, hypotheses were extracted developing significant and comparable data to help answer the proposed research questions. This method is a “research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context” (Krippendorff, 2012, p. 403). As I used inductive reasoning, specific observations were derived from the parent and child codes, to help generate ideas and hypotheses (Walliman, 2006). I did this by extracting ideas and

thoughts based on the context of the stories and related code. Using the same example chart, here is an example of what was elicited:

Story	Parent Code	Child Code	Hypothesis
<p>The bus was standing-room only, so touching was unavoidable. However, the man standing behind me, who I believe was white, in his 30s (?) and sadly, heading to the same destination as I, deliberately stood right behind me so he could press his erect penis into my lower back.</p>	<p>■ - Transit Service Components</p>	Crowding	<p>Crowding on transit service vehicles helps elicit unwanted behavior.</p>
	<p>■ - Harassment</p>		<p><i>(No hypotheses were made for harassment codes, as this would be an assumption into the mind of the perpetrator which goes outside the context of this research.)</i></p>
<p>I would have reached for the report bar, but they were watching us for reaction</p>	<p>■ - Transit Safety Design Features</p>	Panic buttons	<p>Panic buttons need to be hidden from perpetrators, yet easily accessible.</p>
<p>I feared the guy would follow us off the bus and the area is not very well lit and right next to a large school and playing field</p>	<p>■ - Perceptions of Safety</p>		<p>Fear of harassment is often escalated by the victim, thinking what next. Will I be followed off public transit? Will they continue to harass me?</p>
	<p>■ - Land Use Features</p>	Visibility	<p>Poor lighting and unpopulated areas near transit services (such as bus stops or stations) affect perceptions of safety.</p>

After the hypotheses were made, they were then categorized by similarity (manually) using Microsoft Excel. This helped validate the inferences and hypotheses, by showing if themes were repeated, or could be found in the literature, key informant, or an aspect of a precedent. For example, this looked like:



However, if a theme was not repeated or found again in the other sources, I personally decided if it was valuable to include in the analysis or not, by using my own judgment. I did this by carefully deciding if this were a ‘one-time incident’, or if this idea had merit and contributed to the larger narrative of revealing women’s personal experiences and ideas for safety on public transit. From here, I separated the hypotheses into general themes within social media, safety, and transit planning, to offer key lessons from the case study and opportunities for Metro Vancouver. Seven themes emerged from the research, these are discussed in further detail in Chapter 5.

In addition to the lessons from stories, I extracted as much quantitative data as possible. Although the stories were anonymous, users had an option to record their age and gender when inputting their story in the blog. This provided insight into the demographic of who uses social media (and consequently for whom to design and target campaigns), as well as what audiences are not currently serviced or using social media (This table can be found in Appendix 1-b). I also pulled out locations from the stories for the potential to create a “crime hot-spot” map using such software as GIS, a map-making program. The table created could generate a heat map to better visualize concentrated areas of crime (This table can be found in Appendix 1-b).

This analysis of recorded narratives by theme helps illustrate their context or meaning (Riessman, 1993). This method provides an understanding of the human experience, for “it is through stories that we can begin to understand human experience as lived, interpreted, and expressed . . . [and as we come to better understand the interpretation of experiences] we may be able to better understand what we need or ought to do” (Oliver, 1998, p. 247). These hypotheses help reveal how Vancouver and other municipalities can create safer public transit systems for women. The analysis of stories reveals how alternative reporting strategies offer insights from the public. Specifically providing lessons on needs unaddressed or overlooked by transit, the demographics of who uses social media and who is currently left out, crime statistics, and so forth.

3.2 Key-Informant Interviews

The qualitative research uses four semi-structured key informant interviews with two transit officials, a co-creator of the ‘Harassment on TransLink’ blog, and the Team Leader of the Hollaback! Vancouver chapter (a similar activist group in the area that uses

blogging as an informal reporting method for street harassment). These interviews help discover the potential and limitations of using storytelling and social media in transit planning. The research used specific questions to lead to a deeper discussion to gather qualitative data to inform this analysis. This qualitative method involves “a strategy of inquiry in which the research studies the lives of individuals and asks one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives” (Creswell, 2003, p 35). This style of research poses a social constructivist form, which claims “individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences” (2003, p. 27).

The interviewees for this research project were selected by their connection to the project. Those selected include the SFU student who created the blog, the Vancouver team leader of the (online) activist group Hollaback!, and TransLink and Transit Police officials who were, and are involved in the case study and various safety policy and strategy formation. Through e-mail and phone correspondence, I reached out to many individuals to participate in the interview and for their signed consent as participants. Over 20 individuals were contacted, but only 4 were reached. The consent forms can be found in Appendix 1-c. As the research seeks to understand how alternative strategies can be used for reporting sexual assault on transit, specifically how online storyboards can act as a reporting strategy – understanding the process of the case study provided insights and lessons on how this story could be repeated elsewhere. By complementing the account of online stories with the voices of the proponents of change, a more accurate and representation of the case study can portray and uncover insights on planning policy and campaigns affecting the perceptions of safety on public transit and the means to address them.

“Good narratives *capture* and *represent* many *different* voices and are amenable to being told by each in their unique way” (Goldstein et. al, 2013, p. 6). Qualitative research, specifically narrative research, needs not to generalize the popular ideology, but develop a specific exploration of a cultural phenomenon through purposeful sampling strategies (Creswell and Clark, 2007). Thus, an important part of this methodology was choosing who would be sampled to represent the case study. Specifically, focusing on the characteristics of the key informants chosen, so they are similar and representative to those within the whole group (Walliman, 2006). The interviewees were selected through non-probability sampling, based on non-random means. This means the sampled group fit characteristics so they represented the voice of the story to be heard.

It was originally proposed that in addition to those part of the Metro Vancouver case study, transit officials and leaders of non-profit and activist groups from selected precedent cities would be interviewed to gain multiple understandings of various perspectives on the use of social media as an alternative reporting method for safety on transit. Unfortunately, due to time constraints and lack of responses from individuals contacted, this idea was removed from the research intent. Rather, I shifted the focus directly on the different components and perspectives of the Metro Vancouver case study. These included the viewpoints of TransLink (transit authority), Transit Police (policing authority), ‘Harassment on TransLink’ blog co-creator, and adding insight from the team leader of the local activist group Hollaback! Vancouver, who had been involved with both Transit Police and the Harassment on TransLink blog on combatting street harassment in Vancouver. All interviewees are not named in this thesis, as per the ethics protocol, but are characterized by their chosen job title.

In terms of sample size, there is often a preference for a larger sample, as this provides greater accuracy based on a larger number of stories, answers, and opinions collected. However, due to the cost, time, and effort the sample size for this study is quite small. This is compensated by using the stories already collected on the online blogs to amplify the number of voices heard. As the interviews only reached out to a number of active participants within the Metro Vancouver context, the research is limited in its provision of a wholly reliable and valid study. In addition, a bias may exist in solely using transit officials from TransLink. Nonetheless, the issue of sample size and range is acknowledged.

Interviews were conducted on Skype or Google Video in a semi-structured style. Through the semi-structured interviews, personal stories, insights, and ideas for safety on TransLink were discussed. Semi-structured interviews consist of a number of integral questions defining and directing areas to explore. They also allow interviewees to diverge in depth in other ideas or responses not considered by the researcher (Gray, 2004). As interviewing is “simply a conversation with a purpose” (Berg, 2007, p. 66), the intent was to frame questions to encourage discussion of the interviewees’ stories and thoughts around perceptions of safety on TransLink and current and past reporting strategies. Questions were based on the interview schedule, which included a list of probing queries. Interview schedule A was used with transit officials to learn about the potential of social media in a planning and policing atmosphere for safety on public transit. Interview schedule B was used for those involved with blogs, the Blog Co-creator and Hollaback! Team Leader. The semi-structured nature of the interviews provided flexibility and allowed for opportunities to discover and elaborate on information not necessarily

thought of as pertinent by the researcher (Gray, 2004). Questions were grounded around experiences and processes used by representative companies to combat prevent sexual assault. The interview schedules consisted of approximately eight questions (they can be found in Appendix 1-d) and were around 45-75 minutes each.

In the attempt to interpret meaning from the interviews, a number of assumptions were considered. Crotty identifies three assumptions:

- “1. Meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting. Qualitative researchers tend to use open-ended questions so that the participants can share their views.
2. Humans engage with their world and make sense of it based on their historical and social perspectives – we are born into a world of meaning bestowed upon us by our culture. Thus, qualitative researchers seek to understand the context or setting of the participants through visiting this context and gathering information personally. They also interpret what they find, an interpretation shaped by the researcher’s own experiences and background.
3. The basic generation of meaning is always social, arising in and out of interaction with a human community. The process of qualitative research is largely inductive, with the inquirer generating meaning from the data collected in the field” (qtd. in Creswell, 2003, p. 28-29).”

These assumptions outline the issue of bias in collecting valid and reliable qualitative data. They highlight the importance of the sampling strategy used in gathering an accurate, despite small, sample of participants to provide stories and answers which exemplify the larger voice on safety for women on public transit.

Once the interviews were conducted, audio files were transcribed to analyze the content. The audio files were transcribed onto the computer manually. The approach used to analyze and interpret the qualitative data collected was through an inductive content analysis. Content analysis is a flexible “method of analyzing written, verbal or visual communication messages” (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008, p. 107). It is a “useful technique for

allowing [one] to discover and describe the focus of individual, group, institutional, or social attention” (Stemler, 2001, p. 1). By using the transcripts and notes from the interviews to “follow participants down their trails” (Adams, 2007, p. 339), I was able to discover the main themes within the big picture or metanarrative of women’s safety on transit. As content analysis “allows the researcher to test theoretical issues to enhance understanding of the data” (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008, p. 108), this method enabled an examination of larger issues by piecing together experiences and events the interviewees explained and observed as transit riders, transit officials, or activists.

Using a directed content analysis approach, I applied the same parent and child codes used for the online stories to the interviews. After a thorough read-through of the transcribed interviews, new codes were also created. Using an inductive style, ideas and lessons were derived from the categorized codes. This coding strategy revolved around reading the transcripts and classifying them into general patterns (Adams, 2008) to allow for a better understanding of the main actors, factors, and characteristics influencing the larger picture. By developing common themes, I was able to pull out lessons, concepts, and ideas from key informants to answer my research questions. In addition, I pieced together the timelines of the case study from the perspective of the Blog Co-creator, TransLink, and Transit Police. This walkthrough of events is found in Chapter 4, section 2.

A number of assumptions questioning the reliability and validity of semi-structured interviews were considered. Berg outlines these as a) creating universally structured questions, so they are structured in words familiar to the people being interviewed. As well as, b) questions used in interviews may reflect an awareness that

individuals understand the world in different contexts. Therefore, I approached topics in varying ways. Probing questions were used to ask the question from different viewpoints or worldviews (Berg, 2007). As interviews are interpretive and unique, questions were specific in language, directness, and context to the interviewee. The questions asked were framed toward the interviewee, and the interviewees themselves were carefully selected to ensure the reliability of answers and to provide an accurate portrayal of the issue at hand. In addition, as the topic of the research could be considered emotional, sensitivity was considered in the selection of interviewees, creation of questions, and throughout the interview process.

In the discussion of the data analysis procedures, the issues of validity and reliability needs to be addressed, specifically in regards to fieldwork. In general, “reliability in narrative research usually refers to the dependability of the data, while validity typically refers to the strength of the analysis of the data, the trustworthiness of the data and ease of access to that data” (Webster and Mertova, 2007, p. 89). It is important to note in interviews there is always concern regarding the truth, correspondence, coherence, and political, pragmatic, and ethical use of narratives (Adams, 2008). Specifically, in story-telling and narrative style of research, these issues of accurate and repeatable data is a concern; as interviews and stories are often unique in terms of sample size (breadth and width of those interviewed) and who is interviewed (reliable sources and accurate representation). It is often difficult to determine the credibility and consistency of the interviews and interviewees. To satisfy the validity of my research I used a three-fold approach. This helped support my findings from the

analysis of stories and interviews with lessons from the precedent review, and extensive literature review to provide consistency and reliability.

3.3 Precedent Review

To explore how social media has been used in safety measures within public transit planning, a precedent analysis is used. Cities and their transit authorities, nationally and internationally, were selected by using specific criteria to examine different strategies, concepts, and ideas of various transit campaigns that have made good use of social media as a planning tool in public transit planning. By looking at similar cases, I was able to construe connections and implications to the Metro Vancouver context. These precedents range from an analysis of simple online engagement on social media to specific safety campaigns used by transit authorities to combat sexual assault and improve perceptions of safety on public transit. The precedents include non-profit/grass-roots blogs or online platforms, a cohesive ‘hashtag’ on bringing awareness to sexual harassment, and organized and renowned campaigns by official organization used to create a safer public transit system for women to gain lessons and insights about the potential social media has for safety in transit planning and policy.

To determine comparable and applicable cases, I identified specific indicators. The most important indicator I created was a precedent having a similar background to the Metro Vancouver case study, meaning the chosen city must have a publicized or statistical issue of harassment of women riders on their public transit system. Second, the city selected should have a transit agency or other agency (such as a non-profit, policing agency, or activist group) attempting to address the issue (through specific campaigns and/or reporting methods). Third, social media should be a part of the organization or

municipality's campaign. Blogging, by either the city, transit agency, or grass-roots imitative, is preferred to draw specific and conclusive comparisons to the Metro Vancouver Case study. In addition, two other criteria were included to help narrow the scope of research. These included partnerships, which allowed me to select precedents that made great use of different organizations similar to the Metro Vancouver example; and quality, which helped with selecting well-researched, well thought-out, and successful campaigns. The following table outlines the process in selecting the studied campaign:

Criteria	Indicator	Ottawa, Canada	Washington D.C., U.S.A <i>Transit Authority</i>	Washington D.C., U.S.A. <i>Non-profit</i>	London, England (UK)	Boston, MT, U.S.A.	Turkey
Identified problem of sexual harassment on transit	Media has been documenting prevalence of sexual assault	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Activist groups active in combatting assault		x	x		x	
	High number of complaints and/or reports of sexual harassment to transit authority or policing authority	x	x		x	x	
	Available crime statistic data of high frequency of assaults	x	x		x	x	
Transit Representation	Transit Authority leading campaign, or a key figure in the process.	x	x		x	x	
Social Media Component	Blogging is used within campaign	x		x			

	Other social media platforms are used within the campaign (Facebook, Twitter, Periscope, YouTube, Pinterest, SnapChat, etc.)				X	X	X
Partnerships	Community members, activist groups, and planning/transit agencies are included in the decision-making process	X	X	X	X		
	Various groups take on specific responsibilities based on their area of expertise throughout the campaign	X	X		X		X
Quality of campaign	Campaign is well-researched, defined, and carried out	X	X	X	X	X	
	Campaign is inclusive to all members of society	X	X	X	X	X	X

	Campaign uses appropriate language	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Campaign has received awards, or its adoptive framework has				x		

Selected precedents were examined to derive lessons for the Metro Vancouver context. Precedents were found by exploring current blog, media, and article posts on reporting harassment on transit, a general internet search using key words, and exploring the main transit authorities nationally and internationally. The analysis of selected precedents was based on what alternative social media tools are used, how they were used, their success and shortfalls, and applicability to other cities. Precedents help to present specific strategies, campaigns, and ideas on how social media as a planning tool (specifically blogging) can be used in Metro Vancouver.

When choosing precedents, a limitation occurred. It was discovered there were very few precedents that met *all* required indicators. Precedents were then selected based on the number of indicators met, and a strong emphasis if they included social media and/or a reporting tool for harassment on transit, as well as the quality of the campaign. The precedents selected include Ottawa, Canada; Washington D.C., America; London, England; Boston, MA America; and Turkey. Other precedents may have been selected, but to keep the project within a manageable level, only 5 (6 when looking at Washington, DC's transit authority and activist group separately) were chosen to guide the analysis. Each of the 5 acted as a specific precedent for what they provided. It should be noted, although Turkey meets the least amount of indicators, it was included to examine how an area is able to use social media as an informal reporting tool when the jurisdiction actually refuses to accept or acknowledge the problem. The example is used to emphasize the idea that one person can change the world.

Once the precedents were selected, they were analyzed to provide specific information, insights, and recommendations for the Metro Vancouver context and other

transit authorities. Each precedent was described in great detail. The analysis included location of the initiative, agencies involved (transit authorities, municipalities, non-profits, activist groups, etc.), overall summary of the project's mission and goals, processes undertaken to reach goals set, description of various phases within the sexual assault campaign(s), social media tools and techniques involved, partnerships created, description of the reporting method, and other. Next, using the information gathered, specific lessons were extracted from each precedent that could be related to the Metro Vancouver context or in general towards the use of social media within women's safety on public transit.

Once the lessons were obtained, they were then categorized by specific codes created through content analysis. Content analysis creates replicable and reliable inferences through interpreting textual material through codes (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). The codes created for the precedent review included similar ones from the narrative analysis, but others were also created. These codes were then added to the categorized hypotheses from the narrative analysis and key informant interviews to provide specific recommendations, ideas, or examples within the seven key themes.

3.4 Limitations and Biases

The narrow scope of research and small scale of exploration of understanding digital storytelling as a reporting method limits the possibilities of findings to a narrow focus in public transit planning. The scope of the research also had to be contained to a manageable level for a graduate-level research project. As the research focused on how blogging was used to inform safety policy, I relied on the key informants to represent the case study accurately. Additionally, the research offers many suggestions for TransLink

and other transit agencies and municipalities in regards to women's safety. However, it does not provide ways on how to ensure such ideas are met and followed through. The research also provides possibilities which may rely on victims or activist groups to take responsibility for harassment. This limitation is acknowledged, but the need for authorities to take charge of harassment prevention – or support such groups, is highly stressed.

This research also focuses primarily on the needs of those who identify as female. The needs of transgender, nonbinary, and nongender individuals may overlap with the needs of females, but include many differences as well. These needs are acknowledged, but the thesis does not specify them as it is outside the scope of research. It is also important to note the limitations of social media's audience. Although we are becoming digital citizens, not everyone uses or wants to participate with the new tool. Therefore, it is integral to understand that social media is not a tool to replace other tools already in place. Rather, social media should be an additional tool used by planners alongside other methods previously in place. In addition, as this research looks at the public transit system serving Metro Vancouver, the research findings may not necessarily apply to other regions and transportation authorities.

Furthermore, at the time of developing my research proposal, supervisory committee members suggested I include a brief policy review of transit safety policies to compare with TransLink's policies. This was removed and replaced with a brief overview of the positions and statements on safety by TransLink and Transit Police (see the case study description in Chapter 2). The reasons for this removal included the difficulty in finding policies on safety related to passenger safety and not transit staff, as well as

limited resources and time. Due to the lack of documents in regards to policies, stance, and actions a limitation occurred in fully evaluating the goals and stance of TransLink and Transit Police on safety.

Biases inherent in this research involve the understanding:

- Women have a higher likelihood of feeling unsafe on public transit.
- Patriarchy is a relevant barrier women face in western society.
- Gender is fluid and a social construct.
- Cities are created in a gendered approach, influencing the design and construction of public transit.
- Stories posted on the online blog are credible and true, despite their anonymity.
- Lessons from digital storytelling can be applied to other forms of engagement within planning.
- The timeline reflected in the case study relies heavily on the comments from TransLink and Transit Police. Therefore, an interest to portray the agency in a good light may be reflected.

My personal bias comes from a straight, white, female transit rider who has personally experienced harassment on TransLink multiple times. However, I tried as best as possible to keep a neutral and objective stance in the research and analysis. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that this study adopts a strong empathetic bias towards the ongoing victimization of many women on public transit and the results may reflect this.

4 Case Study

The next section provides an overview of the Metro Vancouver case study. It first includes a brief description of the study area and history of the transit authority TransLink. Next, using information from the key informant interviews a timeline of the blog's history is provided for clarification. Key lessons from the case study are then discussed.

4.1 Study Area

The case study focuses on the stories of women riders on TransLink in Metro Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. TransLink (the South Coast British Columbia Transit Authority) is Metro Vancouver's transportation authority, connecting 22 municipalities, one First Nation Treaty, and one electoral area (Metro Vancouver, n.d.). TransLink services 418,000 people each day. Its service area is the largest in Canada at 1,800 kilometres. The company manages a vast infrastructure network, including regional roads, bridges, bike paths, the public transit system, and AirCare inspection services (Demers et al., 2012). TransLink is responsible for more than 215 bus routes with a fleet of more than 1,500 vehicles, 3 passenger ferries (SeaBus), 312 HandyDART vehicles (transit for people with disabilities), the West Coast Express train and its 8 stations along 65 kilometres from the city of Mission to downtown Vancouver, and 3 SkyTrain Lines (TransLink, 2015). The Evergreen SkyTrain extension was completed in December 2016 but is not included in this thesis.

As TransLink oversees such an expansive range of areas within transportation, it has a complex corporate structure. TransLink is governed by the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation and its Board of Directors. TransLink oversees a variety of sub-

companies within its 4 main services areas: bus, rail, security, and roads and bridges. This governance structure is presented in figure 3:

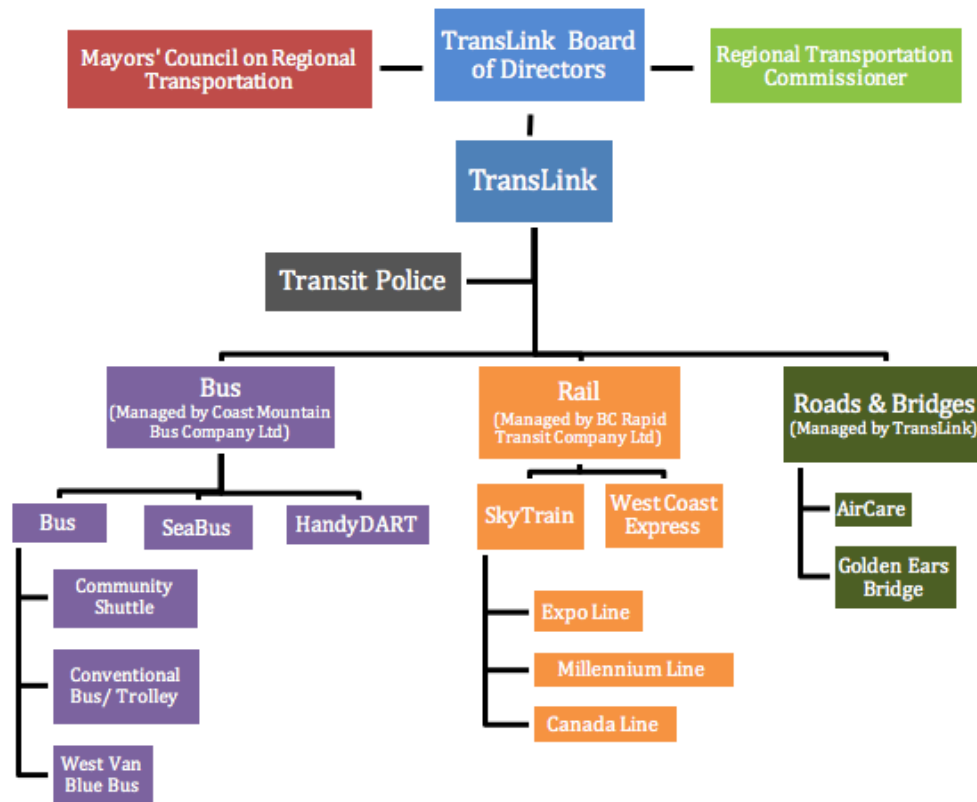


Figure 3: Governance Structure of TransLink (Demers et al., 2012)

Transit Police, a subdivision of TransLink, is the only dedicated transit police service in Canada (TransLink, n.d.). The policing agency is dedicated to ensuring the safety of riders and reducing crime and disorder. Transit Police was officially established in 2005, but was first designated as Transit Security in 1986 with the launch of the SkyTrain for the 1986 World Exposition on Transportation and Communication (Expo 86). Transit Security was originally empowered to enforce the Criminal Code of Canada,

BC Provincial Statutes, and Transit Conduct and Safety regulations. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the role of Transit Security expanded to also include drug enforcement and execution of outstanding warrants. In 2004, Transit Security became a Designated Policing Unit (Transit Police [TP]). Established under the British Columbia Police Act, they have autonomy and power to enhance safety and security of the transit environment as the primary policing authority in these jurisdictions (Demers et al., 2012).

