





Hamilton

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Public Works Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	May 17, 2021
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Winterizing Public Washrooms - Winter Operations (PW21031) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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COUNCIL DIRECTION

Correspondence was received by Council at the October 14, 2020 City Council Meeting, Item 4.7 respecting winter washroom facilities. In October 2020, staff responded by email, to the Ward Councillors included on the correspondence detailing the cost of port-o-lets and limitations of washroom availability as few are winterized.

Further correspondence was received by Council at the January 20, 2021 City Council Meeting, Item 5.32, from a resident requesting Council consider increasing the availability of washrooms at Bayfront Park for the winter, which was referred to the General Manager of Public Works for appropriate action. In January 2021, staff

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OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

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responded by opening the washrooms at the Gartshore Thomson Building seven days a week.

As a result of these and other public requests, several Councillors have asked that additional information be provided to Committee and Council relating to the provision of winter washrooms, feasibility, security and associated costs.

INFORMATION

This Report provides information relating to the feasibility and costs of expanding the availability of winter washrooms, including portable toilets, in park spaces. Traditionally the City has provided park washrooms for public use from May 1 - September 31 annually and they are closed from October 1 - May 1 due to freezing temperatures.

Most park washrooms are not winterized and require minor or major capital upgrades in order to winterize them. Additionally, staffing or contract cleaning with associated operational funding is necessary to open, clean and close them during the winter months as they are operated in summer months using student labour. This report looks at the funding and changes that would be required in order to provide access to winter washrooms in parks to support the recent demand for washrooms that has been highlighted by the increased winter park use due to the pandemic.

Preliminary Review of Expanding Availability of Winter Washrooms:

There is a total of 55 stand-alone public washroom facilities within park spaces, of which there are presently 20 insulated for winter use. No capital funding will be required at these sites relating to the facilities themselves; however, capital funding for optional security infrastructure should be considered. An annual operating budget would also need to be established for the maintenance necessary in getting these sites winter-ready for the intended use, repairs and graffiti, regular cleaning, consumable supplies, utilities, and security monitoring. Table 1 lists the washroom facilities that are currently winterized:

Table 1: Winterized Washroom Facilities	
Park	Ward
Alexander Park	1
Victoria Park Baseball washroom	1
Durand Park	2
Eastwood Park	2
Pier 4 Park (Gartshore Building)	2
Woodland Park	3
Montgomery Park	4
Mahony Park/Shared bathroom	4

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Rosedale Park	4
Sam Manson Park	5
Mohawk Sports Park	6
Macassa Park	7
Buchanan Park	8
William Connell Park	8
Ferris Park	10
Sherwood Park	10
Binbrook Park	11
*Dundas Driving Park	13
*Freelton Park	13
*Waterdown Memorial Park	15

*In a regular winter season, Dundas Driving Park, Freelton Park and Waterdown Memorial Park are open during the winter to support the use of the outdoor skating facilities at those locations.

The listing of existing winterized locations does not necessarily represent the most appropriate locations to operate year-round washroom facilities. Site selection for operating and winterizing (where applicable) washroom facilities should prioritize sites that are heavily visited, have a historically low incidence of graffiti, vandalism and illegal activity and are located near skating facilities or trails.

Feasibility of Winterizing Additional Locations

For a park washroom to remain open year-round, the following infrastructure (retrofits) must be in place:

1. Plumbing: Pipes within a structure must not be exposed to freezing temperatures and water supply lines to the building must be buried below the frost line in order to prevent freezing. In addition, outdoor faucets will need to be isolated from the rest of the plumbing within the building with a proper valve.
2. Heat, Ventilation & Insulation: The indoor spaces require a reliable heat source. The heat source must be supported by enough electrical supply along with rated insulation. Additionally, washrooms built with water lines in crawl spaces require an added heat source. Radiant/baseboard heaters should be fan assisted in order to transfer the heat uniformly into the space. Any building with ventilation intake for summer fresh air needs to be sealed off for winter readiness and to prevent outdoor winter elements (snow, cold) from migrating into the building.

