





CITY OF HAMILTON
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
Environmental Services Division
and
Corporate Facilities and Energy Management Division

TO:	Chair and Members Public Works Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	October 16, 2023
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Winterizing Public Washrooms - Winter Operations (PW21031(b)) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business Item)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Kara Bunn (905) 546-2424 Ext. 4334
SUBMITTED BY:	Cynthia Graham Director, Environmental Services Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	
SUBMITTED BY:	Indra Maharjan Director of Corporate Facilities & Energy Management Public Works
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the provision of winter washrooms based on the two-year pilot program be continued;
- (b) That the Public Works Department, Environmental Services Division be authorized to provide the provision of winter washroom access;
 - (i) at a cost of \$484,525, for the period of November 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024 to be funded from the Tax Stabilization Reserve (#110046) and;
 - (ii) that the cost of \$581,430 to operationalize this as a permanent program in 2024 be referred to the 2024 Tax Budget process;

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- (c) That the Public Works Department, Environmental Services Division, be authorized to provide additional locations namely Confederation Park and to switch Mountain Drive Park to a building facility instead of a port-o-let as part of the continuation of the winter washroom project;
 - (i) at a cost of \$66,900, for the period of November 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024 to be funded from the Tax Stabilization Reserve (#110046) and;
 - (ii) that the cost for the full winter season of \$80,330 be referred to the 2024 Tax Operating budget process;

- (d) That the Public Works Department, Environmental Services Division, be authorized to provide a temporary supervisor to support the contractor monitoring, response and inspection of winter washroom locations;
 - (i) at a cost of \$51,700, for the period of November 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024 to be funded from the Tax Stabilization Reserve (#110046) and;
 - (ii) The Public Works Department, Environmental Services Division, permanent staff complement increase of a 0.5 full time employee for a winter Parks Supervisor at a cost of \$62,000, be added to the 2024 Tax Operating budget process;

- (e) That the 6-month vehicle rental cost of \$8000 be referred to the Public Works Department, Environmental Services Division 2024 Tax Operating budget process;

- (f) That Staff be directed to consider increasing the design standard for park washrooms to ensure winter access is possible for future capital new construction or reconstruction and that all fixtures be installed or replaced at the time of reconstruction as institutionally resilient products such as stainless steel; and

- (g) That Winter Public Washrooms reporting on the two-year pilot program be identified as complete and removed from the Public Works Committee Outstanding Business List.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Standalone washrooms in parks are not open for use from October 1 to May 1 through the existing Parks program; however, a few locations are operated by the Healthy and Safe Communities Department, Recreation Division to support ice skating rinks in the

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winter months. The availability of public washrooms had become a concern highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic when few public washrooms were available, and parks were heavily used. Information Report PW21031 detailing the feasibility of making standalone park washrooms available year-round was presented to Public Works Committee on May 17, 2021 and approved at Council on May 26, 2021. Staff were directed to meet with all Ward Councillors to discuss the feasibility of making some park washrooms within their respective wards available for use year-round. The recommendations in Report PW21031(a) represented those consultations.

Through a two-year pilot program, washroom sites at select parks were made available for use from October 1 to May 1. Starting in 2021, locations that were identified as available without needing upgrades were available for winter use and further locations were identified for portable toilets. In October 2022, an additional two locations received the necessary upgrades required for winter use, offering 14 washrooms and nine portable toilet locations in total during the pilot program. The total cost of the pilot program was \$1,003,430.75; \$15,570.87 washroom upgrade costs and \$847,859.88 in maintenance and operating costs (inclusive of security/monitoring) and \$140,000 admin (staff and vehicle cost) for the two years. Several of the proposed locations were not available for the pilot program due to challenges with capital upgrades, delayed construction of new buildings (including at Confederation Beach Park and Mountain Brow Park) or lack of need informed by results of the year one feedback on usage.

In August 2023, a public survey was completed to collect information from the Public about the pilot program. Feedback from the community consultation supports the continuation of the program; the pressures and challenges faced in delivering this program have resulted in recommendations in Report PW21031(b) to continue to provide security and to enhance the resiliency of the facilities.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 8

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: The Public Works Department, Environmental Services Division 2024 Tax Operating budget would need to be increased by \$670,760 to cover costs to continue the winter washroom program based on the year two pilot program service level for cleaning, maintenance and security; and to cover the cost of a rental vehicle for six months.

Staffing: The Public Works Department, Parks and Cemeteries 2024 staff complement would need to be increased by 0.5 full time employee for a winter Parks Supervisor at a cost of \$62,000 to support inspection and contractor oversight of winter washroom locations.

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Legal: N/A

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 2021, staff were directed to meet with all Ward Councillors individually to determine their preferred locations for the winterizing of public washrooms in City-owned parks in their Wards and report back to the Public Works Committee with recommendations. Locations were chosen based on parks that had a high use in the winter and that had washrooms which were already winterized or that could be modified through capital improvements. Report PW21015 was approved and initiated a two-year pilot for 16 winterized public washrooms, with the remaining recommended locations to begin operations in 2022-2023. Starting in 2021, 12 locations were available for winter use and four locations utilized portable toilets. In October 2022, an additional two locations received the necessary upgrades required for winter use, offering 14 washrooms and nine portable toilet locations in total.