The general public in Metro Vancouver is currently questioning measures of safety for women on TransLink (Huffington Post B.C., 2013). Harassment on TransLink has become so pervasive that it inspired two undergraduate students at Simon Fraser University to develop a blog to act as a digital platform to collect and share stories of harassment from public transit riders throughout Metro Vancouver. The blog, entitled ‘Harassment on TransLink’ include hundreds of stories documenting and detailing the daily harassment women experience on public transit.

In examination of TransLink’s mission and values, it is evident safety and security on transit *seem* to be a main priority. The organization states they are “committed to delivering a transportation system which promotes the health, safety, and security of our customers” (TransLink, n.d.). However, it should be asked, if these are priorities why is harassment such a prevalent issue on TransLink? Through Transit Police, TransLink employs dedicated individuals to create a safer (both in perception and actuality) public transit system. Transit Police attempt to make the system safer by arresting individuals for criminal offenses or with outstanding warrants; patrolling the transit system for an added sense of safety and security of riders; investigating criminal behavior; implementing crime reduction strategies; fining and reprimanding individuals

for criminal offense; and enforcing provincial and federal laws (such examples include fare evasion and public intoxication) (Demers et al., 2012). In Transit Police's 2011-2015

Strategic Plan, the strategic direction:

“Reducing crime and disorder. Deliver comprehensive policing approach. Reduce violence against persons on the transit system. Reduce crime and disorder at identified hot spot locations in partnership with TransLink, jurisdictional police, and transit community partners Establish situational awareness with security partners (Transit Police, 2011).

seeks to outline their interest and commitment to creating a safe public transit system.

However, the question still remains, if these are main priorities for the agency, why is safety still an issue for transit? What is being done to address such an important issue which needs continuous campaigns and strategies?

TransLink's 2015 Annual Report discusses a number of deliverables undertaken by TransLink and Transit Police to create a safer transit system. Such initiatives include: Transit Police partnering with Hollaback! Vancouver to raise awareness about harassment on transit and sharing information on how bystanders can intervene; Transit Police working with Surrey RCMP on a year-long operation to reduce crime and increase public safety around the Surrey Central transit corridor; Transit Police launching a collaborative Transit Watch program with Surrey Crime Prevention Society to enhance safety and security at the city's transportation hubs with uniformed volunteers at the 4 Surrey SkyTrain Stations (Scott Road, Gateway, Surrey Central, King George, and the Newton bus loop); and the continuation of the OnDuty text messaging app, where approximately 70% of SMS text conversations with Transit Police have resulted in the creation of police files (TransLink, 2016). (The “OnDuty” smartphone app refers to the app created by Transit Police that allows individuals to report incidents of harassment

they experience or have witnessed on public transit to the agency through a text messaging format).

Harassment on public transit is a daily reality for many women, men, and non-binary individuals. Vancouver is a fast-growing city and harassment on its transportation system is an issue that *needs* to be, and is somewhat being addressed. However, as the stories reveal, there are many other areas to address and focus on. By examining the narrative of alternative online reporting strategies, specific possibilities and lessons are derived to further one's understanding of how TransLink and others agencies can best enhance women's perceptions of a public transit system so it is safe for them to wait and ride – alone or not.

4.2 Timeline

This thesis focuses on how Metro Vancouver uses – and can further use - social media as a planning tool for safety measures on public transit. The Harassment on TransLink blog, created by two university students in the fall of 2013, is a way stories have been shared anonymously online to address concerns of safety on public transit. The blog received a large amount of attention; after a sexual assault occurred on transit the blog was highlighted in the local media. This wide-spread attention and influx of stories on the blog helped push forward TransLink's use of alternative social media strategies within their campaigns to create a perceived and actual safer public transit system.

Through key informant interviews, a more detailed timeline of the blog and its effects was generated. In September 2013, the blog co-creators launched the blog for a class at Simon Fraser University (SFU). The course was about “making public spaces not

only safe and accessible but also comfortable and inclusive” (Personal Communication, Blog Co-creator, December 2, 2015). Once the blog was up, it was shared on social media, primarily Facebook. At first, the blog primarily received posts from people the creators knew or who were peripheral to them. Both co-creators acted as moderators, posting stories and applying minor edits: “only [editing] sections in stories where things didn’t make sense or a word [were] missing, but [this] was kept to a minimum” (Personal Communication, Blog Co-creator, December 2, 2015). Around the same time of the blog’s creation, a sexual assault took place on transit which was publicized and spurred media traction towards the topic. The media discovered the blog and a number of news agencies began contacting the co-creators for interviews. This helped further publicize the blog. It then received hundreds of posts documenting stories of harassment on TransLink and thousands of views. The blog co-creators thought they would only receive a few hundred views; they did not think it would become as popular it did. As one co-creator said, this shows how big an issue harassment on public transit is. This “speaks to how prevalent and underreported the problem is. Immediately people were like, ‘ugh me too’, and ‘I’ve had nowhere to say this’ or ‘[I couldn’t] prove that it’s a problem. People would say it’s a one-time thing, but now [it can be seen] that it’s all the time” (Personal Communication, Blog Co-creator, December 2, 2015). As the Community Relations Officer from Transit Police said, “as sad as it was to read all the stories, I think it really helped because it brought them to a new light” (Personal Communication, December 15, 2015).

As the blog gained popularity, it soon came to the attention of TransLink and Transit Police who took a proactive approach to the situation. Only days after interviews

with the media, Transit Police contacted the blog co-creators to work with them and inform them of what the company was doing to mitigate assaults on Transit. At the time, TransLink was working on the OnDuty text messaging reporting app, a sexual offences awareness campaign, and a campaign similar to the US Homeland Security ‘See Something, Say Something’ campaign. When the blog came out, due to the wide-spread media attention received, “there was more public awareness and pressure to do something about it” (Personal Communication, Community Relations Officer, December 15, 2015). At first, Transit Police had to convince TransLink (the parent company) these campaigns were a good investment. As the Community Relations Officer stated,

“initially when we were talking about it, we all had our points of view. [TransLink] were more concerned than us that [the campaigns] would affect peoples’ comfort level on the train. Like when we talk about sexual offences, how do we talk about it in a way that still makes people feel safe? That was being bounced around a lot before the blog came out. But when the blog came out, now everyone was aware and it was easier to get that stuff out” (Personal Communication, December 15, 2015).

Transit Police’s chief at the time targeted technology as a place to grow. With the push from the public and the internal support from Transit Police’s chief, TransLink and Transit Police quickly rolled out their projects on sexual harassment on transit.

Transit Police also asked the blog co-creators for their feedback on the app, safety policies, and training measures for officers. The two blog co-creators joined Transit Police Chief Community Council to help provide a “gendered lens in policing and in the transit police structure” (Personal Communication, Blog Co-creator, December 2, 2015). The co-creators were said to have provided a gendered perspective in planning for a safer transit system in Metro Vancouver by informing and partnering with TransLink and Transit Police on their upcoming campaigns and strategies, in addition to sitting on

transit's community council. As the Community Relations Officer stated, they have “done all their studies, [have] read all the blog posts – they have that – they can speak for a lot of people” (Personal Communication, December 15, 2015).

The case study in Metro Vancouver represents a positive partnership with non-profits and community champions to target a serious issue. Sexual harassment on public transit is a global issue and occurs to no fault of a company or organization. Sexual harassment happens because our society has historically followed the ideals and power structures of a patriarchy worldview. “A society is patriarchal to the degree that it promotes male privilege by being male dominated, male identified, and male centered” (Johnson, 2005). This male dominance creates a power struggle between men and women. Historically, men have controlled or handled rape and sexual harassment cases and put the victim rather than the defendant on trial (2005). This has created a paradox, where victims of sexual harassment are unlikely to use formal channels of reporting and believe that when they do, their problems will remain unresolved or they will be found at fault (Dougherty, 2000). This, ‘damned if you do, damned if you don’t’ attitude regarding reporting has largely left the issue out of the public’s mind. As one anonymous poster stated,

“but when no one sees it, when you feel embarrassed, when you’re not even sure it is really happening (how could it?), and when you try to get help or report it and no one cares, how do you get justice? How do you heal? How do you make it stop, for you and for others” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015).

TransLink and Transit Police’s approach towards women’s safety on public transit is a lesson for planners in understanding the possibilities of partnerships and social media for safety planning and policy. Although it is not a perfect example, many ideas and insights arise. The case study provides suggestions for Metro Vancouver and other

Canadian cities' transit authorities. As Transit Police have stated, "we are proud of what we've done. It could be better and we are planning on improving it, but it has worked out really well" (Personal Communication, Community Relations Officer, December 15, 2015). This story has allowed sexual assault and prevention strategies to come to the forefront of planning. For Transit Police, this, "would never – well, rarely – would these quality of life incidents that happen on the train, that everyone talked about and knew that happened, but would never be reported and then dealt with. But now, we get to respond because we hear about it" (Personal Communication, Community Relations Officer, December 15, 2015). The blog has helped encourage riders to report their harassment both informally and formally. It also pushed TransLink and Transit Police into action in preventing and reducing sexual harassment on transit. However, it can be argued that there is more to be done by the transit agency in ameliorating transit safety.

4.3 Key Lessons

The Metro Vancouver case study is an illustration of the possibilities and potential that social media has as a method for online reporting within transit planning. Due to the blog's creation and swift response of the transit authorities (TransLink and Transit Police), the case study offers many lessons for other transit authorities worldwide. However, it should be noted there are a number of key areas for TransLink and Transit Police to tackle and develop in regards to women's safety on public transit which emerged in the further analysis of the stories and through interviews. These can be found in the analysis, section 5 of the thesis.

TransLink is seen as a leader in online communication (Schweitzer, 2014), specifically capitalizing on the various platforms of social media. The Senior

Communications Advisor at TransLink stated:

“[TransLink use[s] social media to help communicate with our customers. We use it to let them know about updates to the transit system and tell them about important notices about the organization. We also use it to form a sense of community about transportation issues in Metro Vancouver” (Personal Communication, December 11, 2015).

TransLink uses various social media platforms in multiple ways: they are on Twitter, Facebook, Periscope, YouTube, have a blog entitled the ‘Buzzer Blog’, and Instagram. Transit Police “use [social media] for informing the public on what [they] do. . . [and as] a public information tool. [Transit Police] also use it as an investigative tool” (Community Relations Officer, Personal Communication, December 15, 2015). Transit Police also use social media platforms in different ways. They are on Twitter, Facebook, Reddit, LinkedIn, YouTube, GooglePlus, and Instagram. In an analysis of transit authorities and their use of social media, TransLink is regarded as a leading example. In her article, Schweitzer wrote highly of TransLink, especially their Twitter feed,

“Most transit agencies have thousands of followers who see what the agencies post, but only a few of them (TransLink, Bay Area Rapid Transit [BART], and TriMet) subscribe or follow a large number of feeds themselves. It is not required that agencies follow other users to interact with them, but following is one way to signal to other users that one wants to see their content. TransLink is by far the most active Twitter user among the transit agencies that I studied. They tweet often, on average about 90 times per day, while most other agencies tweet between 10 and 30 times a day. TransLink interacts a great deal in conversation with other Twitter users, and they also follow others more than other transit agencies” (2014, p. 226).

One anonymous poster on the Harassment on TransLink blog also praised the efficiency of TransLink’s Twitter stating, “TransLink has a super-responsive twitter account” (2015). When the blog arose, TransLink used social media to garner attention in a positive way to learn from and expand on its potential – specifically through the creation of the OnDuty reporting app. However, it should be noted that responses from the transit

authority on social media do not solely eradicate and fix perceptions of safety on transit. Other ideas and lessons are discussed in Chapter 5.

The story also speaks to the pressing need for partnerships in transit planning. Internally, the connection between Transit Police and TransLink is key in sharing a similar message towards safety on public transit. The agencies often share or “retweet” each other’s messages. As the Senior Communications Advisor states, “The Transit Police lead up the charge primarily for safety on the system, but because our networks are bigger than theirs – it helps that we can amplify their message to a larger group of people” (Personal Communication, December 12, 2015). Partnerships expand one’s network for the dissemination of information. Additionally, TransLink and Transit Police have key relationships with others in the community to harness the potential of social media for safety on public transit. It is important to note social media only reaches one subset of the public. Other ways to share information and reach a larger network should also be undertaken.

When the Harassment on TransLink blog emerged, rather than take on a defensive approach, TransLink and Transit Police reached out to the blog co-creators to create a ‘solution’ to the issue. As the Blog Co-creator stated, transit reached out to them and “asked for our feedback on the app and informing policy and transit policy in terms of the cases – as well as training for the officers” (Personal Communication, December 2, 2015). By connecting with the blog co-creators and placing them on Transit Police’s Community Council, a gendered lens was added to the actions the transit authority takes going forward and in the creation of the OnDuty App. It also helped create a connection to other non-profit and activist groups in the community. Since the blog’s start and the

creation of the app, Transit Police have partnered with activist group Hollaback!

Vancouver when working on other campaigns focused on safety for women on public transit.

Partnerships with related organizations and the mutual support of campaigns is another key lesson from the case study. “If you can do a campaign that involves others that have a strong social media presence or a lot of public trust, those campaigns really help” (Community Relations Officer, Personal Communication, December 15, 2015). Recently, Transit Police participated in Global Guardian with British Transport Police for a global campaign focusing on combatting sexual harassment on transit. These informal and formal partnerships are beneficial in expanding one’s network, as the Community Relations Officer stated, “every time we post something and then say the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) retweets it or anytime the message is shared by others that the public trusts, you benefit. It also helps to make sure you are reaching all the demographics” (Personal Communication, December 15, 2015). They also continue to bring light to stranger harassment and hopefully, garner change with every co-sponsored activity or initiative taken on.

The story also speaks to the influence media and grass-roots organization has on planning, policy, and change. If the blog co-creators never created their blog, or the media never became invested in the story, one can question if the sexual harassment campaigns and OnDuty App that TransLink and Transit Police created would have emerged. It is possible these projects could still be on the backburner. Nonetheless, this exemplifies the need for nonprofit groups in cities to vocalize issues which are generally out of the public eye. Schweitzer states, “how individuals, newspapers, and television

portray public services can affect the way voters and stakeholders think about planning and public services. Attitudes and beliefs can influence politicians making budgetary and other decisions such as public transit investment” (2014, p. 218). This also highlights how social media can be an influencing factor in planning. As the Senior Communications Advisor stated, “we find that social media sometimes leads regular media now, and media can influence policy makers” (personal communications, December 12, 2015). Conversely, it is important to note the dangers of putting so much responsibility onto the public. Transit authorities need to be addressing harassment without prompting from community organizations or victims to change the current tolerance of harassment on transit. Non-profits and activist groups are already supporting victims in many ways and this burden should be placed on the transit authority; especially ones which claim safety as a key area of focus.

The case study is a progressive example exemplifying the possibilities of social media and stories. It highlights the potential social media has for a proactive transit authority. It also stresses the importance of non-profit organizations and community champions in the larger scale of planning. This is key in understanding women’s safety within planning. “Local changes are, of course, not enough; women’s safety, like other human rights, requires action at the regional national and supra-national scales” (Whitzman et al., 2014). Key individuals can help spark change from the bottom-up, but it is up to institutions, planners, policy makers, and authorities to expand on initiatives. Social media provides individuals with a platform to voice their stories and concerns for planners to listen to and address. Further themes, lessons, and recommendations arising from the case study and stories are discussed in-depth in Chapter 5.

5 Analysis

This thesis explores the possibilities and limitations of social media for safety issues in public transit planning, specifically as an alternative reporting strategy. The case study of Metro Vancouver provides key insights in using social media as a tool within transit planning and policy. The following section presents the overall findings of this research project, then examines the key themes, lessons, and recommendations derived from the narrative analysis, precedent research, key informant interviews, and literature review.

5.1 General Findings

To help answer the research questions, a precedent review, narrative analysis of online blog stories, and key informant interviews with individuals involved in the case study were used to guide and inform the analysis. These methods helped derive a number of insights, ideas, lessons, and recommendations. Once the findings of the research methods were completed, they were categorized by similarity. Similar ideas or findings in the literature were used to ground or validate the hypotheses. The following section provides a brief overview of the research findings.

The narrative analysis of the online stories presents a number of areas for TransLink and Transit Police to address. The findings also help highlight various issues and recommendations within the topic of women's safety on public transit. The analysis of the stories provides 17 main codes. These include, alcohol/drugs, bystander effect, confrontation, (perceptions of) fear, harassment, patriarchal worldview, (perceptions of) safety, personal well-being, xenophobia, recommendations, relevancy, reporting, ridership (coping strategies), transit service components, land use features, transit safety

design features, and storytelling. The following chart depicts the number of times these themes emerged throughout the 222 online stories analyzed:

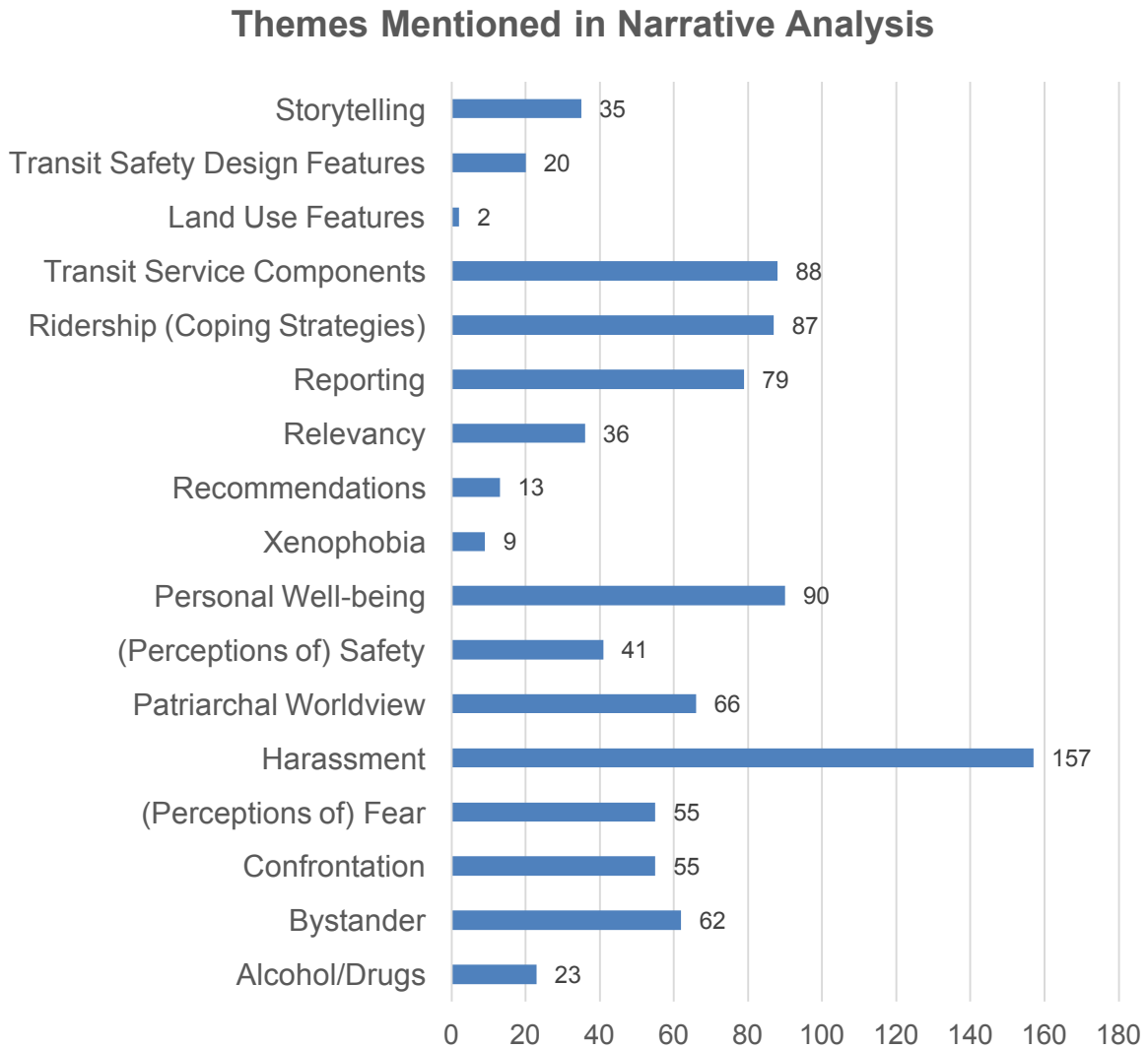


Figure 4: Themes of Narrative Analysis (created by Rogness, 2017)

The semi-structured interviews with key informants in the case study (and Metro Vancouver area) provide specific details for the case study, as well as information and ideas for women’s safety; specifically, in regards to planning, policy, and activism.