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3. Electrical: The electrical source must be reliable and sufficient to power not only the new heating system but other features within the washroom as well.
4. Entrances & Exits: If a facility was designed with doors that open flush to the exterior openings, cold temperatures will radically migrate into the space and affect the temperature of the building causing material lifting (warping), door closing issues, etc. All doorways, window hatches and other openings to the outside will require weather-stripping to ensure proper sealing to prevent cold-air from migrating into the conditioned space as well as to prevent condensation issues
5. Flooring: Floors would need to be anti-slip proof to prevent slips and falls from wet bathroom floors.
6. Roofs: Snow and ice build-ups on the roofs causing dangerous situations of snow & ice cascading to the ground or traffic areas will need to be assessed on a building by building basis.

An additional 8 facilities could feasibly be modified for winter operations. Capital funding will be required at these sites in addition to an annual operating budget that would need to be established for the maintenance necessary in getting these sites winter-ready for the intended use, supplemental snow removal, repairs and graffiti, regular cleaning, consumable supplies, utilities, security infrastructure and security monitoring. Table 2 lists the washroom facilities that could feasibly be modified for winter operations:

Park	Ward
Gage Park Washroom (by baseball diamond)	3
Hamilton Beach Trail (Lift Bridge)	5
Hamilton Beach Trail (Kinsmen Park)	5
Lisgar Park	6
Mountain Drive Park (new build in 2022-2023)	6 and 7
Billy Sheering Park	7
T. B. McQuesten Park	7
Maplewood Park	9

The remaining 27 stand-alone park washroom facilities are not as they will require a significant amount of capital funding (greater than \$10,000 per site) to winterize them. In the worst cases it is better to reconstruct which would not be practical nor cost beneficial.

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Security Considerations

Graffiti, vandalism, illegal activity and safety of staff and washroom users are existing concerns throughout the summer months and with less traffic in parks during the fall and winter months, higher levels of vandalism and illegal activity are seen. Winterizing park washroom facilities will introduce additional opportunities for graffiti, vandalism and illegal activity which cannot be fully eliminated through security measures.

Examples of damage to washrooms in recent years and approximate costs to repair include the following: \$180.00 (example of typical graffiti removal charge); \$3200.00 (facility set on fire, complete clean and repaint); \$6500.00 (replacement of all major plumbing and electrical as well as the removal of needles and garbage).

Through the City's Vision and Mission, City owned open spaces are intended to provide a safe and inclusive space for all residents to enjoy leisure and recreational activities within their local neighbourhoods, free from damage, graffiti and other safety concerns. The City has enacted various by-laws to support the safe and inclusive operation and maintenance of these spaces such as Parks By-Law (01-219) and the Yard Maintenance By-law (10-118). However, some vandalism events have taken place over the last year requiring City resources for repair and restoration.

On August 16, 2019, Council passed a motion at the Public Works Committee (Item 11.6, Theft and Vandalism Prevention in City-Owned Public Spaces) directing staff to identify and explore the feasibility of various options, including Hamilton Police involvement and the installation of security cameras, to address the increase in vandalism and theft in City-owned public spaces.

Refer to Appendix "A" attached to Report PW21031 for additional detail on security considerations that are taken when addressing issues in City owned public spaces and buildings.

Servicing of Winterized Washrooms

If a winter washroom program is offered by the City in 2021/2022, or on an ongoing basis, it is recommended that the cleaning, snow removal and salting of the area around the washroom (if not already captured by the parks snow clearing) be provided through contracted services.

Budget Impact:

A preliminary review of expanding availability of winter washrooms provided in the table below estimates an operational budget impact of \$18,500 per site for sites not requiring supplemental snow removal and \$21,050 for the sites that do require supplemental

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snow removal, which represents 30 weeks of service (October 1 to May 1). The breakdown of costs is as follows on Table 3:

Table 3: Estimated Operational Budget Impact	
Budget Item	Cost
Winter Preparation	\$1,600
Repairs and Graffiti Removal (est.)	\$2,500
Cleaning	\$10,750
Supplies	\$2,000
Utilities	\$1,800
Snow Removal (where required)	\$2,250
Security	\$150
Operating Total per Site	\$18,500 - \$21,050

*Any required supplemental snow clearing would increase the total operating budget required for a site.