Through content analysis, the interviews were coded (using both new and the same codes as with the narrative analysis). The analysis used 19 codes: activism, bystander effect, communication, confrontation, crime prevention, dissemination of information, equality, harassment, patriarchal worldview, xenophobia, relevancy, reporting, ridership (coping strategies), transit service components, transit safety design features, storytelling, social media, case study timeline, and transit app. The chart below depicts the number of times the themes emerged in the interviews:

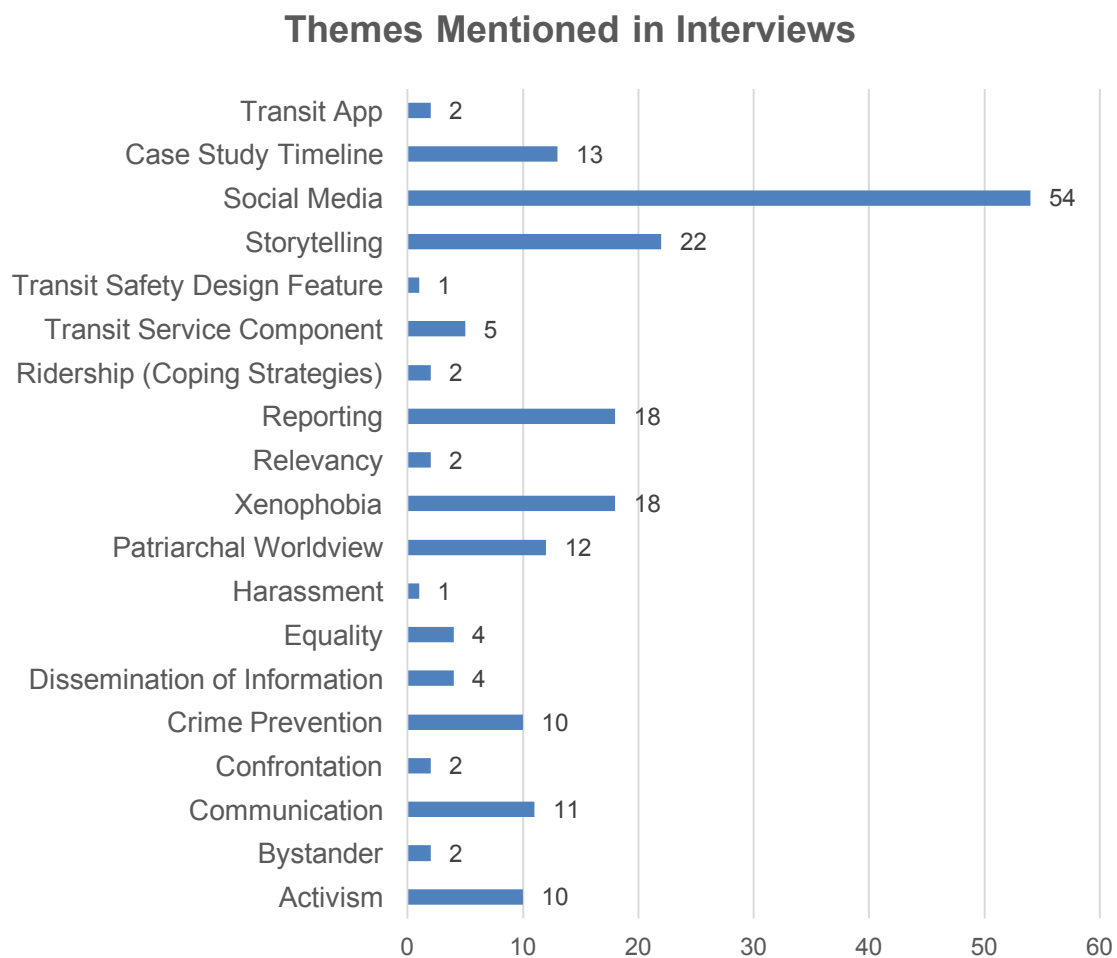


Figure 5: Themes in Key Informant Interview (created by Rogness, 2017)

The precedent analysis looked at 6 different campaigns worldwide. The methodology for selection and inquiry is further explained in chapter 3 section 3. The precedents provide specific lessons and recommendations for the Metro Vancouver context – as well as other transit authorities and municipalities worldwide. These can be identified in 9 main themes of storytelling, partnerships, advertising, crime prevention, reporting, campaign development, social media, transit employee training, and public engagement. The following graph depicts the number of times each theme was mentioned throughout the resulting lessons and recommendations:

Common Themes in Precedent Analysis

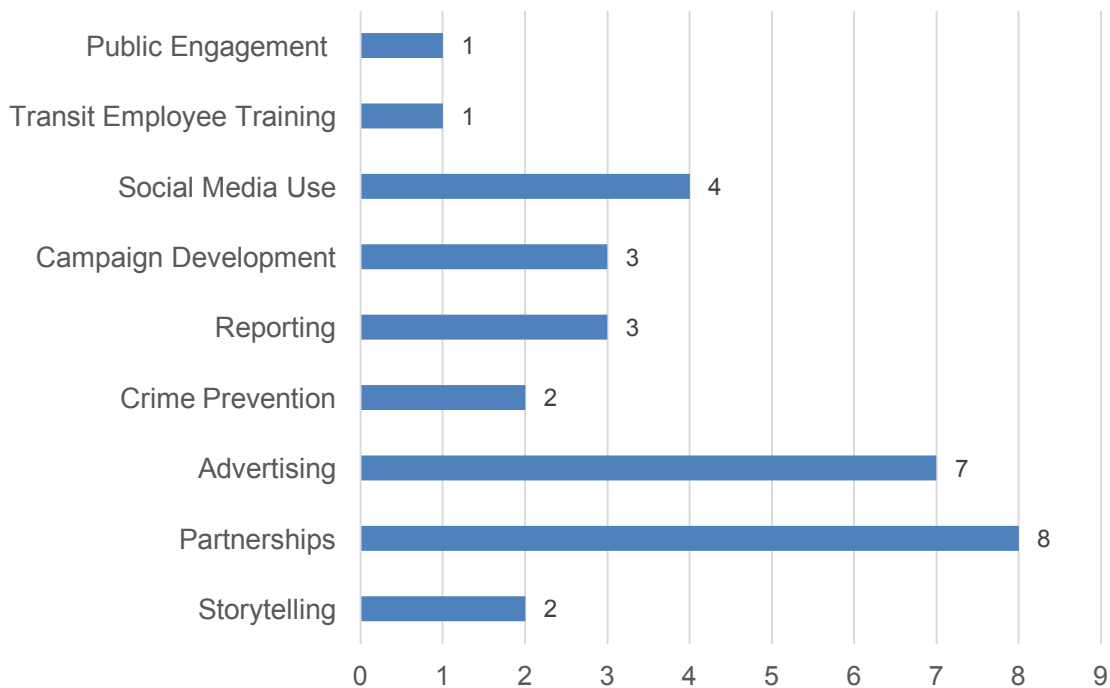


Figure 6: Themes of Precedent Analysis (created by Rogness, 2017 from precedent review)

The findings from the various methods offer insights and ideas on how the design of cities, transit structures, and guiding policies influence and affect the perceptions of

safety for women on public transit. These are explored in the following section, which divides the various codes, which led to different hypotheses, into seven key themes, lessons, and recommendations within an overarching patriarchal framework.

5.2 Effects of Patriarchy on Transit Planning

Patriarchy and the long-lasting results of the gendered city have helped to create a worldview that, intentionally or not, perpetuates violence against women. Feagin argues “the realities of contemporary urban life are disproportionately and heavily shaped by the underlying systems of capitalism, racism, and patriarchy” (1998, p. ix). Since patriarchy is a historical and social system of male dominance over women which enforces and reinforces males’ dominance over females, it is as an explanation for violence against women (Critenden and Wright, 2013). As one poster outlined,

“we live in a culture that is complicit in rape - we stand by and watch someone be harassed and do nothing about it, and we have boys growing up to be men who believe that this behaviour is okay — that they have an entitlement to a woman’s attention and space” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015).

This patriarchal worldview is pushed from birth in our society, with the gendering of boys and girls’ behaviour and attitudes. We excuse pushing and violence from young boys, by claiming ‘boys will be boys’. This leads to the belief that male sexual aggression is natural and part of men’s biological make-up (Weiss, 2009). Consequently, reinforcing the belief that men are unable to stop their sexual advances once they have been set into motion and it is up to a woman to shield themselves from men or prevent their advances.

A consequence of a patriarchal worldview is that sexual assault is seen as a ‘woman’s problem’ (Piccigallo et. al, 2012). As a result of this, women - who are statistically likely to be the victim of public sexual assault (Government of Canada, 2017), are viewed as the one to blame rather than the assailant. Many sexual assault

prevention efforts are directed at women and their risk reduction; for example, rather than campaigns focusing on saying ‘don’t rape’, we tell women not to dress provocatively, not to go out alone at night, or to take self-defense classes to prevent rape. Otherwise, it can be seen that sexual harassment or assault is somehow their fault. Weiss claims, normalizing male sexual aggression, rape myths and gender stereotypes contributes to victims feeling responsible for their own victimization. Women are seen as deserving harassment when they have behaved ‘inappropriately’, which includes getting drunk, dressing provocatively, being sexually assertive, or going to bars alone (2009).

This mindset was evident in the stories recorded on the blog. 66 of 222 posters, or 29.7% of stories discussed issues which are a result of a patriarchal worldview. Many posters shared their experience of harassment with an introduction of what they were wearing, almost as if they were trying to prove they did nothing wrong – when they had nothing to prove at all. For example, one poster wrote, “I was riding the #20 to downtown at around 10:30 pm this summer after having had dinner with a friend on Main St. I was wearing *jeans, a t-shirt and a leather jacket*. Nothing too tight or revealing” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015) Another poster offered a more generalized understanding with, “I don’t often dress up, let alone provocatively, but apparently some men found what I was wearing to be provocative, and therefore an invitation” (2015). Others felt that the harassment was due to something they had done, and rectified any possible behavior. In one story, the storyteller wrote how she would never eat something in public, for fear this could be misinterpreted as a suggestive behavior of oral sex. Another questioned if her harassment was even harassment by asking “Did I overreact?” (2015).

In addition, this belief removes men from the picture, despite the fact they too are victims of harassment, abuse, and assault. Even within the small sample of stories recorded in the Harassment on TransLink blog, 11 posters identified themselves as male - approximately 5% of all stories coded as of December 2015. Another viewpoint from the male perspective which was repeated in the stories and interviews was how hard it was to accept this as a problem if you had not experienced harassment yourself. One poster wrote when she told a male friend of her harassment, he responded, “[It] would have been hot if the guy had been young” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015), again, reinstating this idea harassment isn’t a crime, rather it is a just a compliment misread. This reveals the idea in western society women are lucky to be ‘cat-called’, because it shows they are beautiful. This portrays how sexism dominates our worldview, where women are only worthy if they are beautiful or objects of affection. When the Blog Co-creator was receiving questions from media, she was surprised at their need to discern a ‘correct’ way to offer a woman a ‘compliment’:

“Even the interviewers who asked how to pay a compliment to women, it’s kind of offensive that this is the main priority; how they can still approach women and get what they want - when women are saying I don’t care what your intent is, it still makes me uncomfortable and unsafe” (Personal Communication, December 2, 2015).

In her interview, she further breaks down this notion. She states a compliment “is something that should make someone feel good. And [the complimented] gets to decide if they feel good, [the complimenter] does not get to decide if they feel good” (December 2, 2015). This demonstrates how entrenched our society is in sexism, even when women are saying they feel unsafe and the media is reporting on it, they are ignoring the fact that

women are saying we don't want to be harassed and are searching for ways to construe harassment as a tolerable behaviour.

A patriarchal worldview has also led to a normalization of harassment. As the Blog Co-creator claimed, “we normalize” or “find ways to discount [victims]. Saying, this is a fact of life, instead of saying this is a problem that has to be addressed. This is a problem that you have to negotiate, it can't be fixed” (Personal Communication, December 2, 2015). Buckley argues sexual harassment in public spaces, such as cat-calling, inappropriate physical contact, unwanted attention, aggressive advances from strangers, and other invasive sexualized behaviours, are not ‘incidents’ but rather an inescapable condition of modern life (2016). As the Team Leader stated, “we are taught that [sexual harassment] is kind of a normal part of urban living; you live in a city it's just how it is” (Personal Communication, January 14, 2016). Because these incidents are so common, we have become desensitized to them, causing them to fall below the level of crimes worthy of punishment or social taboos, and instead an inescapable condition of modern life (Buckley, 2016). This acknowledgment of a blasé behavior towards harassment in public was heavily repeated in the blog stories. One poster wrote, “I've come to realize I probably have an unhealthy acceptance for harassment on transit” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). Another stated how they, “have simply learned to accept this (and even worse) types of behavior towards women, minorities, youths, and easy targets” (2015). Harassment is so prevalent one poster wrote they no longer react to seeing other women being harassed. “It is almost like when you ride transit, you have to deal with these types of issues” (2015). To be harassed as a woman is almost seen as a right of passage in modern society.

Focusing on city planning, “women suffer particular forms of unsafety in cities” (Holtmann, 2013, p. 104). Most often, these are associated with, “massive discursive problems linked with patriarchy and with small, pragmatic problems associated with design and space, and much in between” (2013, p. 104). Consequently, if we made every single design, planning, and policy change needed to create a safe city for all, it would not magically become a safe city. This problem is not surface level. Education and a cultural shift are needed to eradicate harassment, sexism, and male entitlement. Nonetheless, making changes found within precedents and literature helps to make strides towards a safer city and brings awareness to the issues women are facing due to current patriarchal notions.

In the analysis of the various stories from the blog, key informant interviews, literature review, and precedent review the effects of patriarchy can be seen as an overarching theme that affects all aspects of the Metro Vancouver case study. Within this patriarchal framework, seven key themes emerged from the stories of female riders that complemented the results and concepts of the literature review on sexual harassment on public transit.

5.1.1 Theme 1 – Factors that prompt harassment

The research findings provided important insights on factors that influence or seem to encourage harassment on transit. These influences included perpetrators using alcohol and drugs on transit, xenophobia, and transit safety features and design measures.

A small number of harassment excerpts, 23 of 222 posters or, 10.4% of all stories, stated their harassers were intoxicated or under the influence of a substance. Others noted a harassers’ intent was due to homophobia or racism: 9 of 222 posters, or 4% of all

stories mentioned xenophobia in their story. One poster stated she believed, “since I [am] an Asian female, this pervert did not think I’d speak out and react the way I did” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015), alluding to the notion minorities may be an ‘easier target’.

There are also many transit safety design characteristics, transit service components, and surrounding land use features which were shown to influence the likelihood of an assault on TransLink. 88 of 222 posters or 39.6% of stories mentioned various components within transit’s range of services and responsibilities. These include staff training or lack of action, such as “the transit driver did nothing in cases of abuse and harassment”, “[there was] no security or anyone around”, or “the transit cop did nothing” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). Posters who mentioned transit service components often talked about issue with overcrowding on trains and buses: “the morning of my incident it was very crowded”, “[I] was clearly boxed in on all sides and didn’t have much room to maneuver in” or “the bus was standing-room only, so touching was unavoidable” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). Additionally, a number of transit safety design features were identified as areas increasing one’s likelihood of assault. In the stories, 20 of 222 stories or 9.0% mentioned specific safety features comprising of areas such as lighting, crowding, issues with silent alarms, lack of CCTV cameras, and minimal seats within a driver (or transit authority’s sight line). Many posters highlighted lighting issues, especially on the Expo and Millennium Lines: “I still avoid the Expo and Millennium Lines and opt for the Canada Line whenever I can. It’s so much better lit” or “badly lit platforms and warm, empty trains seem to be an invitation for people” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). Only 2 stories discussed land use issues as a

prerequisite for their harassment. These stories discuss an empty park near-by a SkyTrain station and a poorly lit street on one's walk towards a bus stop.

5.1.2 Theme 2 – Perceptions of Safety on Transit

Research shows women's feelings and perceptions of safety are influenced by factors such as economic status, age, race, ethnicity, awareness of violence levels from the media, the frequency of use of public transit, security presence, activity levels, graffiti, cleanliness, and time of day (Hsu, 2011). To improve safety for women you need "to make public transit more public" (Drimonis, 2016). This means ensuring transit is accessible to everyone regardless of age and mobility; while discouraging any potential assaults through the use of crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) (2016) and campaigns which increase women's feelings of safety on transit.

Unsafe spaces often include empty areas, parks, bus stops, dimly lit places, areas with poor visibility and certain streets and/or neighbourhoods, but they also include areas where individuals have previously experienced harassment or heard are unsafe (Buckley, 2016). Understanding the perception of safety heavily draws on experience is instrumental in the attempt to plan and create campaigns and policies to help create safer places. Currently, people *feel* transit in Metro Vancouver is not safe – even if it is statistically proven to be. Many posters mentioned transit was simply not safe: 41 of 222 posters, or 18.5% talked about their negative perceptions of safety on transit. One poster bluntly stated, "transit isn't safe for women" (Harassment on TransLink, 2015) and another claimed, "transit [isn't] a safe place for me – it [is] a place that require[s] strategy" (2015). Women are afraid on TransLink, regardless of the statistical likelihood of being harassed or not.

The analysis of the online stories proves harassment is heavily prevalent on TransLink. 157 posters or 70.7% of stories directly discussed their harassment on TransLink. However, this is to be expected, as the blog is for people to share their stories of harassment. In 2015, Metro Vancouver reports of sexual harassment and assaults on transit to police services increased 28%, according to Metro Vancouver Transit Police, confirming harassment is an issue for TransLink (BWSS, 2015). In addition to commenting on their harassment, many stories included the statement, “harassment on TransLink happens all the time” or “I have been harassed on TransLink more times than I can count” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). 36 posters or 16.2% of stories mentioned the repetition of harassment they have experienced or seen on transit (under the relevancy code). The Blog Co-creator commented on how often we think of harassment as a one-time thing, but with all these stories collected in one place, we can prove it’s a problem and that it happens all the time:

“I think that speaks to how prevalent and underreported the problem is. Immediately people were like, ‘ugh me too’, and ‘I’ve had nowhere to say this’ or ‘[I couldn’t] prove that it’s a problem. People would say it’s a one-time thing, but now [it can be seen] that it’s all the time” (personal communication, December 2, 2015).

5.1.3 Theme 3 – Impact of Harassment on Victims

Harassment leaves victims feeling powerless, disgusted, and depressed. In the online stories, people often discussed how they felt during and after their assault. 90 of 222 posters or 40.5% of stories mentioned how harassment has negatively affected their personal well-being. These emotions ranged from “I was so embarrassed” to “I felt really disgusted” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). One individual commented, “in that moment I had never felt so low about myself” (2015). Some posters mentioned how they

cried or were paralyzed in fear and shock. The responses also displayed how harassment affects one's personal well-being well after an assault has taken place. As one poster stated, their harassment was so traumatic they still dream about it months later. Another wrote, "12 years later, it still makes [them] uncomfortable thinking about it" (2015).

The fear from an incident is lifelong. 55 of 222 commenters or 24.8% of all stories discussed the fear they faced due to their incident. Individuals who have been harassed carry around the psychological impacts of their harassment. One poster stated they are "totally scared and being vigilant now. [They are] checking to see if [they are] ever being followed" (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). The effect on one's personal well-being has certain victims living in fear every time they are on the train. One commenter wrote, "I don't know if I'm ever going to be comfortable on transit now" (2015), another stated their experience was so traumatic they still dream about it, and one poster continues to keep their eyes open for their harasser every time they are on transit, even though the incident took place 3 years prior. As these experiences are so traumatic, they greatly shape their perceptions of safety on transit and negatively affect one's personal well-being.

5.1.4 Theme 4 – Coping Strategies on Transit

Harassment on transit is proven to have a negative affect on women's ridership (see Loukaitou-Sideris, 2008; Loukaitou-Sideris, 2009; Buckley, 2016; and Valentine, 1989). Many develop coping strategies to avoid harassment and unsafe spaces, to gain a sense of control and security. Looking at the literature, Valentine identifies three categories of coping strategies: time/space avoidance, environmental awareness, and physical defense strategies (1989). Time/space avoidance strategies refer to avoiding

unsafe spaces or areas at certain times. Coping strategies or comments about ridership were mentioned by 87 posters or in 39.2% of stories analyzed. Many posters wrote of avoiding transit at certain times, particularly at night: “I gave up riding transit at night” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). Another poster avoids the Expo and Millennium Sky Train lines and opts for the ‘safer’ Canada Line. A fair amount wrote they no longer take transit at all: “I decided to stop taking transit altogether and bike or Car2Go instead”, “I bought a car”, and “I would rather walk or drive than be sexually harassed again” (2015).

Environmental awareness strategies include scanning the environment for clues to danger, such as a rustle in the bushes or a drunken man on the bus (Valentine, 1989). Not many posters commented on scanning an environment for clues, but some did note sitting closer to the bus drivers to avoid potential harassers that are not in the driver’s sight.

Physical defense strategies involve the adjusting of one’s physical appearance to deter potential assailants, to aid in potential escape from a threatening situation, and to resist an assault by carrying everyday objects that could be used as weapons (1989). This strategy was repeated in the stories. One poster stated she “wear[s] a fake engagement ring” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015) to avoid potential harassment. Another commented on how she carries dog spray for protection and one poster stated that she changes into baggy, oversized outfits to hide her uniform from men when taking transit.

Loukaitou-Sideris identifies a fourth category, behavioral modification. This refers to women creating legitimacy for their presence in public spaces – such as walking the dog or waiting for the bus instead of aimlessly waiting at a street corner (2009).

Applicable examples for public transit include wearing headphones, reading, or texting to

avoid conversations and unwanted advances (Buckley, 2016), all which were mentioned in the stories, specifically listening to one's iPod.

In addition to these four coping mechanisms, many posters (30 of the 87 stories coded as ridership – coping strategies) discussed how harassment affected their overall ridership. Often, women would state they had to get off at the next stop, even if it wasn't their stop and would cab or walk the rest of the way. Others stayed on the bus past their stop, waiting for their harasser to leave, then travel back. As one poster stated, “most women conduct their lives according to a ‘rape schedule’ by holding their finger over the call button for 911, avoiding walking alone at night, keeping their keys between their fingers ready to jab at a potential rapist” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015).

5.1.5 Theme 5 – The Bystander Effect

Throughout the research, different viewpoints on the ‘bystander effect’ recurred: 62 commenters or 27.8% of all stories mentioned the bystander effect in some way. The ‘bystander effect’ refers to the concept that people are more willing to help others when they are alone than when there are bystanders present (van Bommel et. al, 2012). With sexual harassment, it occurs when “one observes or knows about the sexual harassment of others but is not directly the target of the harassment” (Chaudoir and Quinn, 2010, p. 625). Through literature and anecdotal evidence, the bystander phenomenon has become widely known, with many examples of news items or TV shows depicting crimes and accidents which could be prevented if bystanders had only intervened (van Bommel et. al, 2012).

Within the narrative analysis, a common theme repeated in the bystander code (29 of 62 posts) was strangers did nothing to intervene when their harassment was taking

place. Statements such as “nobody did anything” or “witness[es] on the bus did and said nothing” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015) were heavily repeated. Others commented how alone they felt on transit, “despite a full train of commuters, I was alone” (2015). However, a few posters (7 of 62 posts) commented that someone intervened and stopped the harassment: “the passengers came to my aid”, “a few times people have stuck up for me”, and “luckily, a younger guy [was] just ahead [of me] and helped intervene” (2015). Additionally, posters repeated the need for bystanders to intervene. As one poster stated bluntly, “when no one speaks up against public harassment, the harassment will continue” (2015).

Some individuals (9 of 62 posts regarding the bystander effect) used the blog to explain why they chose not to intervene. The majority of posters attributed it solely to fear. One commenter stated once they spoke up, “rather than diffusing the situation, this merely stoked the fire and the young men quickly turned their attention to me” (2015), claiming they would never interfere again. Another commented, “at the age of 45, I am less and less interested in being at risk of a confrontation turning violent. I am not wearing a cape, have no super-powers, and I am not a law enforcement professional” (2015). Similarly, another individual wrote, “in most of these situations, few people try to defend the victim, including me (I’m no hero), because these kinds of guys are just terrifying” (2015). Although people feel that others should intervene, some believe it is too dangerous: “the fact is, directly intervening is dangerous, and therefore it isn’t fair to blame those who don’t directly intervene in such frightening circumstances” (2015).

Oftentimes, people argue victims should confront their harasser to stop or de-escalate the situation. However, there are a number of reasons for why many choose not

to. Sullivan et al. (2010) claim women are encouraged not to confront street harassers or take the harassment seriously as they have been taught to interpret it as a harmless compliment or flattery. Research suggests a lack of self-confidence and fear of escalating harm or other retaliation stops individuals from confronting their harasser (Dhillon and Bakaya, 2014). In the analysis, confrontation was mentioned 55 times or in 24.6% of stories. Within this, many either wrote they did not speak up due to fear, confronted and the situation stopped, or they confronted the harasser and the harassment escalated. This implies although people may recommend one should confront their harasser, personal limitations and potential consequences that follow inhibit one from standing up for themselves. This also speaks to the idea of victim blaming, where the onus is put on the victim to fix the situation themselves. This diminishes the intensity of harassment and refers to stranger harassment as simply a women's problem. Additionally, two posters, one identified as male, used the forum to provide advice on what women should do to avoid harassment – repeating the idea that women must be the ones to stop stranger harassment, rather than focusing on the message for harassers to stop harassing.

5.1.6 Theme 6 – Reporting

Underreporting is one of the most significant problems when examining safety and fear of sexual harassment on public transit. It is argued, “the failure of transit operators to recognize and address sexual harassment and assault on public transit has fostered a culture of non-reporting, and encouraged a normalization of sexual harassment” (Buckley, 2016, p. 46). Furthermore, awareness is key in addressing harassment on transit. Research claims, “women keep quiet because they think it's normal. . . by showing that it is a manifestation of sexism, we can say no, it's not normal,

and we have the tools to fight against it” (Duche, qtd. in Rebryna, 2016). If transit authorities acknowledge there is a problem, they can work with planners and community organizations to create initiatives focused on preventing sexual harassment.

The vast majority of sexual harassment and assault is underreported in Canada (Canadian Women’s Foundation, 2016). On TransLink, it is estimated only 1 in 10 incidents are reported (Woo, 2014). There are a number of reasons attributed to this, ranging from the cultural normalization of sexual harassment, officials’ apathetic response to reports, to victim blaming (see Buckley, 2016; Fox and Smith, 1999; and Macmillan et al., 2000).

Within the analysis, reasons for, or for not reporting were offered by posters 79 of 222 times or in 35.6% of stories. For some it was fear, “I was too shaken to say anything” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015), or blaming of themselves, “I never did report it, I felt at the time it was my fault, I made stupid decisions”, to embarrassment or disgust: “I never reported it because I was so embarrassed”, “I should have told people around me, but I was so disgusted”, “I felt so disgusted and violated, but at the time I didn’t feel like I could speak up” (2015). Some posters commented how their flight or fight reaction left them paralyzed, unable to speak up: “I should have pushed the emergency button but I was startled and confused” and “I started to cry and couldn’t even tell the bus driver what was wrong before I got off at my stop” (2015).

Others (10 of 79 stories regarding reporting) commented because there was no discrete way to report their harassment without having to call attention to themselves or relive the incident, they did not report it: “I was afraid to call and have to speak to someone and relive what happened”, “there was a SkyTrain attendant on the platform,

but I was a bit traumatized so I didn't approach her and tell her what happened", "I wish there was a more discreet way to report", and "I would have reached for the report bar, but they were watching us for a reaction" (2015).

Some posters (24 of 79 stories regarding reporting) commented on their past negative experience of reporting to transit or general lack of confidence in TransLink's ability to sincerely respond as a deterrent in reporting: "If I had waited and told a security guard, they really wouldn't have been able to do anything about it, because he would have been gone, and all I would have done would be file some incident report" and "I found myself wondering if I should tell the bus driver, or call someone about it, but wondered what a bus driver could even do about such an obscure problem" (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). One poster stated the lack of criminal laws was a deterrent: "I didn't call the police because there is no law saying that you can't take pictures of people" (2015). The lack of trust in the capability of TransLink (and Transit Police) is a deterrent for reporting officially.

Posters often mentioned TransLink's (synonymous in this context for Transit Police's) action or inaction to their incident. 88 of 222 posters or 39.6% of stories referred to actions and responsibilities of TransLink, which were or were not met. Posters commented they had reported their incident to transit authorities, but nothing came out of it. Some stated officials didn't do anything and 'passed the buck' around until the problem (the victim) went away. One commenter wrote after their assault,

"I got off at the next stop. I called TransLink and asked what I was supposed to do in a situation like that. I was told I should tell the bus driver, I said I did and he did nothing. . . So I told the man on the phone there was not a transit cop around so he said I should call 911. Yeah right, can you really see anyone taking it seriously if I called 911 because a man was sexually harassing me on the bus? It's

just not done and any ways, I shouldn't have to go that far” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015).

Another individual stated, “I reported to the police, they told me to tell [the] driver next time”, a similar poster said, “the women sitting with me went to the driver and told him to call the police but he ignored her” (2015). When posters filed a report with police, they were disheartened to hear there was nothing done: “I ended up submitting a report to the police, but nothing came of it”; “I called the police but it has been 2 months and they haven’t done much”; “I got off and called the police, again they told me there was nothing they could do”; “The police didn’t care”; and, “I dialed 911. The operator was disinterested and curt. So was the officer that came by, he cut me off mid-sentence when my bus came and told me to go home” (2015).

A large majority of posters commented on TransLink’s actions (discussed within transit service component code), with the bulk of these being negative. Commenters claimed transit authorities did nothing, were nowhere to be seen, or the bus drivers were the assailant. However, it is important to note this is a platform to post stories of harassment and discontent. Nonetheless, this exemplifies the distrust riders have in their transit authority and its employees. Although a few positive stories stood out. One in particular about a bus driver: “[*name removed*] my favourite ‘take-no-bullshit’ bus-driver is working, I tell her about the man in the alley, and she says that if that ever happens again to flag down whatever bus I can and get on the bus for free if needed, to be safe” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). One poster positively acknowledged TransLink’s Twitter account, “TransLink has a super-responsive twitter account”, while another posted their reporting experience: “I reported the assault to transit police, who were

fantastic and empathetic and supportive. They made it easy for me to feel comfortable and share my story” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015).

Individuals also commented on the lack of a formal reporting method as a deterrent for reporting. Many posters wrote about the inadequacy of transit staff (primarily Transit Police and bus drivers) to properly address or acknowledge harassment on transit (49 of 88 stories coded as ‘transit service components’ negatively discussed the service – or lack thereof, of transit staff in regards to reporting, harassment, and women’s safety). Some of these posters felt there were no SkyTrain attendants to report to, and bluntly stated they feel TransLink workers and Transit Police only care about writing fare tickets: “I looked for a SkyTrain attendant to inform them that there was someone making violent threat, but there was no one around”; “we can’t rely on TransLink employees to intervene”; and “we ran off [to] the next station and ran out of there. No security or anyone around” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). Others commented on the inability to get a hold of security personnel due to signal troubles in the tunnels: “by this point we were in the tunnel and I tried 911 but we had no signal” and “I pulled out my phone to call the transit non-emergency line, but I had forgotten that there is no reception in Granville Station” (2015). Others wrote they were unable to find a place online to submit an official report: “I’m having trouble finding a way to email a harassment complaint to TransLink/the Transit Police. Like, this is really personal, so I’m not comfortable sending it to TransLink’s general complaints” (2015).

5.1.7 Theme 7 – Importance of Digital Narratives & Social Media

A digital platform provides a safe space for women and other victims of harassment to share their story. Storytelling is a method used in the healing process of

trauma. The analysis indicates a public desire for an informal channel to share one's story, rather than only having an official reporting method. The reason being for recovery from their harassment. One poster commented on the need to write her story to heal: "I left a country where violence against women is at high levels, to meet these cowards here. I hate not having the courage to denounce, but now at least I can write about it". (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). As the blog co-creator stated, "a lot of the people who submitted to our blog first and foremost wanted to be heard. They wanted someone to acknowledge that something had happened to them and it is a problem. . . They just wanted their voice to be heard" (Personal Communication, December 2, 2015).

A few posters (7 of the 22 stories regarding 'storytelling') wrote how seeing other stories allowed them to realize they are not alone: "I realize I am not the only one who has been harassed or have had these things happen to them" or "I'm so glad I found this blog where I can read stories about other women similar to mine" (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). One poster commented on how they had been wanting to share their story but never had the opportunity to until now.

Some posters commented on the hope they have in having an accessible public database to help change the public perception of issues of harassment on transit (11 of the 22 stories regarding 'storytelling'). As one commenter stated, "I hope this dialogue will bring light to the problems that women face today", or "I don't think people will realize what happens to women on a daily basis", and "Thank you for your project. . . it really brings light to a subject that really needs to have some awareness" (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). Many of the commenters thanked the blog creators for producing a safe space to share their story, highlighting its importance and need. Digital storytelling is

a process that not only helps one to heal from the trauma of harassment but also brings awareness to the situation – hopefully shifting viewpoints or stirring a movement for change in society.

5.2 Key Lessons

The themes derived from the analysis provide a general outlook on the main topics emerging when discussing women’s safety issues in public transit planning. The key themes are specific to the Metro Vancouver context as they arose from the voices of female riders. From the analysis of these themes, specific lessons for the Metro Vancouver case study are created. These lessons are informed by the narratives from the blog, relevant literature, key informant interviews, and well-regarded precedents.

5.2.1 Lessons from Theme 1 – Factors that prompt harassment

Street harassment is so prevalent it is often regarded as a cultural norm. We see it in public, in the workforce, and in the media. It can be argued that street harassment is a symptom of gender inequality (Santhanam, 2014). Studies show that the most frequent victims of street harassment are women and girls (Logan, 2013). However, within this group, subsets of women are more likely to experience harassment than others. Race and racism are proven to be a factor that increases the likelihood of street harassment (see: Madriz 1997a, 1997b, and Kears 2010). It is shown women of color experience more street harassment and sexual violence than white women (see: Logan, 2013 and Madriz 1997a, 1997b). A study conducted by Nielsen showed 68% of women of color reported daily harassment or often, compared to only 55% of white women (2009). Classism is also addressed as a point that increases the likelihood of street harassment (see Miller, 2008 and Logan 2013). This can be attributed to the argument that those living in lower

class neighbourhoods are exposed to more extreme social and economic disadvantages, especially as the neighbourhoods in these areas have a higher rate of unemployment or criminally employed men (Logan, 2013). Additionally, sexual identity is a factor increasing one's likelihood of harassment. It is found that those identifying as something other than heterosexual often feel unwelcome in public spaces due to their sexuality (McNeil, 2012).

When looking at the harasser or perpetrator of harassment, the majority of those who harass others in public spaces are male (see Logan, 2013; Kears 2010; Gardner 1995; and McNeil 2012). It is argued men who harass others in public either fall into two categories (or both): men who use harassment as a form of amusement or men who use harassment as a way of terrorizing others (Logan, 2013). Other factors influencing men to commit violence against women include those who have previously committed acts of violence against women, those who hold traditional gender role beliefs and conform to masculinity norms, and those with a past history of – or exposure to abuse (Futures Without Violence, 2013).

The use of design in safety precautions primarily focuses on the concepts of CPTED. It should be noted that this area of literature has been critiqued in relation to gender issues. Nonetheless, there are many other design opportunities for improving safety on transit, these are discussed in section 2 of the literature review in Chapter 3. One specific lesson extracted is the importance of a gendered lens within transit service components, transit safety features, and design to ensure the needs of urban women are met.

The discussion of transit service areas and transit safety features within the stories highlight areas for TransLink and Transit Police to address or further investigate to be able to provide a safer public transit system and eliminate factors which influence harassment. With 39.6% of stories commenting on transit service components, it is evident this is a key area TransLink and Transit Police need to address. Additionally, the stories highlight the lack of trust in the transit authority, the lack of action and training to properly respond to harassment, and the need for more staff on transit property (buses, SkyTrains, platforms, and bus stops). Furthermore, an analysis of the location of the stories highlights the bus as the most likely place for an assault. The following chart (a more in-depth chart is found in chapter 5 section 3.7) depicts where incidents of harassment posted on the blog have taken place:

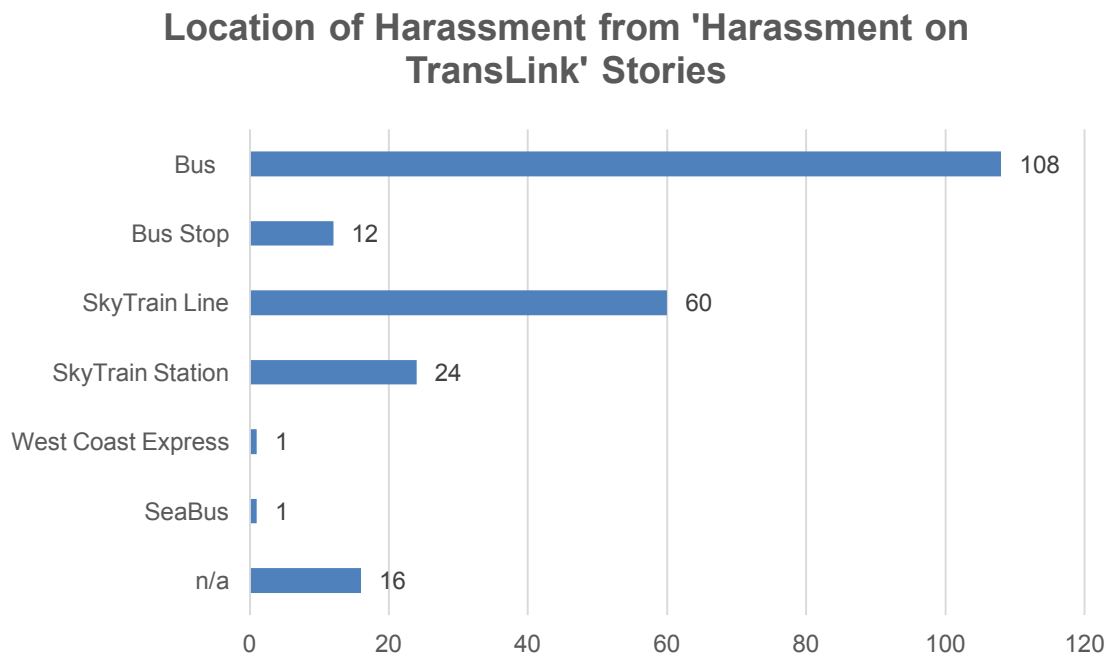


Figure 7: Location of assaults on TransLink (created by Rogness, 2017 from stories collected on Harassment on TransLink)

Almost half of all the stories (108 of 222, or 48.6%) show harassment occurring on a bus. This illustrates a major area of concern for TransLink and Transit Police to address. Additionally, almost one third (60 of 222, or 27.0%) of stories stated harassment occurring on a SkyTrain Line. Again, presenting the pressing need for TransLink and Transit Police to focus on preventing harassment on their transit system. This data helps to highlight issues that TransLink and Transit Police are not, or are not properly addressing.

The stories discussing transit safety features and transit service components not only reveal specific areas for the transit authority to explore and tackle, but show that although TransLink and Transit Police state that safety is a main priority, there is currently not enough being done. Only 2 stories discussing safety design issues were outside of TransLink's responsibility; this emphasizes the need for transit to continue to develop and strengthen their role in improving women's safety.

5.2.2 Lessons from Theme 2 – Perceptions of Safety on Transit

Anxiety and fear about one's personal safety is a main deterrent in using public transit (Needle and Cobb, 1997). As the narrative analysis showed, people are fearful of public transit in Vancouver due to what they have seen, heard, or experienced - regardless if they have personally faced an incident of harassment. This complements the idea that although experts claim crime rates have declined over the years, fear of crime is running high (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1999).

Studies show the experience of street harassment (which often takes place on public transit) is directly related to greater preoccupations with physical appearance and body shame. This is also indirectly related to heightened fears of rape for undergraduate

women (Chaudoir and Quinn, 2010). It can be argued the encounters of harassment can make individuals feel uneasy in their environment, angry, depressed, and experience a decline in their self-esteem (Manalo et. al, 2011). In regards to body shaming, harassment is noted to make women feel disgusted with their bodies and become more self-conscious and less comfortable in public (2011). Research also demonstrates vulnerable populations – women, children, elderly and physically handicapped, are most fearful of bus stops and subway settings (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1999). This emphasizes the importance of creating a safer transit system and *ensuring* riders feel safe, despite the statistical likelihood of assault.

5.2.3 Lessons from Theme 3 – Impact of Harassment on Victims

Stranger harassment has harmful and lasting impacts on individuals. Not only does it limit one’s access to public places due to fear, declined comfort level, and humiliation (Kearl, 2014), it leaves a lasting psychological and emotional effect. The harassment one experiences – or sees, can also be a trigger, bringing up victims’ memories of past abusive experiences (Roenius, 2016). One commenter wrote about the struggle to heal from her incident, especially with no follow-up or justice:

“When no one sees it, when you feel embarrassed, when you’re not even sure it is really happening (how could it?), and when you try to get help or report it and no one cares - how do you get justice? How do you heal? How do you make it stop, for you and for others?” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015).

The emotional effects of street harassment can range from mere annoyance to extreme, life-long fear (Roenius, 2016). Street harassment is shown to be connected with self-objectification, where individuals see themselves as objects for the pleasure of desire of others (2016). This is proven to lead to an assortment of mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety, and eating disorders (2016).

Street harassment can also reduce one's level of comfort in public, affecting one's willingness to use transit or not, consequently limiting one's right to the city. Female riders, or those vulnerable to harassment, will take various measures to limit the possibility of harassment. First, those who take transit by choice will most likely avoid transit altogether. Those who have no choice will modify their behaviour despite any inconvenience or discomfort such changes may bring (Hsu, 2011). These augmentations include – but are not limited to, avoiding going out alone at night, relying on companions, walking in certain areas only, not taking particular bus routes, and dressing conservatively (Lenton et. al, 1999). Despite the great pains women take to avoid harassment in public places, there is no guarantee such precautions will be effective. As Gardner claims, “women can never be sure what activities on a man's part are precursors to battery, rape, or other violent crime, so that women commonly classify any public harassment as abuse preceding rape or violent crime” (1995, p. 29).

Many victims worry that mild forms of stranger harassment may escalate into violent sexual assault (Roenius, 2016). One study in America found 68% of women and 48% of men reported being either very, or at least somewhat concerned verbal street harassment would turn physical (Kearl, 2014). Although statistically it may be unlikely to experience such levels of violence, these fears are still warranted. In 2013 a Detroit mother of three was shot and killed by a man after she refused to give him her phone number (Osborne, 2014). In 2013 in New York, a young woman's throat was slashed after she declined to go on a date with a stranger on the street (Feis, 2014). In 2016 in New York, a young woman was shot and killed after refusing the advances of a man in public (Buncombe, 2016). These examples are not anomalies, within the stories posted

women often spoke of harassment escalating after a confrontation. One wrote, “I turned around, told him to shut up, and turned back to face the front of the bus. He then proceeded to move in close behind me and tell me, ‘I should slap you in the head with my dick’” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). Another wrote that after confronting her harasser, “he immediately got incredibly aggressive and verbally abusive” (2015).

5.2.4 Lessons from Theme 4 – Coping Strategies on Transit

Women taking public transit are continuously altering their routes to escape and avoid harassment. Living a life according to a ‘rape schedule’ disadvantages women’s right to the city. As the Blog Co-creator stated, “in the negotiation of public space [fear of harassment] can physically limit where you go and what you’re able to do” (Personal Communication, December 2, 2015). Consequently, stranger harassment has a profound impact on a person’s life, emotionally and physically. A 2008 study conducted by Stop Street Harassment showed 19% of participants moved due to street harassment, and 9% changed jobs for the same reason (Roenius, 2016). In addition, women may be spending more money avoiding harassment by paying for alternative modes of transportation such as a taxi or purchasing a vehicle. Victims may also be so preoccupied with an obscene gesture directed toward them, that they are unable to confidently perform (2016). Although there is no quick solution, this emphasizes the importance of creating a safer public transit system and bringing awareness to the issue.

5.2.5 Lessons from Theme 5 – The Bystander Effect

Research has proven women (and minorities) are more likely to be targets of stranger harassment – specifically catcalling. Often when harassment occurs, other passengers sit idly by (Chaudoir and Quinn, 2010). Catcalls are a component of ‘stranger

harassment', which includes "verbal and nonverbal behavior, such as wolf-whistles, leers, winks, grabs, pinches, catcalls, and stranger remarks; the remarks are frequently sexual in nature and comment on a woman's physical appearance or on her presence in public" (Bowman, 1993, p. 523) Women are often the targets of stranger harassment and although it is possible men intend to make such remarks as compliments, studies have shown the emphasized derogatory and sexist nature of such comments (Chaudoir and Quinn, 2010). As the Blog Co-creator discussed,

"basically a compliment – by definition, is something that should make someone feel good. And they get to decide if they feel good, you don't get to decide if they feel good. If you feel you're being burned by somebody – or the rejection of your compliment is somehow unfair, then it is not a genuine compliment. Because they decided that they don't like it, and you feel that your entitlement to have them experience it positively is more important than how they actually feel" (Personal Communication, December 2, 2015).

Whether it is the fact that women are not taken seriously, or people do not understand the definition of stranger harassment, people still feel it is in their right to offer a stranger a comment about their looks. In the interview, the Blog Co-creator stated when the media approached her about her blog, they too asked how someone could offer a compliment to a stranger. It is clear, no matter the intent of the assailant, the assault - and especially the bystander effect, leave women feeling vulnerable and alone.

Research has proven street harassment affects those who see it occurring in addition to the victim. In a study on the bystander effect on US employed undergraduate students, 69% of participants stated being a bystander to sexual harassment aggravated the negative emotional responses women had in their own personal experiences with sexual harassment (Chaudoir and Quinn, 2010). As harassment has a negative effect on

both victims and bystanders, it is clear this is an issue that can no longer be tolerated or ignored.

Street harassment occurs so frequently, that it is viewed as something that is just part of living in cities. It is argued, “at the local level, police often ignore or minimize street harassment, sending a message to victims, perpetrators, and bystanders that street harassment is, at the very least, not a serious issue and that it is at some level tolerable” (O’Neill, 2013, p. 22). Thus, the attention organizations in power have towards street harassment can influence the attitude towards sexual harassment in public spaces. For example, if sexual harassment is not included in policies or campaigns of a transit authority, people will not consider it a priority of transit and continue to ignore it or view it as a fact of life in the city. Furthermore, this *laissez-faire* attitude towards harassment from transit authorities and bystanders helps perpetuate one of the most significant problems in perceptions of safety and fear in public transit, underreporting (Buckley, 2016). “As in non-transit spaces, sexual harassment is ‘normalized,’ [and consequently] considered to be a cultural fact and not a problem to be addressed” (2016, p. 23).

Activist groups emphasize the importance of bystanders intervening in stranger harassment. Many highlight education and awareness as a key strategy for prevention (Chaudoir and Quinn, 2010). Hollaback! provides ‘The Five D’s’ strategy in an attempt to educate and empower bystanders to intervene. They say to either direct, distract, delegate, delay, and document street harassment (n.d.) However, it is important to note it cannot solely be up to the passengers to intervene to prevent harassment. This is just one part needed to prevent street harassment and encourage intervention and reporting.

5.2.6 Lessons from Theme 6 – Reporting

In surveys of victims of crime, the usual response for not reporting a crime are pre-formulated answers such as the crime was not serious/no serious loss, solved it ourselves, crime was not appropriate to report, or police would not be able to do anything about it (Kääriäinen and Sirén, 2011). Although these may contribute to underreporting, it is important to truly understand why victims of crime report and fail to report crimes. Despite not being specifically asked from the creators of the blog, many stories offered reasons as to why they reported or did not report harassment. This specific insight on what leads people – and more specifically TransLink riders, to report or not to provides specific lessons TransLink can focus on.

In an offer as to why many victims did not report, many posters stated they were too embarrassed, afraid, or traumatized to report. Cohn et al. claim the majority of sexual assaults are not reported due to the victim's race, their fear of the offender, where the assault took place, *shame or embarrassment* about the incident, and not wanting anyone to know about it (2013). It can be argued this personal barrier is because of society's patriarchal worldview, which diminishes the severity of assault and harassment and has historically ignored the validity of women and/or tended to 'victim blame'⁷. Consequently, this has left women feeling at fault for their own harassment, or their harassment is not worthy of reporting

⁷ Victim blaming can be defined as a degrading act that occurs when the victim(s) of a crime is held responsible - wholly or partially, for a crime that has been committed against them. The blame can appear in multiple forms, whether a negative social response from legal, medical, and mental health professionals, or negative treatment from the media, family members, and other acquaintances (CRVC, 2009). Victim blaming is often seen in the way we address rape prevention, focusing on actions for women (majority of rape targets) to take to not get raped – such as self defense, changing their dress, etc. rather than telling people not to rape others.

Additionally, the prevalent language of victim blaming in preventative measures is a major contributor to underreporting. As sexual assault has been defined as a woman's problem, many prevention efforts have been directed at what women can do for risk reduction (Piccigallo et al., 2012). Lately, the media has been documenting and promoting 'anti-rape' tools used to prevent an assault. These include apps for reporting or checking in, anti-rape nail polish, or anti-rape underwear. However, these preventative measures put the onus on women to prevent harassment. Molloy argues the problem with these products is they don't address the root cause of rape – people who rape (2015). As Buckley states, "the phrase 'preventative measures riders can take' seems to put the burden on women not to be harassed" (2016, p. 46). This highlights the importance of campaigns to focus on the underlying problem of patriarchy in measures used to prevent sexual harassment.

A main reason posters offered in not reporting was their distrust in TransLink. Many posters stated they feel as if transit workers would not do anything if they reported their harassment. Worse, some commenters posted their harassment came from a transit authority (some posters stated they were harassed by bus drivers). This has helped perpetuate an image that TransLink is apathetic to sexual harassment on transit. Buckley writes, "the failure of transit operators to recognize and address sexual harassment and assault on public transit has fostered a culture of non-reporting, and encouraged a normalization of sexual harassment" (2016, p. 46). Furthermore, the thought that Transit Police only cares about fare evasion was repeated. This highlights the current distrust in transit officials and possible dislike to the policing agency. As one poster stated, "I don't understand why TransLink employees feel the need to hassle someone for not having the

correct change but feel no need to do anything about situations like this” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). This repeated concept shows not only do people feel TransLink does not care about harassment, they simply don’t care about their riders. The image seems to be TransLink’s main priority is profit over riders.

Another specificity to not reporting harassment given was the lack of a formal channel to report an incident. As one commenter stated, “I’m having trouble finding a way to email a harassment complaint to TransLink/the Transit Police. Like, this is really personal, so I’m not comfortable sending it to TransLink’s general complaints” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). There is a need for a way to report harassment, informally and formally. However, it is important to note this was addressed with the OnDuty App created by Transit Police, where individuals are able to discretely file a report using their smartphone.