The Total Annual Operating Cost for all locations in Table 1 and 2 is \$518,850. Refer to Appendix "B" attached to Report PW21031 for detail.

The capital budget impact is site specific and is estimated at approximately \$3,000 per site for those sites deemed feasible to winterize in Table 2. Additionally, all washrooms in Table 1 and 2 would incur capital security infrastructure costs which are \$7,500 per washroom. The Total Capital Cost for Table 1 is \$150,000 which represents the capital security infrastructure costs for these sites. The total Capital Cost for Table 2 is \$73,500 which represents the capital winterization costs and the capital security infrastructure costs for these sites, with exception of Mountain Drive Park which will be under construction for 2022 and 2023. Refer to Appendix "B" attached to Report PW21031 for detail.

Portable Toilets as an alternative or to enhance permanent facilities

The use of portable toilets can provide washroom facilities during the winter months with hand sanitizer available within the units. The right location and setup to place portable toilets is critical to allow the servicing of each unit. This includes easy access for drop-off and pickup and to provide cleaning services. Winter poses a host of challenges for technicians & cleaning contractors such as mud, snow, and ice, all of which hinder truck access. These issues, if not addressed, can make it difficult for portable restroom companies to come in and provide cleaning and maintenance services.

Optimal placement of portable toilets should address the following factors in typical winter conditions:

- Set units on high ground: To promote drainage and prevent the buildup of snow / ice.

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- Situate unit in a well-lit area: With short winter days, daylight is the only source of interior lighting. Portable toilet service technicians and cleaning contractors also need light to perform scheduled cleanings and maintenance.
- Place near roads or parking areas with paved pathways: For easy drop-off, pickup and maintenance and to make snow removal accessible

Locations should be limited to sites where the City is already providing snow clearing to ensure safe access for users and servicing.

Table 4 below summarizes the monthly and seasonal total cost per portable toilet not including snow removal. The two options represent a difference in the level of servicing and cleaning provided; Option 1 includes servicing and cleaning twice per week which is the non-pandemic approved standard which some municipalities still utilize, and Option 2 includes servicing and cleaning twice per day which is the City of Hamilton approved standard during the pandemic.

Table 4: Portable Washroom Monthly and Seasonal Total Per Unit Cost		
Description	Option 1	Option 2
Supply Portable Toilet + pump unit out once per week	\$ 250	\$ 250
Servicing, cleaning, supply disinfectant 2x per week	\$ 1000	Not applicable
Servicing, cleaning, supply disinfect 2x per day (\$350 per day)	Not applicable	\$ 10,500
Monthly Per-Unit Total	\$ 1,250	\$ 10,750
Season Per-Unit Total (Based on 30 weeks)	\$9,375	\$80,625
	One-time cost	One-time cost
Delivery of Unit	\$ 100	\$ 100
End of Season pick-up	\$ 100	\$ 100
Total	\$ 200	\$ 200

Costs due to vandalism would vary depending on the severity and the City would be responsible for covering these costs through a risk claim.

Municipal Scan of Winter Washroom Availability

Parks staff completed a municipal scan via a survey send out through an online park association website. Ten neighbouring and comparable municipalities responded to the survey with the following summarized results:

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- 7 of 10 Municipalities have at least a few parks washrooms open throughout the year, an additional municipality was considering for this year as an exception due to COVID.
- all year-round washrooms are typically brick and mortar, use of portable toilets to support winter use of parks has been made as a specific COVID measure only.
- the availability of winter washrooms is not necessarily dependant on site amenities, such as skating rinks.
- all municipalities have seasonal differences in the hours of operation and level of service provided, i.e. shorter hours outside of the summer peak-season and fewer washrooms available throughout the different seasons.

Additional Washroom Options for the Public

Aside from the stand-alone washroom facilities within park spaces and subject to Provincial pandemic related restrictions, the public can also access washrooms at 20 arenas, 18 recreation and aquatic centres and 22 libraries, many of which are adjacent to or near parks, and are available to the public for washroom use and in some cases showers.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” to Report PW21031 - Security details (Graffiti and Vandalism)

Appendix “B” to Report PW21031 - Budget Impact - October 1 - May 1 (30 Weeks)