The lack of formal laws was shown to be a strong deterrent for reporting. Many feel as there is no law against public harassment, nothing can be done if it is reported. As Roenius argues, “the rigid statutory elements required by current criminal laws leave most street harassment victims without any legal protection” (2016, p. 853). When looking at Canada, there is no specific law in the Criminal Code referring to stranger harassment. Hollaback! argues, “some areas of Canadian criminal law . . . may touch on and prohibit some types of street harassment” (2014, p. 23). From a Federal perspective, criminal harassment is prohibited under the Canadian Criminal Code. Section 264 states:

1. No person shall, without lawful authority and knowing that another person is harassed or recklessly as to whether the other person is harassed, engage in conduct referred to in subsection (2) that causes another person reasonably, in all the circumstances, to fear for their safety or the safety of anyone known to them.
2. The prohibited conduct in subsection (1) consists of:

- a. repeatedly following from place to place the other person or anyone known to them;
- b. repeatedly communicating with, either directly or indirectly, the other person or anyone known to them;
- c. besetting or watching the dwelling-house, or place where the other person, or anyone known to them, resides, works, carries on business or happens to be; or
- d. engaging in threatening conduct directed at the other person or any member of their family (Criminal Code, 1985).

The Canadian courts define harassment as the state of being “tormented, troubled, worried, continually or chronically, plagued, bedeviled and badgered” (Department of Justice, 2012, p. 56). For the court to deem harassment as criminal harassment, the following four elements must be met:

- 1. The target must feel harassed by the conduct;
- 2. The perpetrator of the conduct must know or ought to know that the target feels harassed;
- 3. The perpetrator’s conduct must be one of the acts listed in the section, including repeatedly following the target, repeatedly communicating with the target, besetting or watching places where the target frequents, or threatening the target or someone the target knows;
- 4. Lastly, the target of the conduct must have a reasonable fear for their safety or the safety of someone they know (Department of Justice Canada, 2012).

Consequently, the only way street harassment can potentially be considered criminal harassment is if the harassment is seen as threatening conduct – defined by Canadian courts as intimidating conduct intended to make the target fearful (2012). Cat-calling and unwanted comments are not considered as threatening conduct.

Causing a disturbance in or near a public place is prohibited by the Canadian Criminal Code. In section 175(1) it states:

175. (1) Everyone who
- a. not being in a dwelling-house, causes a disturbance in or near a public place,
 - i. by fighting, screaming, shouting, swearing, singing or using insulting or obscene language,
 - ii. by being drunk, or

- iii. by impeding or molesting other persons,
- b. openly exposes or exhibits an indecent exhibition in a public place,
- c. loiters in a public place and in any way obstructs persons who are in that place, or
- d. disturbs the peace and quiet of the occupants of a dwelling-house by discharging firearms or by other disorderly conduct in a public place or who, not being an occupant of a dwelling-house comprised in a particular building or structure, disturbs the peace and quiet of the occupants of a dwelling-house comprised in the building or structure by discharging firearms or by other disorderly conduct in any part of a building or structure to which, at the time of such conduct, the occupants of two or more dwelling-houses comprised in the building or structure have access as of right or by invitation, express or implied, is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction. (Criminal Code, 1985).

Although not explicitly defined as illegal, it could be extrapolated – based on the facts of each case, street harassment is illegal under Section 175(1)(A) of The Canadian Criminal Code if the perpetrator is engaged in one of the listed acts, which causes a disturbance in or near a public place.

5.2.7 Lessons from Theme 7 – Digital Narratives & Social Media

Dialogue brings light to women’s issues. It allows people to listen to other’s stories and see the world in a new perspective. Stories allow one to see the world in a new light. Bell Hook’s book, ‘Reel to Real: race, class and sex at the movies’ discusses boundary-crossing and border crossing through stories found in movies. Through such medium of movies, people are able to see a scene they would otherwise not experience in their daily lives. In regards to harassment on public transit, “if people aren’t seeing it, they have trouble believing it exists” (Blog Co-creator, Personal Communication, December 2, 2015). Even if you experience harassment on a daily basis, if you don’t hear about others’ experience, it can feel as if you are the only one who is harassed or the only one who feels uncomfortable or upset about harassment in public transit. As one poster

wrote, “reading other stories, I realize I am not the only one. . . thank you” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015).

In addition, by collecting these stories in a visible, public place – such as an online blog, it brings awareness to the issue of stranger harassment. As one poster stated, “I don’t think people realize what happens to women on a daily basis when taking public transit in Vancouver” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). With the creation of the blog and its sudden rise in popularity due to the media, people are able to see they are not alone in their experiences and this is a problem that exists. One commenter cemented the process in their statement:

“It is high time that stories like these are collected to show that these seemingly small, not that big of a deal stories are truly part of a pervasive attitude of society. The more we share our stories, the more people will see how common this is, the more people will take a stand against it, and the less acceptable it will become” (2015).

By posting experiences online, in an organized and collected format, the issue is put out there. The story is told and hopefully helps to perpetuate a change, for “sometimes change just needs a catalyst” (2015). Stories are a powerful tool for planners in bringing light to an issue, and motivating members of the community and those in power to make changes, or “at the very least, [individuals] are inspired to make changes in [their] own lives” (Gaffney and Pollak, 2006, p. 96). Stories told online also are beneficial in the potential they have in connecting and sharing. As the Team Leader of Hollaback! Vancouver stated, “if people are sharing this, transit hears about these personal experiences and issues” (Personal Communication, January 14, 2016). When using an online blog, these stories aren’t just sitting somewhere, they can be actively used by

planners to help perpetuate change in design and policy or provide insight towards campaigns and plans.

Stories, told online or in-person, can be used to help in one's personal healing process. People want to be heard. By sharing your story, your experiences and trauma are validated. As the Blog Co-creator stated,

“a lot of the people who submitted to our blog first and foremost wanted to be heard. They wanted someone to acknowledge that something had happened to them and it is a problem that they experience often, and see often. A lot of people weren't responding because they expected it to be fixed or the person to be caught – or anything like that. They just wanted their voice to be heard” (Personal Communication, December 2, 2015).

Hollaback! Vancouver is a chapter of an international activist group that also collects stories of harassment online. Rather than solely focusing on stories on public transit, they collect stories throughout Metro Vancouver online through their blog and through a smartphone app. As the Team Leader stated in regards to their digital platform, “what's great is that once you've read a story you can click on an 'I got your back' button. So there are some really upsetting stories, but there are 70 people saying, I've got your back. It's become an informal support network” (Personal Communication, January 14, 2016). Digital platforms become communities of support. They provide support and potentially aid in the healing process, as there is a need to share and connect with others, especially in experiences of such intensity.

Although no stories explicitly discussed the potential and reach of social media, the other methods used in the analysis provided content on the possibilities and limitations of using social media as a tool for safety in public transit planning. From the research, social media was shown to have the potential to act as a communicative tool, informative tool, an (informal) reporting tool, a public engagement tool, and an

investigative tool within the planning practice. As a communicative tool social media can provide information regarding timely updates on schedules and event, and answer questions posed by the public. However, it can also be used to facilitate authentic two-way dialogue between the public and an organization to build rapport and social capital. Social media can act as an informative tool by offering different perspectives one may not typically see in their day-to-day experience. For example, as a white person, you may not understand the perspective of a person-of-colour. Therefore, insights and conversations on the social movement 'Black Lives Matters' can inform your perspective. For planners, this can be seeing the city from others perspective and gaining insight on what areas current plans, policies, and campaigns may not currently address. As a reporting tool, social media can be used to offer an informal platform for individuals to share their stories and connect with others to help in the healing process. Formally, online websites/forums or social media run by transit authorities can also be used to collect and share stories, offer an informal support network, and provide insights and information for potential crime prevention. As a public engagement tool, social media can be used to garner feedback from the public on specific plans and policies but also as a way to better integrate and connect the community within the planning process through blogs, hashtag campaigns, or live broadcasts. Social media can act as an investigative tool by using the knowledge of the public to help guide transit authorities in pursuing offenders. These are all further outlined below.

Social media is a relatively new medium for communication. Living in the digital age the majority of individuals worldwide have access to the internet, and use it to connect to others, gain information, and share their experiences. "Social media

applications encourage users to share their experiences, opinions, knowledge, and sometimes their locations. These connections can contribute to a sense of engagement or loyalty among users” (Bregman, 2012, p. 7). TransLink is regarded as a leader in the use of social media for communicating and engaging with riders. One of the main reasons for this attributed success is understanding what platforms to use, using different platforms for specific reasons, and emphasizing the need for 2-way connections on social media. As the Senior Communications Advisor at TransLink says, “we find there [are] different audiences for different channels” and “we use the platform where the people are having a conversation about transit. We go to where the people are already having the conversation and that is where we invest our time and money” (Personal Communication, December 11, 2015). Schweitzer argues that

“If planners seek to support strong public transit systems as a key element in building equitable and sustainable communities, they should encourage positive public sentiment about the service, in part by encouraging public transit agencies to use interactive social media approaches” (2014, p. 219).

This interactive approach focuses on two-way communications. Rather than just blasting out information, transit authorities should be using social media to build conversations and respond to users. Bregman argues social media can help to create connections for transit authorities to reach out to their riders and stakeholders to build support (2012).

Social media allows one to see and hear about ideas, topics, and issues they may not otherwise experience. “I think [storytelling is] very important, especially for marginalized groups. Often, they are the ones who are heard less or have to shout louder for their voices to be heard. I think it does kind of democratize that” (Blog co-creator, Personal Communication, December 2, 2015). When stories are posted online, they are put out there for everyone to see, opening the discussion to anyone. The Turkey

precedent of #sendeanlat (you tell your story too)⁸ is an example where social media provides a platform to vocalize an issue authorities and governing organizations either don't know about, or refuse to acknowledge. In February 2015, after a 20-year old woman was killed in southern Turkey, Turkish women started a social media campaign to bring awareness and help end violence against women by sharing their stories of sexual harassment under the hashtag of #sendeanlat. By providing a space for women to share their experiences, the campaign helped to break the country's taboo against street harassment. Men are able to see the experiences that women face everyday and women are able to see they are not alone. As almost everyone is able to see and access the internet, collecting stories through social media allows everyone to be included. Social media opens our eyes to other peoples' lives and situations. It allows us to see things we would not necessarily experience or hear about. In regards to street harassment, when women share their stories experiences, it can help show it is a legitimate issue needing to be addressed. It is not just a normal part of urban life. As the blog co-creator wrote, "social media can help, it can help to translate into something more formal and integrated" (Personal Communication, January 14, 2016) – social media allows an idea to become a reality.

In addition to being an informative tool for safety measures, social media can be used a reporting tool. Social media can be used formally for reporting - such as through an app or online form, or informally on a blog or platform such as Twitter. Social media is instant; it allows you to instantaneously connect to someone. "With social media you can respond immediately. If something happens you can tweet about it – you can tweet

⁸ # refers to the term 'hashtag' which is defined as a word or phrase that is used to identify messages on a specific topic

the Transit Police” (Blog Co-creator, Personal Communication, December 2, 2015). As we live in the digital age, almost everyone has access to the internet. By allowing individuals to report online, you are reaching them on a platform they already use, making it easier to report harassment. Additionally, when reporting online, there is an anonymity factor. In sensitive issues, such as sexual assault and harassment, reporting online allows you to stay anonymous. It allows you to decide how you want to report what happened to you. It is a way in which, “you can let it be known there is a problem without putting yourself in a more vulnerable position” (Blog Co-creator, Personal Communication, December 2, 2015). Additionally, the information gathered (formally or informally) can be used to gather data on transit ‘incidents’ (i.e., graffiti, harassment, assault, etc.). Transit authorities can respond, take note of, and address the reports received. They can use the information gathered to inform future policies, plans, and campaigns, while also creating crime prevention strategies using the collected data. A clear example of this is the collaboration between the activist group Collective Action for Safe Spaces and the Metro Transit Police of Washington, D.C.. Collective Action for Safe Spaces hosts an online blog to garner stories to create an informal network of support. On their blog, one is directed to the formal reporting channel with Metro Transit Police. MTP use the information gathered to inform crime statistics and various strategies on crime prevention.

While there is a lot of potential for social media to be used as a reporting tool, there are limitations to consider. Currently, reports are not taken online by Transit Police. Reports on social media are also considered inadmissible in court when pursuing an assailant. “Most of the time when someone mentions something online – whether it’s

Twitter/Facebook/Reddit I can't even start a file until they call in. So our first reply is just, we can't take reports online, please call us" (Community Relations Officer, Personal Communication, December 15, 2015). B.C. courts do not permit statements taken online. Thus, any information taken online cannot be used in court. Additionally, online stories can be detrimental in pursuing criminals. It is easy to share a lot of personal information online, however, "if you share too much publically and share all the details [of an assault], then that could actually jeopardize an investigation" (Community Relations Officer, Personal Communications, December 15, 2015).

Social media allows anyone to share whatever they want. Even though social media allows us to share our stories, people can be tempted to share someone else's story. If the experience has happened to someone else, we have to ask if it is really our story to tell. For example, the Team Leader of Hollaback! Vancouver discussed the time someone had recorded harassment on a bus and posted it to a misconnections website. The individual posted it with good intentions, in an attempt to identify the harasser for criminal justice. However, the video was shared over 2,000 times, it had gone 'viral'. This shows the power and potential of social media, but it also means the woman's assault was relived 2,000 times by strangers without her permission to share her story. As the Team Leader says, "[social media] can be a really powerful tool, it is just figuring out how to appropriately harness that power" (Personal Communication, January 14, 2016) so victims are not further libeled.

Social media is instant. It follows trends and immediate topics. When the 'Harassment on TransLink' blog emerged, media caught wind of the issue and it was a popular topic for the time being. The blog soon became flooded with stories. However, as

time went on, stories dwindled. Additionally, Hollaback!'s online blog and app collecting stories, sees this ebb and flow of posts due to the rise of awareness of assault in the media. When using the internet or social media as a tool, it is important to note things trend and things fade out over time. If planners are to use social media as a tool – whether it be for reporting or not, there is a need for continuously keeping content fresh, new, and exciting.

The internet allows for anyone to post anything, anonymously. Although this has a number of benefits, it allows for people to post hurtful or untrue things without any penalization. The term for people who use the anonymity of the internet to cause harm or trouble to others is 'trolls'. Trolls cause a lot of difficulties in using social media as a tool for safety and reporting in planning. Often times trolls make up stories to cause trouble or to interfere for no reason at all. The problem with this is, "the loudest person in the room gets the most attention – even if it is not the correct things they're talking about" (Senior Communications Advisor, Personal Communication, December 11, 2015). In many online initiatives, trolls have caused trouble for TransLink and Transit Police. For example, "if there's trolls out there and they spam our page, they're going to get more attention than the person that leaves one comment on our page. That is a challenge and to dispel falsehoods can be a challenge" (Senior Communications Advisor, Personal Communications December 11, 2015). In addition, with the anonymity of the internet, there is no responsibility to the story you tell. Once it is posted, you no longer have any accountability to it. Thus, if you fabricate your story, you're not associated with it and suffer no consequences. As the Community Relations Officer said, "there's also people, who, unfortunately, make up stories. We don't normally talk about it, but we have

received reports that ended up being completely fabricated” (Personal Communications, December 15, 2015).

Social media can also be used as a tool for public engagement. It can be used to elicit feedback and ideas on specific plans, policies, and campaigns through online surveys, questionnaires, or Q&A’s. It can also be used to advertise to a wider group of individuals on various planning and community events. However, there is great potential in capitalizing on social media to strengthen participatory planning. Social media can help further bridge the gap between planners and the public. TransLink uses Periscope (a live and interactive social media platform) to broadcast press releases and open board meetings. Planners could make use of such live tools (periscope, Instagram live, or Facebook live) to broaden the engagement within the planning processes. Whether it is through broadcasting press releases or open board meetings, having online ‘live’ world cafés, or facilitating a forum discussion through an AMA (*ask me anything*) Reddit post, social media offers a flexibility in connecting the public’s voice to plans, policies, and campaigns. This can help catalyze participatory planning by bringing women and transit officials together to work through identified issues to move towards satisfactory solutions. In addition, community councils, task forces, or planning committees can use social media through specific forums or platforms to reach a wider audience. For example, a community council that starts a “hashtag” campaign⁹ on Instagram/Twitter/Facebook can use the results to inform decisions and provide recommendations. A blog or public social media page can also provide an area for individuals to comment on, further strengthening one’s reach.

⁹ A ‘hashtag’ campaign refers to a specific statement that one includes in their social media post towards a campaign asking for others opinions, insights, or photos.

Transit authorities, specifically transit police, can use social media as an investigative tool. Transit Police use the platform Reddit to help with their investigations. By posting on the /r/Vancouver forum, they elicit information from the public on perpetrators by posting security footage or photos asking ‘who this is’? They can also use various social media tools to update riders on criminals to be aware of. Another example of a police force using social media is the Vancouver Police Department using Facebook to catch instigators and participants in the 2011 Vancouver Stanley Cup Riot. People were “tagged” in the Facebook photos, identifying the criminals.

5.3 Recommendations

In addition to the 7 themes and lessons derived from the research, there are a number of recommendations offered. These recommendations can be directly applied by TransLink and Transit Police Metro. They can also be applied to other municipalities looking at starting or expanding campaigns on sexual harassment, considering using social media as a tool for reporting, or for other measures in public transit planning.

5.3.1 Recommendations on Theme 1 – Factors that prompt harassment

As xenophobia is a cultural issue, no easy solution can be offered. Rather focusing on implementing a strong stance against such behaviour in ad campaigns can help to establish a zero tolerance policy. The research of this thesis does not explore this topic specifically, but it is mentioned in the conclusion as one of the possible next steps. Many of the precedents reviewed offer a good starting point for this research, specifically Washington, DC’s campaign ‘It’s not Ok - Report Sexual Harassment on Transit’ by the Metro Transit Police focusing on the use of affirmative and gender-neutral advertising.

There are a number of features within transit's services related to transit safety that were specifically mentioned as an issue in the Metro Vancouver case study. These allow for specific recommendations which can be applied by TransLink to help create a safer public transit system. One transit safety feature that stood out was the issue with crowded SkyTrain and buses. When routes are crowded, you are unable to figure out who may have grabbed you, providing an easy escape for a perpetrator. Crowding also traps victims and they are forced to wait out their harassment until they can physically move off the train or bus. This is an area transit can address to prevent sexual harassment. However, this issue is a bit of a double-edged sword; empty buses, trains, and platforms also instill fear. With no 'eyes on the street', women feel frightened. One poster stated that an empty platform isn't a safe place to be because then she couldn't make a scene to get help if something were to happen to her (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). Therefore, there is a need to find a balance. One possibility is having an attendant on both busy and empty routes, and adding more buses on routes of high incidences to ease congestion.

As stated in the research in design measures for transit safety (see Chapter 2 section 2), cameras were commented to provide little comfort in creating a safer system. Rather, their purpose is to help after an assault has taken place. This does not eradicate their use, but shows how they can be used: cameras are important in pursuing assailants, not in preventing sexual harassment. Posters stated the desire for a higher physical presence of transit officials: "if TransLink wants to make people feel safe while using their services, they should always have an attendant at each station" (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). In addition, silent alarms were proven to be ineffective in times of immediate danger. As one poster wrote, "I would have reached for the report bar, but

they were watching” (2015), emphasizing the need for more discrete panic buttons or other covert ways to get the attention of security.

In addition, improper lighting (coded as transit safety features) was mentioned a number of times throughout the stories. Dark places incite fear, one poster stated, “badly lit platforms and warm, empty trains seem to be an invitation for people” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). Another poster was more specific in her story, mentioning how she avoids the Expo and Millennium lines and opts for the Canada Line whenever she can due to lighting inefficiencies – a route TransLink could focus on improving by adding additional lighting.

Lastly, the stories reveal the need for additional strategies and campaigns focusing on preventing harassment on buses and the various SkyTrain lines themselves. Recommendations offered include proper training of all transit staff and police in gendered issues and how to properly address harassment and assault. In addition, the adding of uniformed and non-uniformed police on buses and trains to improve perceptions of safety and reduce the risk of potential harassment.

5.3.2 Recommendations on Theme 2 – Perceptions of Safety on Transit

When discussing safety on transit, it is important to note perceptions of safety are just as, if not more important than statistical likelihood of vulnerability or harm. Security on transit is defined as, “the actual degree of safety from crime or accidents and the feeling of security resulting from that and other psychological factors” (Joewono and Kubota, 2006, p. 87). Feelings of security consist of three aspects: safety from crime (includes factors such as transit safety design features, staff/police presence, and

identified help points); safety from accidents (includes factors such as presence/visibility of supports, avoidance of hazards, and safeguarding by staff); and perceptions of security (includes factors such as media relations, transparency of safety measures, and the public's view of transit system) (2006). Making transit safer through safe design measures is not enough. As Jaffe argues, “the perceptions that people have about public transportation, substantiated or not, are powerful enough to attract or repel them” (2013, p. 1). Currently, riders feel transit in Metro Vancouver is unsafe. If all safety measures were taken, people would still feel unsafe due to their preconceived notions of safety issues on TransLink.

To improve women's perceptions of safety a number of steps can be undertaken. Loukaitou-Sideris provides 5 key strategies for improvement: design strategies, security technology strategies, policing, education and outreach strategies, and supplemental policies. The first, design strategies, includes the measures of CPTED (particularly highlighting the importance of lighting and visibility) and highlights the importance of the location and surrounding of transit settings. The strategy argues bus stops should be away from desolate environments and near people and activities, much like the concept of Transit Oriented Development (TOD). TOD refers to a walkable, mixed-use form of higher density development within a 600 metre radius (or 5-minute walk) of a public transit station (The City of Calgary, 2017). Other design strategies include the general maintenance and upkeep of transit facilities and the regular cleaning of litter and graffiti also provides comfort to riders.

Next, security technology strategies are emphasized. Although surveillance cameras are important in increasing actual and perceived safety risks, the physical

presence of staff is key in providing a deeper level of comfort. Technology can also provide real-time scheduling information at bus/train stops for reliability, predictability, and efficiency. Real-time information offers transit riders a sense of accountability and relief of being stranded (2009). In a study by Taylor et al. of transit users needs, the most important determinant of user satisfaction was frequent, reliable service in an environment of personal safety (2009). Thus, the emphasis on short and predictable wait times for buses aids in the perceptions of safety in women. Within this strategy, Loukaitou-Sideris also mentions other security technology devices such as emergency buttons and phones on transit (2009).

When looking at the policing, this strategy presses the importance of hiring additional security guards and staff to patrol transit stops, routes, and stations in peak times and on the most ‘vulnerable’ routes (those within a lower-socioeconomic area).

Education and outreach strategies stress the need for transit agencies to organize or co-sponsor campaigns, public education workshops, and events focusing on reporting sexual assault, harassment, and crime. This shows the transit agency cares about the safety of their riders and the issue of stranger harassment on transit. Additionally, the importance of public information signs encourages bystanders to intervene – and also penalize assailants on not harassing others.

Other policies include special escort programs for females, transit passes so women do not have to open their wallets or carry cash on transit, further ability of public transportation so walking distances in poorer neighbourhoods are minimized, cab vouchers available for low-income women in emergency situations, and incorporating women in the transportation process so their voices are heard (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2009).

Todd Litman, a Canadian transportation researcher argues there is a need for a new safety narrative to improve the overall safety and security of public transit to current riders, potential riders, and to all other members and organizations of the community.

This new safety narrative should seek to provide,

“Accurate and comprehensive information on various ways that public transit can affect safety and security. It should not understate risks or blame victims by implying that they should have been more cautious; safety and security should be recognized as a serious concern that can be reduced through cooperation between transit agencies, passengers, and communities” (Litman, 2016, p. 39).

He argues this narrative should be incorporated into all types of communications – such as planning documents, community engagement, newsletters, websites, media contacts, performance evaluations, advertising, and employee training (2016). Thus, to provide a better sense of safety for transit riders, its importance should be present in all materials of a transit authority and a main focus in its plans and policies.

5.3.3 Recommendations on Theme 3 – Impact of Harassment on Victims

The emotional effects of street harassment can range from mere annoyance to extreme, life-long fear (Roenius, 2016). Harassment can happen only once, but the consequences and stigma associated with it can have lasting impacts on a victim. There is a need for a support network to help women (and others) who have been affected by stranger harassment. This need validates the importance of having both an official reporting method and a non-official reporting method, as the non-official method creates a safe space to heal and share one’s story. Having an online blog as a reporting method creates an informal network that connects victims of harassment with one-another and potential resources. By sharing your story and hearing similar stories, you are able to see

you are not alone. Within their campaign, Metro Transit Police in Washington partnered with the activist group, Collective Action for Safe Spaces to compliment their online reporting tool for sexual harassment with an online database for people to share their stories. As reporting is important in preventing further crime and catching an assailant, it is only one part of the healing process. An online database helps fulfill this other need through connections and informal support. Following suit of the Washington example, TransLink could partner with Harassment on TransLink to direct those reporting their harassment on the app to the blog to share their story and feel connected.

Another aspect TransLink could explore, based on the need presented, is expanding their partnerships to focus on the healing process of those affected by harassment on the transit system. In the precedent research, Washington, DC's Metro Transit Police partnered with Collective Action for Safe Spaces to provide both a formal reporting method for sexual harassment and an informal online tool to share one's stories anonymously as well. Collective Action for Safe Spaces seeks to partner people suffering from their harassment with the National Street Harassment hotline to get in touch with the right organizations to aid in the healing process. One poster wrote how she herself, "went to the North Shore Women's Centre for support and have since been able to resume living without fearing the men around [her]" (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). On the blog or the app, TransLink and Transit Police could offer links to resources in the areas for help and counseling.

5.3.4 Recommendations on Theme 4 – Coping Strategies on Transit

Women are taking various measures to avoid harassment on public transit. These measures have a negative effect on their personal and economic well-being. Riders

discussed four coping strategies they use to avoid harassment: time/space avoidance, environmental awareness, physical defense, and behavioral modification strategies. Insights from these strategies provide specific areas TransLink can address to provide a safer public transit system. A number of individuals commented on their avoidance of transit at night. Improved lighting (especially on the Expo and Millennium Line), additional security, and transit escort programs (where women are dropped off closer to their destination at night) could help improve perceptions of safety at night for female riders. It was also noted that drunk individuals on transit create a feeling of uneasiness and fear for women. Having a zero tolerance policy on alcohol and drug use on transit and the removal of intoxicated individuals or refusal of service is proven to improve levels of safety (Yavuz and Welch, 2010). Additionally, messaging of sexual harassment prevention campaigns which focus on a zero tolerance to harassment, rather than prevention or reporting creates an environment where women feel welcomed and valued. Women do not have to create a legitimacy for their presence, as harassment is not viewed as something to prevent or a part of urban life, but something that is wrong and should not happen at all. Although there is no quick solution to harassment on transit, it is important to recognize it is an important issue to tackle to ensure our cities are accessible and inclusive to all.

5.3.5 Recommendations on Theme 5 – The Bystander Effect

The bystander phenomenon leaves victims feeling even more alone and powerless. Posters on the blog repeated the need for bystanders to intervene. As one poster bluntly stated, “when no one speaks up against public harassment, the harassment will continue” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). This highlights the importance of key

advertising by the transit authority. If harassment is said to be a problem that is not tolerated, it will no longer be viewed as something that just happens. An educational campaign on zero tolerance towards public sexual harassment is key in changing the current *laissez-faire* attitude of riders. Osmond argues, “this message, which should include encouragement for bystanders to intervene, ought to be wrapped within a zero tolerance campaign, with posters and information in every public space, including social media sites” (2013, p. 6). Campaigns should focus on all ages, but start with the early teenage years so the idea that this type of behavior is acceptable is squashed as early as possible. When people are told this isn’t okay at a young age, they will know it is wrong and not something that happens to all women. Osmond also states a successful campaign needs to have governmental backing, robust policies, and strategic champions within all partnering organizations that are responsible for safety in public spaces within a city (2013).

When looking at the tolerance society currently has to stranger harassment, this can help direct the language of ads seeking to prevent harassment and encourage bystander intervention. The ‘Anti-Sexual Assault Campaign’ by Massachusetts Bay Transport Authority focuses on sending a strong message of zero-tolerance towards sexual harassment through specific advertisements. These ads do not seek to provide ‘preventative measures’ to avoid being victimized, but explicitly state harassment is not tolerated. Thus, moving away from victim-blaming and towards putting the onus on the harasser to stop harassing. Advertisements on transit use slogans such as, “Respect my space”, “Keep your hands off me. Grab a handrail, not me”, “Keep your privates private.

Want the whole world to see you? No problem” and “No means no. Sexual harassment is a crime”. All are followed by the text of:

“Hey you, you are not entitled to my space. Sexual harassment is a crime, and if you make me uncomfortable, I will find an MBTA Station Official or transit Police Officer, take your photo with my phone, or use my See Something, Say Something app to report you. Leave me and the other riders alone” (MBTA, 2008).

These advertisements also use pictures of both men and women – emphasizing the fact that harassment can be perpetrated by anyone and happen to anyone, regardless of gender. What the advertisements say is harassment towards anyone and committed by anyone is not tolerated. In the online database, 11 of 222 (~5%) of posters identified as male and 1 as ‘other’ (transgender), recognizing the importance of men in advertisements within awareness campaigns. Additionally, this style of messaging highlights the importance of focusing on the perpetrator, not the victim. Instead of relying on messages pushing for victims to come forward and report, advertisements should instead focus on telling assailants not to harass victims and for others to intervene when they see harassment.

From the research conducted, the initiative ‘Transit Tuesdays’ stands out as a key component of a way for transit agencies to combat sexual harassment and the bystander effect. For this campaign, Transit Police partnered with Hollaback! Vancouver to bring awareness to the issue of sexual harassment on TransLink and provide advice on what to do if you are a bystander to someone being sexually harassed on transit. It is a great campaign which capitalizes on the use of social media in addition to a print brochure: “every Tuesday both of our respective social media would have tweets and stories about how to be a bystander and help each other out on transit” (Team Leader, Personal

Communication, January 14, 2016). On the printed brochure, ideas on how to intervene are posted so “bystanders can be silent no more” (BWSS, 2015). Furthermore, the language was not on “‘how to stay safe’ or ‘how to not get assaulted on transit’, but more about engaging bystanders” (Team Leader, Personal Communication, January 14, 2016). The brochure included three categories giving specific examples on how to intervene:

1. Rolling solo:
 - ‘Hey knock it off’
 - ‘Are you ok?’
 - Go stand next to the woman being targeted so they know they are not alone
 - Ask the woman, ‘Are they bothering you?’
 - Take a picture with your phone
 - Look disapprovingly at the person doing the harassing behaviour
 - Offer to get off at the next stop with the woman and catch the next train together
 - Don’t join in or laugh
 - Loudly say ‘ugh, that is so gross’.
2. Squad:
 - Tell a transit authority worker
 - Yell, ‘Somebody do something!’
 - Get a group together to intervene
 - Call 911 or contact Transit Police by text 87-77-77
 - Text a friend who is on SkyTrain, SeaBus or bus with you and ask them to HELP!
 - Make eye contact with some other bystanders and ask, ‘What should we do to help?’
3. Stealth Moves
 - Ask for directions
 - Offer the woman your seat
 - Act like you know the woman and say ‘I’ve been looking everywhere for you – we have to hurry to meet our other friends’
 - Drop your bags to create a commotion.

(BWSS, 2015)

This initiative helps to put the onus on bystanders rather than the victim, and hopefully aids a shift in worldview that disapproves of this type of behaviour; making it impossible

for other passengers to sit idly by and excuse themselves from intervening. This example is recommended as an initiative to continue and expand upon.

Although people feel others should intervene, some believe it is too dangerous: “the fact is, directly intervening is dangerous, and therefore it isn’t fair to blame those who don’t directly intervene in such frightening circumstances” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). Understanding this, Hollaback! Vancouver hosted an activist activity focusing on bystander intervention in a subtler way. They created ‘creeper cards’ which people could download to print off and give to people. “They’re basically these little cards that say, ‘Hey, your behaviour is really creepy’. So if you’re not feeling brave enough on transit to intervene when you see harassment you can give this card” (Team Leader, personal communication, January, 14, 2016). Although it should be noted, despite the intention, this subtler intervention could still cause harm and instill fear in potential bystanders. Nonetheless, it provides an easier way to intervene to help prevent harassment. These initiatives also show the importance of partnerships – especially with activist groups, to create safer transit systems. These types of partnerships and initiatives are offered as a recommendation for TransLink to continue and expand upon, as well as other transit agencies to capitalize on.

5.3.6 Recommendations on Theme 6 – Reporting

Through the narrative analysis and supplemental literature, four main reasons emerged as to why women are not reporting their harassment on transit. These include fear and shame over their harassment, distrust in TransLink, no formal reporting channel, and lack of laws supporting any potential criminal justice. The following provides

various precedents and suggestions TransLink could apply or further explore to increase reporting of harassment.

Women's fear of public spaces is socially constructed. Johnson argues:

“Our culture has done a very good job of convincing women that we are unsafe in public space and that we should not go to certain places at certain times, where certain people might be present, and that if we follow those rules we'd be safe. I think that we are probably safer in public space, and those arbitrary forms of social control are lies” (Johnson qtd. in Loukaitou-Sideris, 2009, p. 15).

Patriarchal values make victims feel at fault for their harassment. Their shame makes them feel dirty and responsible – when in reality there was nothing they could have done. O'Neill states, “police often ignore or minimize street harassment, sending a message to victims, perpetrators, and bystanders that street harassment is, at the very least, not a serious issue and that it is at some level tolerable” (2013, p. 22). Stranger harassment has been documented since the Industrial Revolution, yet it has only become a relatively hot topic in the early 21st century. For hundreds of years, this has just been a reality women have dealt with. To reshape our notions and ideas on stranger harassment, it needs to become a main priority for leading organizations. Thus, by bringing harassment to the top of a policing agenda, reporting could potentially be increased through awareness and the removal of stigma.

One way to highlight the importance of negating sexual harassment on transit is by creating campaigns focusing on sexual harassment awareness. This does more than attempt to stop harassment, it says this is an issue that we – being both society and the policing agency, consider important. Fitzgerald et al., states, “[in] the last few years there has been an increasing awareness of sexual harassment as an important social problem with serious implications for individuals and organizations alike” (1995, p. 117). This use

of awareness through campaigns, supplemental advertisements, and educational material was highly prevalent within the various precedents researched.

The examples discussed include Project Guardian, a collective campaign involving British Transit Police (BTP), Transport for London (TfL), Metropolitan Police, and the City of London Police, but many other campaigns do exist for further research. Some specific lessons extrapolated for recommendations include Project Guardian focus on advertisements specifically seeking to diminish insecurities related to the unwillingness to report harassment. This project focuses on increasing awareness and confidence amongst the public to report offences through specific language - which again focuses on the perpetrator rather than the victim. Massachusetts Bay Transport Authority (MBTA) in Boston, launched an Anti-Sexual Assault Campaign (See Something, Say Something) in 2008. This campaign also centers on sending a strong message that sexual harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. It also uses advertisements which encourage intervening in sexual harassment, rather than how the victim can prevent or report harassment. In Washington DC, Metro Transit Police launched the ‘It’s Not Ok’ campaign. The second phase of the campaign, initiated in February 2015, focused on releasing a number of anti-sexual harassment PSAs in a gender-neutral language, acknowledging that this not an issue solely for women, but includes men and those who identify as non-binary or other. It shows individuals of all genders and identities are protected and valued by the transit authority as well. In addition to the emphasis on advertisements focusing on the perpetrator, these campaigns highlight the general importance of awareness. If people see posters or hear advertisements discussing sexual harassment and how it is not tolerated, it no longer becomes something everyone just

deals with. It is important to note Transit Police have partnered with Project Guardian in a campaign entitled Global Guardian to focus on combatting sexual harassment on public transit worldwide.

If riders don't trust authority or feel as if the authority lacks competence to follow-through with a pursuit, they are unlikely to report harassment. Currently, it can be argued there is a distrust in TransLink and Transit Police and their proficiency. Devos et al. defines trust in an institution as,

“[a belief] that this collective entity, on the whole, is competent, fulfills its obligations, and acts in responsible ways. Trusting an institution entails having confidence that the institution is reliable, observes rules and regulations, works well, and serves the general interest. Thus, the notion of trust goes beyond whether individuals have a positive or negative attitude toward an institution or whether they approve or disapprove of it. Trust refers to a set of beliefs or expectations rather than to a purely affective reaction (2002, p. 484).

Trust in the police is built on a number of factors: first by personal experiences, images and stories of the public, secondly the historical image of the police, and lastly the role the media plays in contributing to the image of police (2008). Understanding all what is needed to secure the relationship of the public with police goes beyond the scope of this research, but it is evident accountability and the image we see in the media, in the past, and in our daily lives commuting on transit, helps to build the trust we have – or don't have with a policing group. This is an area TransLink could improve to increase reporting.

From the stories in the blog, it is can be deduced that the lack of a formal reporting channel is a deterrent in reporting. However, the OnDuty App (created by TransLink and Transit Police after the blog came out) primarily addresses this need. However, there is currently no online portal or channel to file a complaint or report. One

can only file a report to Transit Police by either filing a report using the OnDuty app (for iPhone or Android), texting 87-77-77, or calling 604-515-8300. When using the OnDuty app to report an incident, one is directed to a text message. An online form could be used to better track data for follow-up and crime prevention. The “It’s Not Okay – Report Sexual Harassment on Transit” campaign by Metro Transit Police (MTP) in Washington, DC provides a strong precedent in using an online reporting tool which incorporates both a formal and informal aspect in sharing stories of harassment on transit.

Easily found on MTP’s website is a user-friendly and intuitive form to report harassment. The form is used to report any sexual misconduct experienced – or witnessed. It is sent directly to Metro Transit Police for follow-up action and is inputted in their database to create crime statistics for better crime prevention. All of the data is available, and the online stories can be posted on the partnered blog, ‘Share Your Story’ created by Collective Action for Safe Spaces. This partnership provides a formal and informal way to report one’s harassment, allowing one to tell their stories and have the details collected, analyzed, and used to guide planning decisions.

The Metro Transit Police form includes four main fields discussing the location of the incident, the suspect, the incident itself, and the victim’s contact information – the last section being optional for anonymity. The following figure is an example of what the form of MTP looks like:

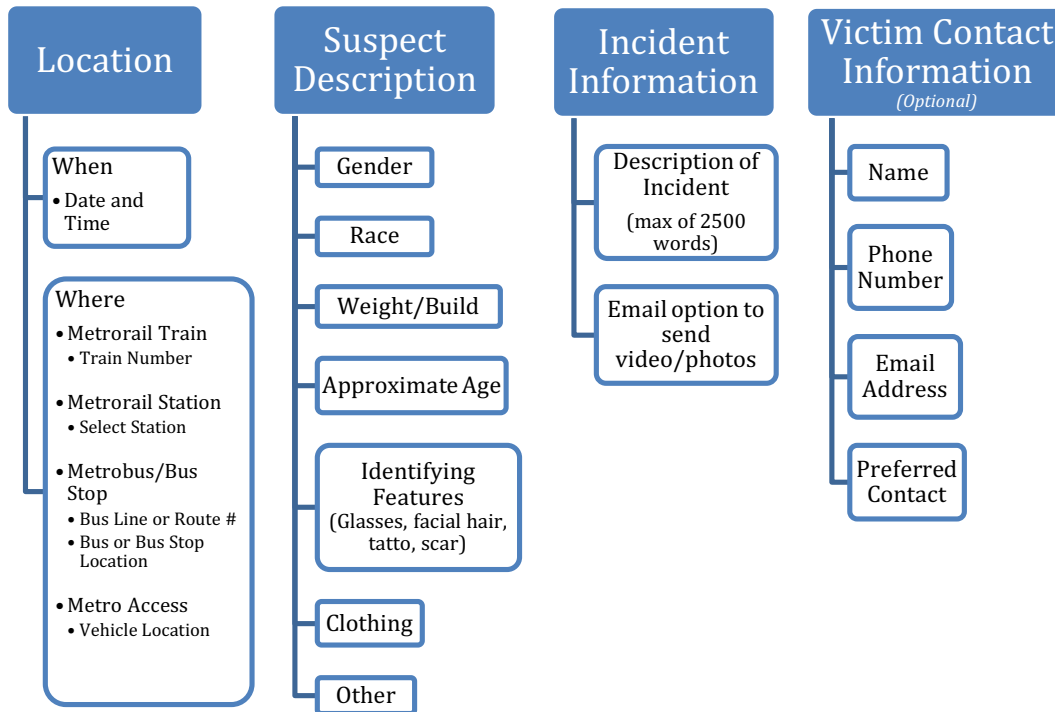


Figure 8: Adaptation of Metro Transit Police’s online reporting form (Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority, n.d.)

If Transit Police were to align their collecting of reports, they could easily follow the same format. By including the time and location of the incident and specifics as to where it happened (such as what bus, bus stop, SkyTrain Station, or SkyTrain Line), this data could allow TransLink to implement a stronger crime prevention strategy and possibly create a safer public transit system.

Additionally, a number of posters stated they were unsure of who to contact in regards to harassment on transit. They seemed to get a ‘run-around’ by each authority figure they contacted. This highlights the need for clarity under who is responsible for safety on transit in Metro Vancouver. As it is currently unclear to riders if it is TransLink, Transit Police, Coast Mountain Bus Company (CMBC), or all.

Currently, the Canadian legal system does not recognize street harassment as a crime. It fails to recognize the harm it causes and arguably, sees it as trivial (Roenius, 2016). This is a main deterrent in reporting. Furthermore, by not including this behavior as an offence, “our legal system reinforces these harassing behaviors and sends the message to offenders that making others feel unsafe in public places is ‘no big deal’” (2016, p. 869). This thesis offers no specific recommendation on a solution, but it highlights the importance of organizations in power to pressure legal systems to recognize the importance of validating stranger harassment as a crime. It also emphasizes the need for transit authorities to work with the legal system to show the need to be able to use online statements in court. Currently, Transit Police cannot pursue anonymous reports. As the Community Relations Officer stated, “the courts don’t want to hear from me about some person, who I don’t have a name of, that told me this story and I just took their word and acted upon it” (Personal Communication, December 15, 2015). Nonetheless, it is recommended that Transit Police continue to take anonymous reports even if not pursued legally. These can help people feel safer and add to crime statistics for future crime prevention initiatives.

5.3.7 Recommendations on Theme 7 – Importance of Digital

Narratives & Social Media

TransLink currently has no public online database to share and read individual’s stories, formally or informally. One is able to report harassment to Transit Police formally through their OnDuty app, by text, or phone. One is also able to use the ‘Harassment on TransLink’ blog or the app or blog put forth by Hollaback! Vancouver to informally share their story separately from TransLink. It is recommended that TransLink

and Transit Police partner with either the ‘Harassment on TransLink’ blog or Hollaback! Vancouver to connect the formal and informal reporting aspect. This can allow for additional data from the stories posted to be used for crime prevention and can help connect grass-roots organizations with other community organizations to benefit victims of harassment (such as violence against women organizations or trauma and healing centres). As previously mentioned, there is an importance not only to formally report incidents but informally share your story. Online stories provide an informal support network allowing individuals to help heal and realize they are not alone. It also allows others to become aware of an issue they might otherwise not experience.

Social media follows what is trending – it focuses on the immediate, highlighting what is popular at that very moment. It is important campaigns on sexual harassment are continuously kept in the public’s eye. As the Team Leader writes, “if we’ve had a media blitz, say if we have been in the news for something, we will have a spike in them, but it always tapers off” (Personal Communication, January 14, 2016). This speaks to the need for continuation and different phases of campaigns focused on reporting and harassment on TransLink. Focusing on combatting sexual harassment on transit is not a one-time campaign. No single policy or plan can eradicate the lasting effects of patriarchy manifested in harassment. It has to be continuous. The Anti-Sexual Assault Campaign in Boston, Massachusetts, Project Guardian in London, England, and the It’s Not Ok – Report Sexual Harassment on Transit campaign in Washington, DC are still continuing and developing different phases. Each phase develops on a previous initiative or tackles a new issue not previously addressed. It is recommended TransLink continuously expand upon their campaigns regarding sexual harassment. For example, the creation of the app

and supplemental messaging is just a part of the process. Various initiatives and partnerships can and should be continuously made to keep up momentum with reporting and preventing sexual harassment. It is important to note that as of Fall 2016, TransLink has issued another campaign regarding advertisements on further preventing sexual harassment – this is not included in the analysis.

Additionally, it should be noted that social media is not the main solution for women's safety in public transit, reporting, or as a tool for public engagement. As of 2016, 88.5% of Canadians have access to the internet in Canada (UFCW Canada, 2017). However, only around 50% of Canadians use a social media platform. Social media also targets the age demographic of 18-24 best. It often excludes those of a poorer socio-economic background, the elderly, and non-English speakers. It is recommended any actions that include social media – or an online perspective, be complemented by other in-person or “on-paper” techniques or forms. Social media is not the quick solution to the problems arising for women's safety on transit, but is one method that can help create a safer city.

By using a more formal method of collecting stories through online reporting, data can be used for crime prevention and crime statistics. Social media can also be used to further harness initiatives in crime prevention. We can use stories as an “informal way to gather and collect [information] to take to Transit Police or municipal planners and be like, for example: ‘hey there’s no lights around this one stop and every time I go there it is really dark and I can’t see’” (Team Leader, Personal Communications, January 14, 2016). Ottawa's transit authority, OC Transpo has capitalized on its campaign ‘Let OC Transpo Know’ by collecting stories of harassment through a formal online reporting tool

to gather stories of harassment to discover crime trends, arrest offenders, and help transit riders feel safer during their everyday commute. In addition, Metro Transit Police also use data collected from online reports to track incidents and use crime data for better preventative measures. These tactics are something TransLink could expand on by a more formal or in-depth reporting tool. By examining where and when assaults are occurring, different strategies could be implemented – such as increasing on-site personnel to buses with the highest rate of assaults, adding more buses to a certain line to decrease congestion and improve visibility, or fixing the design of certain SkyTrain Lines or bus stops which are frequent hotspots for assault. From the stories on the blog, I inputted data into a table to reveal locations of crime. Below is a chart depicting where crime most frequently occurs based on the stories:

Incidence of Harassment from 'Harassment on TransLink' Stories

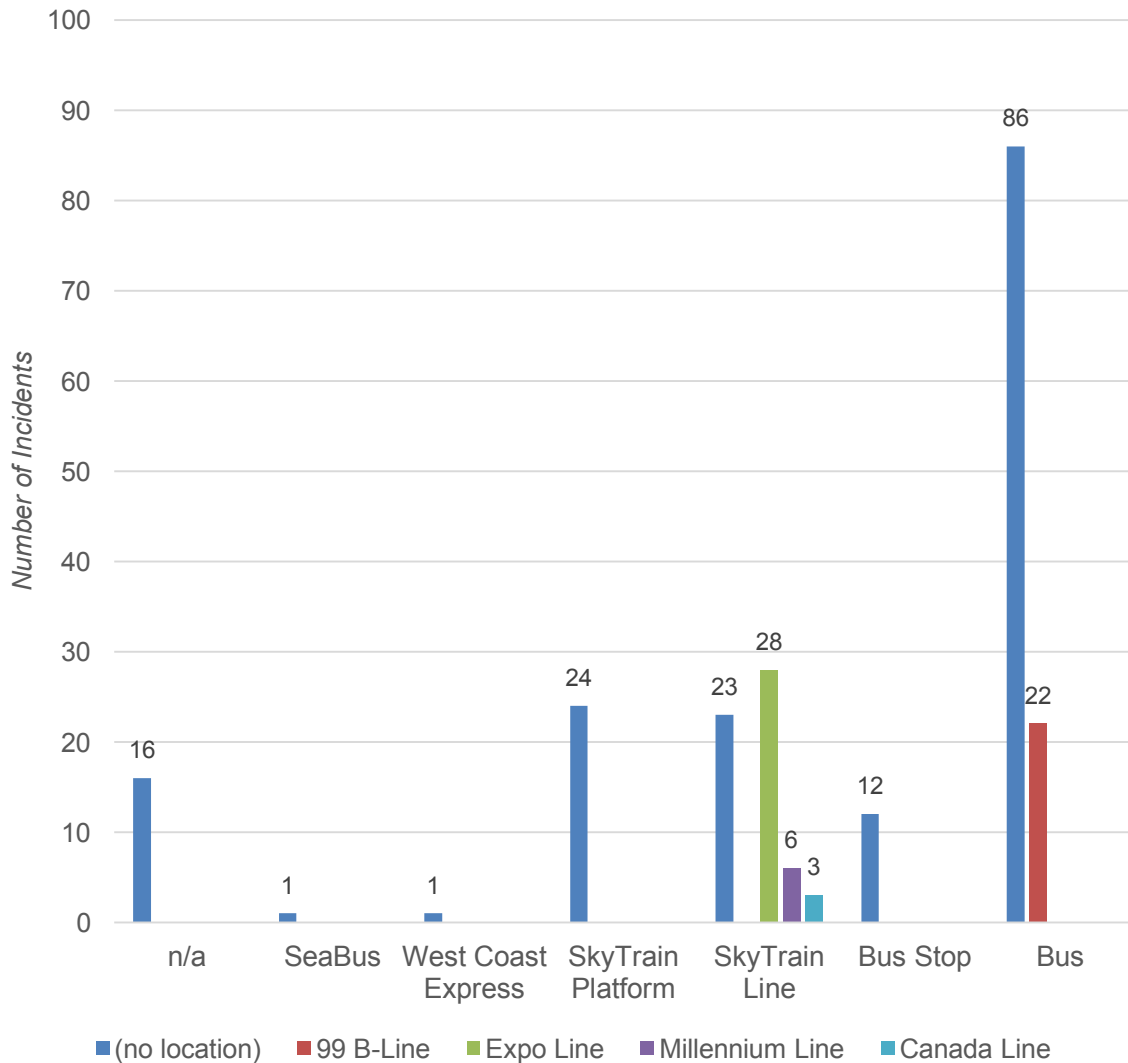


Figure 9: Incidences of harassment on TransLink (created by Rogness, 2017 from stories collected on Harassment on TransLink)

From this analysis, it is evident harassment often occurs most frequently on buses. The 99 B-line is a particular hot-spot for crime. It also shows that the Expo SkyTrain Line has a high rate of incidents. The data from the table (a more specific breakdown can be found

in Appendix 1-b) could be overlaid on a map to create a hotspot map to better visualize areas of crime. The analysis can also reveal the routes of the demographic base as well. From the data shared with me by Transit Police, it is evident that certain trends are being pulled from the apps and reports offered. I suggest creating a more formal template as the one used by MTP in Boston, Massachusetts – which includes an informal section to share one’s story, to better collect information to extract specific data that explicitly aids in crime prevention and helps create “HarassMaps” (Logan, 2013).

5.3.8 Additional Recommendations

Within the research, supplemental ideas and suggestions were found that did not fit within the 7 categories represented in the analysis. These include:

- Partnering with activist groups for additional campaigns such as,
 - Body Mapping: a process in which maps are used to detail and visualize where people feel safe or unsafe in the city through their body. This artistic measure helps illustrate what our stories look like. For example, what fear and safety look like to women through links between our experiences, bodies, and surroundings. By using an outline of a front and back of a body, specific colours, words, and drawings on body parts help visualize what emotions are evoked in areas of the city. Such as, red for pain drawn on a head in the SkyTrain due to the trauma of a past experience of harassment. As the Team Leader describes in further detail,
 - “It is a whole day workshop – or done over multiple days. . . So, what these female researchers did – is used this process to map out how it feels to move around your city and have your safety be threatened. So you trace yourself in

an outline and then you go through these guided questions about moving around your city, what safety feels like and doesn't. They studied how valuable that process is in planning cities to create these visceral images of what safety does or doesn't look like. . . They've shown that creating them is very valuable to show planners what it looks like when people don't feel safe in the city. Perceived threats of safety, to have this documented in other ways than just the statement of 'I don't feel safe here'. There are unsafe areas of Vancouver and unsafe things happening – so to have these life-sized representation is great" (Team Leader, Personal Communication, January 14, 2016).

- Partnering with municipalities to conduct safety audits of the neighbourhoods and transit system.
- Using the 'What's Your Number' (clicker) campaign, where individuals walk through their city/use transit and use a clicker/tally-counter to keep track of harassment experienced over 24 hours. All harassment can be recorded in a sketchbook either by writing, drawing, making a map, or through poetry. The clickers and sketchbooks can be displayed to help bring awareness to the issue of stranger harassment.
- Bus drivers and other transit staff should receive specific training on gendered issues and how to deal with situations of harassment that occur to themselves and others.
- All advertisement messages on sexual harassment should have a zero tolerance policy towards harassment of any kind, anywhere.
- Recommendations for policy, planning, and development include,
 - An enhanced policy on safety in TransLink and Transit Police's Official and/or Strategic Plans.

- Review policies on land use planning with a gendered perspective to reduce any possible opportunities for public violence against women in the city and on public transportation.
- Further integrate safety and women's voices in the transit planning process by training planners in women's safety issues (Whitzman, 1992).

6 Conclusions

If city planners aim to make cities inclusive, addressing sexual harassment in public spaces must be a priority. Stranger harassment has existed since the Industrial Revolution, yet it has only recently begun to garner attention and research. As we live in a society permeated by the effects of patriarchy, women's rights have only gained attention with the rise of feminism in the 1960s. As cities have been constructed by men, and consequently for men, women's needs have often been ignored by planners. In addition to the design of public spaces, "women have too often been assumed to have identical [transit safety] needs to men's. However, it is clear that women have travel needs as significant as those of men and in many respects distinct from them" (Hamilton and Jenkins, 2000, p. 1794).

In Metro Vancouver, women currently feel unsafe riding transit. There is a pressing need for TransLink to better address the needs of their female riders. The creation of the blog 'Harassment on TransLink', and subsequent media attention highlights the issue of stranger harassment, which has not been a main priority for transit planners and TransLink. The Metro Vancouver case study provides specific lessons on how social media can be used as an alternative reporting method, and insights on how transit authorities can create a safer transit system by implementing tools, design measures, campaigns, plans, and policies that seek to prevent stranger harassment. This thesis argues that the voices of women are integral to be heard to first help in their own healing process, and secondly to provide a better understanding of the wants and needs of female transit riders so planners can more effectively plan for women's needs.

This chapter of the thesis first demonstrates how the research questions are answered. It then summarizes the key themes, lessons, and recommendations derived from the field research and literature review. I then present possible next steps and recommendations for further study.

6.1 Answering the Research Questions

This section provides answers to the guiding research questions of this project.

These include:

- 1.) What can we learn from women's online stories that may enrich our ways of understanding and addressing transit safety for women?
- 2.) How is alternative social media being used to encourage transit authorities to address women's concerns about transit safety?
- 3.) Are there any lessons for Metro Vancouver to learn from other jurisdictions responses to use of alternative social media for women's safety concerns?

Question 1:

Stories are essential for change. Stories offer insights, lessons, and recommendations on the needs of women on public transit. The experiences of female (and male, trans, and non-binary) transit riders reveal what is being addressed and what is overlooked by transit authorities. The stories collected on the blog illustrate the needs and wants of (primarily) female transit riders. The stories collected enrich our understanding of women's' perceptions of safety by vocalizing their concerns, ideas, and wants.

Through the narrative analysis, the experiences of women on transit showed the desire for a formal and informal reporting method. A formal method helps women feel safer, increases their likelihood to report, and aids in crime prevention strategies. An informal method offers an informal support network that allows women to feel connected and aids

in their healing process. The stories demonstrate that certain factors, such as inefficient transit safety features, xenophobia, alcohol, and drug use help elicit harassment. Research reveals that age, economic status, race, ethnicity, media publications on violence, use of transit, graffiti, cleanliness, and urban design features affect one's perception of safety on transit (Hsu, 2011). The stories collected confirmed these characteristics but also illuminated how what someone has heard, seen, or experienced is just as – if not more likely to influence one's feelings of safety on public transit. Stories also reveal the seriousness of harassment on transit. Harassment is not a one-time issue; it has a strong consequence on one's personal well-being. Stories also provide insight onto issues in transit planning. The stories collected on the 'Harassment on TransLink' blog offered four specific reasons as to why women are not reporting their harassment to TransLink. These include fear and shame of their harassment, distrust in TransLink, unable to find a formal reporting method, and no existing legal recourse for harassment. Stories allow individuals to share and vocalize uncomfortable and difficult experiences. Planners can capitalize on this insight to help create safer public spaces.

Question 2:

The potential for social media in planning is great. The Metro Vancouver case study reveals how social media can be used as an informative tool for transit planners to share real-time information on transit schedules, updates, and news. It can also be augmented as an investigative tool to use public knowledge to gain insight on perpetrators and crimes. As social media allows for an immediate interaction through images, texts, videos, and documents it permits transit authorities to directly connect and engage with riders. Using social media as an informal engagement tool can help elicit

feedback, foster connection with riders and stakeholders, and collect comments and stories to influence design, plans, and policies. Through authentic two-way dialogue, social media also acts as a communicative tool to create connections for transit authorities with stakeholders and riders to build rapport and create social capital.

For women's safety, social media can be used as an alternative reporting tool. When used as a digital platform, it can collect and share positive and negative experiences of female riders on public transit to inform transit planners on women's needs and wants. Whether through apps, blogs, or platforms such as Twitter or Facebook, social media creates a safe space for women to share their stories anonymously and easily. When social media is used to collect stories it helps bring awareness to topics otherwise not addressed, provides informal data to help garner statistics (for transit, these include crime prevention statistics and 'HarassMaps'), and create informal networks to strengthen campaigns' reach and potential. As social media can be used by anyone, it has the potential to be a great influence on planning. Social media influences what stories are shared by the media. When grass-root organizations, such as the 'Harassment on TransLink' blog use social media to share an issue, it is brought to the attention of authorities. Social media opens one's eyes to other peoples' experiences. This helps perpetuate a change that may otherwise not be addressed or known about. For the Metro Vancouver case study, the online blog helped push TransLink and Transit Police's action towards the prevention of stranger harassment on transit. The blog also helped bring the issue of stranger harassment to the general public's attention. As social media acts as a platform for the voiceless and muted, it can be used to share stories and experiences ignored or overlooked to influence policies and plans. Social media has the potential to

bring many voices to the planning table for consideration and hopefully to contribute towards the planning process.

Question 3:

Through a review of precedents and literature, a number of lessons on the capabilities of social media in transit planning emerged for Metro Vancouver. Social media is being used in multiple ways to encourage reporting on public transit, discourage harassment, and help create a zero-tolerance attitude towards stranger harassment. Social media a communicative tool that connects transit authorities to their riders. Social media can be used as a way to collect stories to gain insights to better inform transit plans and policies. The use of a formal and informal collection of stories by Washington, D.C., and Ottawa, Canada illustrates how TransLink can use social media as a formal tool to help engage with citizens to discover needs and wants of riders, while also offering a safe space to help people connect and heal from traumatic experiences. They also reveal how TransLink could use social media to develop crime statistics to provide a better understanding of where and when a crime is occurring on transit. This can inform transit safety design changes and highlight where gaps exist in security to help create a safer public transit system. The Turkey example of #seandeanlat exemplifies how social media can be used to connect individuals and bring awareness to situations not addressed by planners. Social media helps translate large topics into a specific need to influence planners and policy makers. Additionally, social media should be used by TransLink to further enhance and strengthen partnerships with organizations in the community or other transit authorities worldwide to expand activities, educational workshops, and campaigns' reach and potential.

6.2 Synthesis: Lessons learnt for Public Transit Planning and Metro Vancouver

Currently, women in Metro Vancouver feel their transit system is unsafe. The blog created by the two SFU undergraduate students provides an informal network for transit riders to share their stories and release their frustration, hurt, and fears. Within these stories, lessons can be extracted by planners and policy makers to better understand the needs and wants of women to help create a safer public transit system. This highlights the importance of transit planners to capitalize on the potential of social media and online stories to inform plans and policies and engage with riders.

At the time of the creation of the blog, no formal channel existed for women to report harassment on TransLink. Women not only felt fearful but as if their harassment was unworthy of redress. The stories on the blog revealed that majority of those who had reported their harassment to Transit Police and TransLink often felt their harassment was pushed aside, passed on to someone else, or ignored. After the blog was shared on social media, it soon garnered the attention of the media. Overnight, the topic of harassment on transit had become front page news. The blog and the attention it gathered, helped propel a number of actions by TransLink and Transit Police to eradicate the fears and presuppositions of riders. This momentum does emphasize the care TransLink has towards its riders through its desire to create a safe and accessible transit system; however, there is much more that can and should be done by the transit agency. The case study of the blog provides a number of insights on the issue of stranger harassment on transit in Metro Vancouver, as well as further recommendations for TransLink.

Through an analysis of the stories posted, key informant interviews with blog co-creators, a local activist leader, and transit officials, a precedent review, and review of supporting literature seven key themes emerged, providing specific lessons and recommendations for TransLink and other municipalities. These include factors that prompt harassment, perceptions of safety on transit, the impact of harassment on victims, coping strategies on transit, the bystander effect, reporting, and the importance of digital narratives and social media. It is important to note all of these themes exist under the overarching theme of patriarchy. We live in a society that is shaped by patriarchy. These long-lasting results of the gendered city have allowed us to form a worldview which perpetuates violence against women. This is a cultural problem and there is no quick solution.

The first six themes provide specific lessons from the voices of actual transit riders to help enrich our ways of understanding and addressing transit safety for women. The first theme, factors that prompt harassment, helps provide an understanding of the specific characteristics that have instigated harassment on transit. Research shows feelings of perceptions of safety are influenced by factors such as gender, economic status, race, age, time of day, awareness of violence levels presented by the media, and environmental characteristics such as cleanliness, graffiti, and activity levels (Hsu, 2011). The stories of transit riders not only recognize these characteristics but highlight specific areas which elicit harassment on TransLink. These were shown to be alcohol and drug use on transit, xenophobia, and transit safety features such as poor lighting, empty platforms, overcrowded buses, lack of hidden emergency buttons, and a demand for more security presence – not just cameras on transit.

The second theme, perceptions of safety on transit, address areas of concern for transit riders. Currently, people feel unsafe on TransLink. As anxiety and fear about one's safety is a main deterrent in using public transit (Needle and Cobb, 1997), this is an important issue for TransLink to address. It is imperative to note that perceptions of safety are not the same as actual safety. Women are fearful of public transit in Vancouver due to what they have personally seen, heard, or experienced – regardless of crime statistics or actual likelihood of experiencing crime. The research also displays five key initiatives to be undertaken to improve perceptions of safety (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2009). These include design strategies on urban and environmental features; security technology strategies encouraging the use of digital technology to provide accurate, efficient, and reliable data on transit schedules; policing, which emphasizes the importance of in-person security personnel on transit; a focus on education and outreach strategies to bring awareness to the issue of harassment on TransLink and encourage bystander prevention; and other ideas including strategies to increase safety, such as taxi vouchers, escort programs, and transit passes, as well as an emphasis in including women in the planning process through collaborations, partnerships, and public engagement.

The third theme emphasizes the severe impact harassment has on victims and opportunities for TransLink to aid in the healing process of victims. Stranger harassment leaves victims depressed, embarrassed, and defenseless (Roenius, 2016). Stranger harassment also has the potential to limit one's access to public places – such as transit, due to fear of possible harassment (Kearl, 2014). This reduction of comfort level in public limits one's right to their city – their right to move freely when and where they please. As victims are suffering from the long-lasting effects of harassment on transit,

there is a need for formal and informal support for transit riders who have experienced trauma on transit. Online storytelling helps to provide an informal support network which validates one's story through a safe space while connecting with others. As one poster wrote, "thank you for starting this project. These stories are horrifying to read, but also so so important to discuss and acknowledge and validate" (Harassment on TransLink, 2015).

Coping strategies on transit is the fourth theme that emerged in the analysis. When women experience harassment on transit, it is shown to have a negative effect on their ridership (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2008; Loukaitou-Sideris, 2009; Buckley, 2016; and Valentine, 1989). To avoid harassment and unsafe spaces, many women develop coping strategies to regain their sense of security and recreate control. Research reveals four coping strategies. These include time/space avoidance, environmental awareness, physical defense strategies (Valentine, 1989), and behavioral modification (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2009).

On the blog, these four coping strategies emerged in many stories. Women noted the many strategies they use, specifically the altering of their looks, behavior, and choices to avoid harassment on TransLink. In regards to time/space avoidance strategies, many posters wrote about avoiding transit at certain times of the day, especially at night. Others wrote they avoided the Expo and Millennium Lines and took the 'safer' Canada line. Some commented they avoid transit altogether and use alternative methods such as biking, walking, taxi, or Car2Go (a car-share initiative within Metro Vancouver). Riders mentioned environmental awareness strategies such as sitting closer to bus drivers to avoid potential harassers out of the driver's range of view. For physical defense, posters

commented on adjusting their physical appearance to deter potential assailants by dressing down in baggy and oversized outfits or wearing a fake engagement ring. Others commented how they carry weapons for protection – such as dog spray or keys between their fingers. Posters also discussed their behavioural modification strategies – such as reading, texting, or wearing headphones to avoid conversations and unwanted advances. Additionally, beyond these four coping mechanisms, posters discussed how harassment affected their ridership. Many women stated they had to get off at the train or bus early or staying on past their stop to remove themselves from an unsafe – or potentially unsafe situation.

Stranger harassment has a serious effect on one's life. Women who take public transit are altering their routes, looks, and mannerisms to avoid and escape harassment. Some women are also opting to not take transit if they are able to make that choice. Research reveals harassment has severe consequences on a person's well-being. In dire cases, women have even moved to avoid street harassment or changed a job to avoid unsafe areas (Roenius, 2016). Women may also be spending more money for alternative modes of transportation, such as a taxi or ride-share to avoid harassment. Research also shows victims of street harassment may be so preoccupied with their harassment they are unable to perform adequately at their workplace (2016). This displays how although harassment happens on transit, its effects permeate through all other areas of a victim's life.

Bystander effect was the fifth theme to emerge in the analysis. The bystander effect is a concept in which people are more willing to help others when they are alone, rather than when there are bystanders present (van Bommel et al., 2012). It often occurs

on transit, when one witnesses harassment taking place but does nothing to intervene, stop, or prevent it from happening or escalating. The stories showed women feel alone on public transit and expressed a pressing need for strangers to intervene rather than ignoring the harassment taking place. One poster stated, “despite a full train of commuters, I was alone” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). As stranger harassment is so frequent, it can be argued as a natural consequence of urban life. Historically, stranger harassment has been ignored by planners, policy makers, police and transit authorities. Perpetuating a message to victims, perpetrators, and bystanders that street harassment is not a serious issue and is something to be tolerated (O’Neill, 2013). Additionally, this highlights the influence authority officials have towards the attitude and action of bystanders towards sexual harassment in public spaces.

Insights on reporting emerged as the sixth theme, specifically to reasons why women are not reporting. Underreporting is one of the most substantial problems when examining women’s safety on public transit. TransLink riders offered four main reasons for not reporting their harassment: fear and shame of harassment, distrust in authority, no formal reporting channel, and lack of legal repercussion towards stranger harassment. Few posters commented on reporting with a positive response, while many posters commented they had reported but nothing came out of it, were ignored, or the responsibility was passed on to someone else. This highlights a need for a major overhaul of transit policy and procedures in taking the concerns and reports of women seriously.

The seventh theme, the importance of digital narratives and potential of social media explores the possibilities of social media and online stories. Through key informant interviews, the narrative analysis, and relative literature, lessons on how social

media can be and is being used to address women's concerns about transit safety materialized.

Social media is used by planners as an informative tool. For transit, it provides information to transit riders in real-time. It can also be used as an investigative tool, using platforms such as Reddit and Facebook to share posts and images warning others about criminals or garnering information about assailants. Social media can also be used as a communication method. It can help planners connect to the public immediately and easily. Channels such as Facebook and Twitter help propel an authentic two-way communication between organizations and the public they service. For public transit, it can be used for media releases, transit updates, and general comments and inquiries. The Senior Communications Advisor states, "there's different audiences for different channels" (Personal Communication, December 11, 2015). To effectively use social media in planning it is about going to where the conversation is already started. "Social media is a great digital tool you can use to augment your message and to get to your users in a platform that they can relate to" (December 11, 2015). As social media can act as a channel between transit authorities and their riders, it helps to create connections for transit authorities to build public support (Bregman, 2012).

Online stories collected on a digital platform – such as through a blog, Facebook page, or Twitter hashtag, help create a safe space for women and other victims of harassment to share their stories anonymously. As women currently feel unsafe on transit, providing a place to share their stories and experiences can help mitigate the negative effects harassment has on one's personal wellbeing. Storytelling is a method often used in psychology to aid in one's healing of trauma (Blanch et al., 2012). By providing a safe

space to share one's story online, victims are able to be heard and connect with others who share their story. By sharing one's experience, your pain is validated. Seeing others who have experienced a similar situation also helps one to no longer feel alone.

Social media enables the public to see and hear about ideas, topics, and issues they may not otherwise experience. When stories are posted online, they are quickly and easily shared and seen. This awareness stimulates a dialogue around stranger harassment and other issues women may experience on transit. This knowledge allows other to see an issue they might otherwise not experience or know exists. One poster wrote, "I don't think people realize what happens to women on a daily basis when taking public transit in Vancouver" and another stated, "this website is finally allowing the public to see the magnitude of this problem" (Harassment on TransLink, 2015). This dialogue not only brings light to problems women face on transit but increases awareness and helps perpetuate the systemic and societal changes needed to eradicate harassment on transit.

Social media can also be used as a reporting tool. Social media can informally collect stories on a variety of digital platforms. However, transit authorities can use their website page or app for a more formal method of reporting. With a formal collection of stories, women's voices are heard and validated. Police are aware of situations and able to pursue assailants and extract crime statistics to gain a better understanding of the issues of safety on transit to refine prevention strategies. However, collecting stories online informally is just as important. Having a safe space online where women can share and see similar stories creates an informal support network. The narrative analysis revealed a desire for both a formal reporting method and an informal digital platform to share their story. As one poster commented, "reading other stories, I realize I am not the only one

who has been harassed or have had these things happen to them, I feel encourage[d] to say something now” (Harassment on TransLink, 2015).

While social media has great potential to be a communication tool, investigative, and reporting tool, there are many limitations to consider. Transit Police currently do not take online reports. They are only able to take reports from their formal app and need an in-person statement if the harassment or assault is to be pursued legally. Also, by sharing too much on social media there is a possibility it could be detrimental to an investigation. Another issue is that social media allows anyone to share anything they want anonymously. Trolls are able to use social media to report untrue stories without any penalization to the people and organizations they seek to harm. Social media only serves a portion of the population. It is important to remember that not everyone uses or has access to it. Additionally, social media is instant; it focuses on what is important now or what is currently trending. When using social media or online channels as a reporting method, it is hard to keep a consistency in the input of stories.

Throughout the research, specific lessons from other jurisdictions emerged for TransLink to apply and learn from. The five precedents chosen for review include OC Transpo’s campaign ‘Let OC Transpo Know’ in Ottawa, Canada; Metro Transit Police’s ‘It’s Not Ok – Report Sexual Harassment on Transit’ campaign that partnered with Collective Action for Safe Spaces ‘Share Your Story’ online blog in Washington, DC; Transport for London and British Transit Police’s campaign ‘Project Guardian’ in London, England; #sendeanlat (you tell your story too) created by common citizens in Turkey; and Massachusetts Bay Transport Authority’s ‘Anti-Sexual Assault Campaign (See something, say something)’ in Boston, Massachusetts.

The Turkey precedent of #sendeanlat (you tell your story too) is a great example of the use and potential of social media. Social media provides a platform for anyone with internet access to vocalize their concerns and experiences. After the death of a young 20-year old woman in southern Turkey due to stranger harassment, women began sharing their personal stories of sexual harassment under the hashtag of #sendeanlat. Rather than waiting for an organization or transit authority to bring awareness to the situation and address the issue, women took matters into their own hands. Twitter provided a safe space for women to share their experiences anonymously, helping break down the country's taboo against street harassment and show men the experiences women face every day as a result of their gender. This example shows the 'power of the hashtag' to connect individuals and bring awareness to a situation. Social media can help translate an issue into something formal and integrated to propel planning and policy changes needed on issues often overlooked or unknown.

Stranger harassment is so prevalent in our society it is considered a daily part of life that women just endure. Thus, the language and direction of campaigns against sexual harassment on transit are crucial in preventing assaults, encouraging bystander intervention, and eliminating its tolerance. The advertisements and informative material present in the campaigns by Massachusetts Bay Transport Authority, Transport for London and British Transit Police, and Metro Transit Police offer insight into how TransLink could direct advertisement language, images, and educational material in their campaigns. Such recommendations were found to include using specific language to diminish the insecurities related to harassment by focusing on the perpetrator rather than encouraging victims to report. Rather than putting the onus on the victim by using

advertisements which encourage reporting, they should focus on having a zero-tolerance approach to harassment of any kind on transit. When campaigns strongly suggest that sexual harassment is not tolerated, rather than focusing on encouraging victims to speak up, it depicts stranger harassment as an issue for everyone to acknowledge and intervene in. Additionally, using male and female models in advertisements and a gender-neutral language is also encouraged to acknowledge how stranger harassment affects women, men, and those who identify as non-binary or other. The ‘Harassment on TransLink’ blog revealed that men and transgender individuals are often victimized as well. Within the blog approximately 5% of posters identified either as male or other (transgender).

The importance and potential of partnerships were another key lesson emerging from the precedent review. Metro Transit Police’s partnership with the National Street Harassment hotline exemplifies the importance of partnerships. This connection allows individuals who report harassment on the transit authority’s page or the informal database with Collective Action for Safe Spaces to be referred to the hotline to gain additional help and services they may need. Moreover, the partnership between the non-profit and transit authority reveals the need for both an informal and formal space in regards to reporting harassment on transit. This provides users with an option of sharing their story publically and anonymously, in addition to, or just using the online reporting method offered by the transit authority to record what happened to them. Having an online blog creates an informal network connecting victims of harassment with one-another and potential resources. By sharing one’s story and reading others, one is able to see they are not alone in their experience and hopefully help in their healing process. A formal tool provides a more specific and structured reporting format to help with crime prevention data and

statistics while showing the public that this is an issue to be considered and taken seriously. OC Transpo and Metro Transit Police both use their online stories formally (and informally for Metro Transit Police) to garner specific information on crimes – such as dates, times, and location to develop crime statistics to provide insight on where to best apply different strategies to prevent and combat harassment.

Metro Transit Police, Project Guardian, and Massachusetts Bay Transport Authority all reveal combatting sexual harassment is not a one-time issue. They are continually adding on and expanding phases within the campaigns as-of-date. As no single policy or plan can remove the effects of patriarchy, the fight against stranger harassment in public spaces must be continuous. Each of these campaigns offers insights into various ways to continually focus on harassment on transit – whether it is through the creation of an app or online tool for reporting, partnering with a non-profit to expand the campaign's reach, or creating new advertisements for the transit system.

Other policies which emerged in the literature review from campaigns outside of the precedents included having a special escort program for females, switching from coins to transit passes so women do not have to open their wallets or carry cash on transit, providing cab vouchers to low-income women for emergency situations, expanding transit systems in poorer neighbourhoods to minimize walking distances, and incorporating women in the planning and policy process to ensure their voices are heard and met (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2009).

From the analysis, literature, and precedence, specific recommendations TransLink could explore or achieve emerged. These include:

- Implementing a strong zero-tolerance policy to harassment on TransLink.

- Implement a zero-tolerance policy to use of drugs and alcohol on transit.
- Improve lighting on transit, especially on the Expo and Millennium Lines.
- Remove congestion on overcrowded routes by adding additional buses.
- Add security personnel on platforms, trains, and buses during off-peak hours.
- Use technology and social media to provide accurate and real-time info on bus schedules and interruptions.
- Keep up with general maintenance of transit with regular cleaning of litter and graffiti removal.
- Hire additional security personnel – both uniformed and non-uniformed officers to improve perceptions of safety.
- Create or co-sponsor campaigns and public education workshops that focus on sexual harassment and crime.
- Continue partnerships with local activist groups, such as Hollaback! Vancouver to continue implementing strategies and ideas to prevent harassment and improve perceptions of safety.
- Use public information signs and ads that encourage bystanders to intervene rather focusing solely on encouraging women to report.
- Train all transit workers on how to prevent and intervene with harassment on transit.
- Connect with local non-profits to provide victims with the additional support they may need in their healing process, such as with local women centres.
- Partner with a non-profit to create an informal digital platform so women are able to share their stories in a safe space.

- Create a more formal online reporting tool to be used for crime statistics.

6.3 Recommendations for Further Study

Despite the lessons and insights, the Metro Vancouver case study and chosen precedents provide, a number of gaps still exist in understanding the potential of using social media as a tool for safety within transit planning. Further research could explore the accountability of TransLink and Transit Police towards safety on public transit. By examining how goals or strategies are implemented, or conflict with other goals could be one aspect of this. In addition, looking at how resources are used and the evaluation of the success of specific campaigns.

To develop a better understanding of the possibilities and limitations of using social media recommendations for future research include exploring other campaigns for further insights and ideas on strategies used to prevent stranger harassment and encourage reporting. Particularly, further research could explore how the look and language of ads can affect the perceptions of safety on transit and aid in the prevention of harassment. Additionally, a better understanding of how crime statistics can be used on social media to prevent stranger harassment is an area to explore.

Another valuable topic for future planning research includes looking at how women can be and have been directly involved in the planning process when using social media for transit planning. In particular, such research could explore *how* women's (or others') voices have been used in a planning process and to what degree have planners or a transit agency addressed arising issues, prioritized areas of concern, and/or allocated research towards ameliorating women's safety. Such research should focus on how to

ensure the accountability of transit agencies and municipalities for problems of women's safety.

6.4 Reflections

Harassment is a serious issue that has been overlooked and ignored by planners for too long. Consequently, this has helped create a stance of ignorance or acceptance of stranger harassment on transit by riders and victims. Ultimately this has led to low reporting levels – why report something when it is not taken seriously; or a complete avoidance of public transit, which arguably is a public right. Stranger harassment is the easiest way to take away one's right from the city. It is a way for harassers to gain control over their victims and their city. It says to women you are not welcome on public transit. The previous lack of policy, campaigns, and attention by authorities and organizations has done nothing but propel this idea. There is a need for TransLink to expand and embark on new strategies and campaigns focusing on creating a safer public transit system. Based on the stories of the online blog and supplemental interviews and precedents, this thesis provides clear suggestions and ideas for TransLink to undertake.

The emergence of the blog, 'Harassment on TransLink' is an example of how women can informally work together to create safer public spaces and encourage transit officials and planners to act upon such pressing issues. Without the blog, it can be argued the campaigns recently undertaken by TransLink may never have happened. The notion that grass-roots and non-profit organizations have an influencing role in the planning process emerges in the case study. However, it also is a limitation to consider.

Harassment is a public issue and should not be addressed only when attention is brought to it by community organizations. It should be a main priority for planners, policy

makers, and transit authorities without being asked by the public. Nonetheless, the case study provides specific lessons in the potential and limitations of social media in public transit planning for women's safety.

Social media is a multidimensional tool that can be used for information, communication, investigation, and reporting. Social media offers an informal way to share one's story, connect with others, and bring awareness to issues previously ignored. Using a blog, Facebook page, Twitter channel, or other digital platform creates a safe space for individuals to come together, understand they are not alone, and share their own experience. Sharing one's story not only validates one's feelings and trauma but helps reveal issues previously overlooked or misconstrued. This awareness can shed light on those issues and encourage change – such as what occurred in the Metro Vancouver case study. Although it is important to have a *formal* reporting method easily accessed online to garner crime statistics for prevention, online stories on an *informal* platform can reveal insights and ideas that might otherwise be overlooked.

Stories are integral to planning. When we look at a city, we view a number of stories combined into a greater metanarrative. When we see roads, bridges, and intersections, we see the everyday story of one's commute. Currently, the over-arching story on TransLink is that it is perceived as an unsafe space for women, limiting their right to their city. Women's stories reveal feelings of sadness, distrust, embarrassment, and fear. Although they are residents of their city, they feel isolated and unwelcomed. Planners can use stories to help guide their campaigns, policies, plans, and strategies to create a welcoming environment. If we can change the urban narrative of women on public transit, we can change the city, we can create a safer and more inclusive city.

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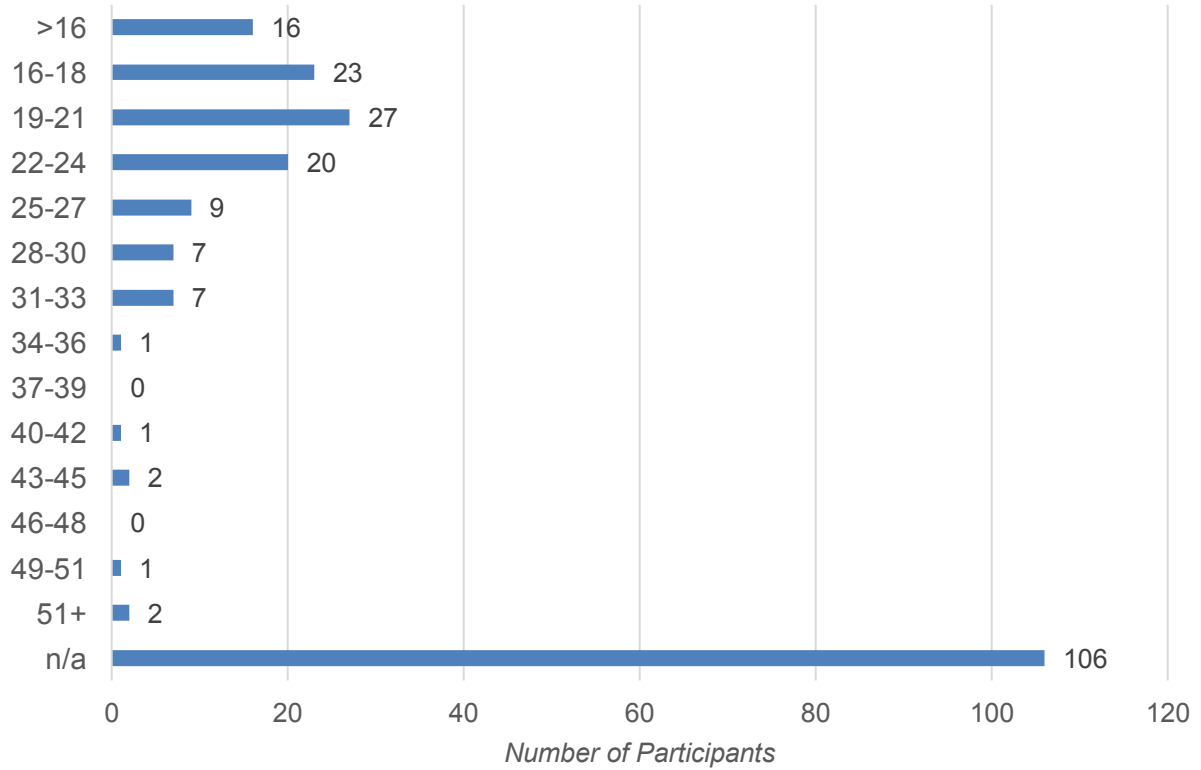
Appendix:

1-a: Codes for Analysis

1	Alcohol & Drugs
2	Activism
3	Bystander Effect
4	Communication
5	Confrontation
6	Crime Prevention
7	Dissemination of Information
8	Equality
9	(Perceptions of) Fear
10	Harassment
11	Land Use Features
12	Patriarchal Worldview
13	(Perceptions of) Safety
14	Personal Well-Being
15	Planning & Policy
16	Xenophobia
17	Recommendations
18	Relevancy
19	Reporting
20	Ridership
21	TransLink Action
22	Transit Safety Design Features
23	Transit Service Components
24	Storytelling
25	Social Media
26	(Case Study) Timeline
27	Transit App

1-b: Supplemental Data from Analysis

Age Range of Blog Participants

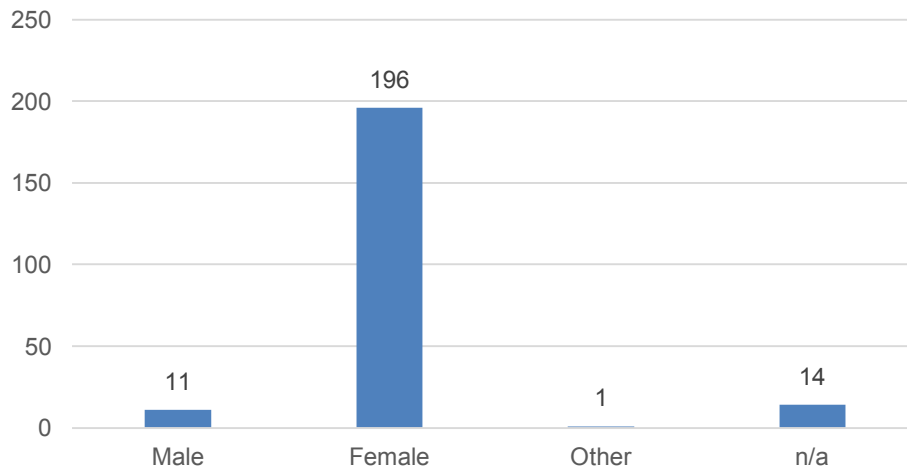


Location of Harassment	# of Times Mentioned
10 Bus	1
10 Bus Stop	1
104 Bus	1
135 Bus	1
16 Bus	1
16 Bus Stop	2
160 Bus	1
169 Bus	1
17 Bus	1
19 Bus	1
20 Bus	8
210 Bus	1

22 Bus	3
22 Bus Stop	2
22 nd Street SkyTrain Station	1
240 Bus	1
25 bus	2
257 Bus	1
29 th SkyTrain Station Bus Loop	1
3 Bus	3
312 Bus	1
319 Bus	1
321 Bus	1
325 Bus	1
351 Bus	1
403 Bus	1
41 Bus	2
410 Bus	1
555 Bus	1
7 Bus	1
7 Bus Stop	1
8 Bus	2
9 Bus	2
97 B-Line Bus	1
99 B-Line Bus	22
Brentwood Town Centre SkyTrain Station	1
Bridgeport Bus Station	1
Broadway SkyTrain Station	2
Burrard SkyTrain Station	2
Bus (no location)	39
Bus Stop (no location)	5
Bus Stop at Waterfront Station	1
C22 Bus	1
Canada Line SkyTrain	3
Georgia and Granville SkyTrain Station (Canada Line)	1
Columbia SkyTrain Station	1
Commercial SkyTrain Station	3
Granville SkyTrain Station	1
King George SkyTrain Station	1
Lougheed SkyTrain Station	1
Main Street Bus	1
n/a	16
N20 Bus	2
New Westminster SkyTrain Station	1
Royal Oak SkyTrain Station	1
SeaBus	1

SkyTrain (no location)	23
Expo Line SkyTrain	28
Millennium Line SkyTrain	6
Sperling SkyTrain Station	1
Waterfront SkyTrain Station	3
West Coast Express	1

Gender of Blog Participants



1-c: Research Participant Information and Consent Form



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Statement of Informed Consent

- Research Project Study: *'Alone on the SkyTrain: How women's online stories can be used in planning for a safer public transit system for women in Metro Vancouver'*
- Principal Investigator: Krista Rogness, Graduate Student, Master of City Planning, Faculty of Architecture, University of Manitoba
- Advisory Committee: **Supervisor** – Rae St. Clair Bridgman, Professor, Department of City Planning, Faculty of Architecture, University of Manitoba
Internal Advisor – Orly Linovski, Assistant Professor, Department of City Planning, Faculty of Architecture, University of Manitoba
External Advisor – Susan Freig M.C.P., Director, Freig & Associates, Winnipeg, MB.

Introduction

You are invited to take part in a research study. This consent form, a copy of which you can keep for your records, is intended to ensure you have consented willingly and with all necessary information. It should explain what is involved in the research and what is expected of you as a participant.

Please take time to read, understand, and review the consent form and information about the research. If you would like more information, please feel free to ask me (the Principal Investigator).

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research is to explore how social media, such as online narratives, can be used as an alternative reporting method for ensuring

adequate safety measures on public transit. By examining the specific case study of Metro Vancouver's informal blog 'Harassment on TransLink', the study will discover how the blog uses the voices and stories of female transit riders to vocalize their concerns and fears of victimization on the public transit system. The aim of key informant interviews with those involved in the Metro Vancouver "Harassment on TransLink" blog and other public transit officials is to learn more about the specific case study and what social media tools have been and are being used elsewhere for safety measures in public transit planning. These key informant interviews will help provide new knowledge on the topic and develop and strengthen the limited research present. By capitalizing on the specific knowledge from transit officials and those involved in the Metro Vancouver case study, the importance and functionality of social media for safety measures and storytelling can be determined. I anticipate that lessons learned from studying the Metro Vancouver case and similar strategies can help clarify how social media can be implemented in public transit policy and strategies to better safety measures for women and all other riders in Metro Vancouver and other Canadian cities.

This research project (thesis) is my Major Degree Project which is a requirement of the two-year Master of City Planning program at the University of Manitoba.

Study procedures

If you participate in this study, you will be asked a series of questions pertaining to the Metro Vancouver case study or a series of questions regarding the social media strategy you were engaged with at the organization you work(ed) for. You can refuse to answer any questions, and may end the interview at any time. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. You will have the option to choose to see the transcription prior to the publication of this project. You will also have the option to choose to see the final thesis once it is completed and has passed Oral Defense. The interview will be approximately 30 minutes to 60 minutes long.

Participant risks, benefits, costs

There are minimal to no risks related to participants in this project. The proposed study is based on your experience and knowledge relating to the use of social media in public transit planning. Although your names will not be included in the study, to provide context to the topic you will be identified by your job title or affiliated group. There may be a risk to confidentiality due to the inclusion of job title or affiliated group. I will take steps to minimize this risk by providing you with the opportunity to review the interview transcript to ensure your comments are appropriate for public domain.

Benefits for participants include the opportunity to share their knowledge and experience related to the potential of using social media as a tool for safety measures in public transit planning. This insight may help future

researchers and studies understand social medias' role in planning and transit policy.

Audiotaping & confidentiality

With your permission, the interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed later to ensure accuracy. I will remove personal identifiers with the exception of your job title or affiliated organization. Including your job title or affiliated group is important to provide depth and context to the qualitative research gathered or specific precedent discussed. In addition, interviewees who are experts in their respective fields offer knowledge that would not be possible to uncover if interviewing a non-expert, or someone not involved in the project.

Data will be stored in a secure location on a locked computer and will not include. Data will only include participants' job titles or affiliated organization. Supervisors will not have access to the data to ensure confidentiality, since they may be able to identify participants based on their responses. I will destroy any identifying information, including audio tapings and interview transcripts, two years after the final submission of this Major Degree Project.

Feedback & debriefing

Once the interview is completed, I will provide you with an interview transcript to allow the opportunity to verify the information and remove or modify any comments that you now feel are inappropriate for the public domain. I will provide individual feedback to you within two months of the interview through phone, email, or in person to ensure the information I have compiled from the interview is accurate. Once the Major Project Degree has been completed, I will provide you with a digital copy.

Dissemination of results

Results from the study will be disseminated as a hard copy at the University of Manitoba Architecture/Fine Arts Library, an online digital copy housed through the University of Manitoba's M Space, and in my oral defense. Dissemination of the study results will be shared with participants if requested; this will not compromise participants' confidentiality. I will send a digital copy of the Major Degree Project through email once the Masters' Defense has been approved. It is possible that conference papers or articles could arise from the research.

Voluntary participation/Withdrawal from study

Your decision to take part in this study is entirely voluntary. You are able to refuse participation or to withdraw from the research study at any time. If you decide to participate, you have the right to refuse to answer any question or to refuse participation in any activity, at any time.

Contact information

Student researcher:

Krista Rogness
Graduate Student, Department of City Planning, Faculty of Architecture,
University of Manitoba
Email:

Research supervisor:

Rae Bridgman

Professor, Department of City Planning, Faculty of Architecture,
University of Manitoba

Email:

Statement of consent

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB) If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator (HEC) at 204-474-7122 or by email at Margaret.Bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

If you agree to each of the following, please place a check mark in the corresponding box. If you do not agree, leave the box blank:

I have read or it has been read to me the details of this consent form.

My questions have been addressed.

I, _____ (print name), agree to participate in this study.

I agree to have the interview audio-recorded and transcribed.

I agree to be contacted by phone or e-mail if further information is required after the interview

I agree to have the findings (which may include quotations) from this

project published or presented in a manner that does not reveal my identity.

Do you wish to receive a summary of the findings?

Yes No

How do you wish to receive the summary? E-mail mail

Surface

Address: _____

Participant's Signature _____

Date _____

Researcher's Signature _____

Date _____

1-d: Interview Schedule A & B

Interview Schedule A

The purpose of key informant interviews with public transit officials is to learn what social media tools are being used and how they are being used for safety measures in public transit planning. Through key informant interviews with transit officials it is assumed new knowledge on the use and function of social media in transit planning will help develop and strengthen the limited research present. By capitalizing on the specific knowledge from transit officials, the importance and functionality of social media for safety measures and storytelling can be determined. The aim is to discover how social media can specifically be an alternative reporting method for safety measures within public transit planning. I anticipate that analyzing the uses of social media can lead to lessons for cities and transit officials in understanding the potential it may or may not have. The intent is to interview transit planners and other officials who have used social media tools as a strategy for safety measures on their public transit system to learn how such alternative methods have been used. To ensure reliability and consistency all interviews will include specific questions to guide the conversation. Such questions include:

1. How has the organization you work(ed) for used social media as a tool?
2. How was the social media tool developed in the strategy?
 - a. Who was involved?
 - b. How was it implemented?
 - c. What were its measures of success and limitations?
 - d. What was the timeline of the project?
3. What place does social media have for reporting incidents experienced by public transit users?
4. How important do you think storytelling on social media is for effective public transit planning?
5. What suggestions do you have for how social media tools can be used to enhance safety issues on public transit?
6. How do you think this strategy could be repeated elsewhere or adapted to other cities?
7. Is there anything else about the initiative you worked on and/or your use of social media that you would like to share?

Probes:

- Has social media been used for safety measures or strategies (for women)?
- What types of social media have you used? What types worked best/least
- What demographics were targeted using social media and which were met?
- Is social media important for reporting? Indicating safety measures? Storytelling?

Interview Schedule B

The purpose of key informant interviews with those involved in the Metro Vancouver “Harassment on TransLink” blog is to learn more about the specific case study and its use of the blogging as an alternative reporting method. As social media is a participatory tool used by all, it is important to gain knowledge not just from those in official positions but other key players from non-governmental organizations, non-profits, or other grass-root initiatives. Through key informant interviews with TransLink officials and those involved in the blog’s creation and start-up, it is assumed that further knowledge on the case study will be discovered. The aim is to determine how blogging has been used as an alternative method in transit planning and how other social media tools can be used to strengthen strategies for women’s safety on public transit in Metro Vancouver. I anticipate that through interviews the meta-narrative for the specific case study of Metro Vancouver will be more documented and understood. This knowledge will help to discover the need and functionality of blogging as an alternative safety method for sharing women’s stories, or simply reporting incidents of harassment. The intent of these interviews is to gain more knowledge about the project and to reflect upon lessons from other social media strategies to find ones that are applicable and feasible to Metro Vancouver. To ensure reliability and consistency all interviews will include specific questions to guide the conversation. Such questions include:

1. What was your role in the start-up and/or use of the blog?
2. What role has TransLink played in the use of the blog?
3. What are the next steps for the blog, if any?
4. What place does social media have for reporting incidents experienced by public transit users on TransLink?
5. How important do you think storytelling on social media is for effective public transit planning?
 - a. How can sharing stories on social media be used as a reporting method?
 - b. Do you think other social media tools could be used for safety measures in the Metro Vancouver case study?
6. What lessons have you learnt from your role and use of the ‘Harassment on TransLink’ blog?
 - a. How do you think a blog could be used elsewhere in other cities?
7. Is there anything else about the initiative you worked on and/or your use of social media that you would like to share?

Probes:

- What inspired you to create/use the blog?
- How did you hear about the blog/share the blog with others?
- What other social media strategies that you know of could be used or strengthened/improved upon?