Staff were directed to report back to Council with the results of the pilot at the end of year two and to engage in community consultation to gain feedback on the successes and challenges of the program.

During the month of October 2022, washroom facilities in parks were shut down for the fall and winter seasons except for the locations approved for the second and final year of the Winter Washroom Pilot Program. Winter washrooms were available daily during daylight hours starting November 1, 2022 until May 1, 2023.

The locations approved under the Winter Washroom Pilot Program, year one:

Ward	Park
1	Alexander Park
1	Victoria Park Baseball Washrooms
2	Pier 4 Park (Gartshore Thomson) Building)
3	Woodland Park
3	Gage Park Washroom (by Baseball Diamond)
3	Gage Park Washroom (by Spray Pad)
6	Mohawk Sports Park Parks storage building
6 & 7	Portable Toilet: Mountain Drive Park
7	T. B. McQuesten Park
7	Portable Toilet: Eastmount Park
8	Bruce Park
8	Buchanan Park
7& 8	Portable Toilet: Sam Lawrence Park

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8	William Connell Park
13	Dundas Driving Park
15	Portable Toilet: Joe Sam's Park

Additional locations approved under the Winter Washroom Pilot Program for year two:

Ward	Park
1	Portable Toilet: Churchill Park
1	HAAA Park
2	Portable Toilet: Bayfront Park
3	JC Beemer Park
5	Confederation - Beach Park – Sports Park (approved but not available due to construction)
5	Portable Toilet: Hamilton Beach Trail (Kinsmen Park)
13	Portable Toilet: Strabane Community Park
12	Portable Toilet: Lion's Outdoor Pool (Hemming Park)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

Not applicable.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Staff from the Public Works Department, Environmental Services Division, Parks and Cemeteries Sections and Corporate Facilities & Energy Management Division, Facilities Operations and Maintenance Section previously consulted with each of the Ward Councillors regarding the washroom locations within their respective Ward and were made aware of any issues or changes to the program related to provision of washrooms in their wards.

Community consultation was done through the Engage Hamilton platform at the end of year one and two of the pilot program and generally provided support for continuing the program permanently. The results of the survey are summarized in the Analysis section of Report PW21031(b).

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Year one of the pilot program began in November 2021. Some of the challenges encountered in the first year included damage to facilities, graffiti, maintaining cleaning standards and need for security infrastructure. This was a two-year pilot program, which concluded on May 1, 2023. Year two of the pilot program provided for additional

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washroom locations; while there were similar challenges encountered in year two, some of the issues in year one were resolved with regards to better availability of washrooms as opening/closing processes were improved.

Some examples of damage to facilities that required repairs or replacement in 2022/23 included damage to porcelain fixtures (such as sinks and toilets), doors, and dispensers, along with need for repainting of facilities and minor electrical repairs. Graffiti on both the interior and exterior of the washrooms was also an area of concern requiring increased service levels for prompt removal.

Challenges for the janitorial cleaning service included the presence of discarded needle waste in washrooms, which was a safety concern for the service provider, and the illegal dumping of personal items, which required extra care and effort to address.

Opening and closing services were also hampered throughout the pilot project, as individuals or groups locked themselves into washrooms and refused to leave. Additional security oversight measures helped to resolve these matters; however, there were delays to closing or cleaning washrooms while the service provider waited for the security team.

Damage to portable toilets occurred in year one, due to tipping over of portable toilets, which was resolved by bolting down the units.

The introduction of intrusion detection technology was applied a few locations to support the after-hours monitoring of the property from unauthorized use and entry when it was expected to be secured. The technology that was implemented became the target of tampering where devices such as motion sensors, and door contacts were intentionally damaged or removed, preventing the system from operating as designed. Resilient devices were used in the installations, however the original design criteria for these types of devices would not have anticipated that access to the devices would be permitted for extended periods of time (i.e. open hours of washroom) to allow free access to tamper without the system triggering an intrusion event. The application of alternative security technology such as closed circuit television was not recommended by Corporate Security.

For year two, staff worked to resolve the above issues with the following actions: funding a higher level of service required for cleaning duties, making available an ice melter for use on frozen locks, retaining the services of a property management company to open/close and to streamline service response, and adding security staff for locations that were challenging for the cleaners (this measure was needed due to a work refusal from the cleaning contactor, which resulted in the escalation of security guard services being required to support closures at night).

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It is recommended that future washroom additions and redevelopments be built with resilient fixtures and robust design standards going forward; the costs to make this change will vary by facility; however, the overall cost would not be substantially more than previous design standards. New buildings can range from \$1,750,000 - \$2,250,000 and renovations in the range of \$750,000 - \$1,000,000.

In order to understand how well the pilot was received by the residents of Hamilton, a survey was hosted on the Engage Hamilton website after year one and year two of the pilot project. Appendix “A”– Engage Hamilton, Engagement Results of Report PW21031(b), provides a summary of those engagement activities collected after the second year of the pilot.

The major themes reported by survey respondents were:

Year one - the winter washroom program represents a value-added service, a washroom facility is preferred over a portable toilet, 20% of respondents would prefer to use a washroom in an arena, library or recreation centre before using a park washroom during the fall/winter season. The top three sites visited by respondents were: Pier 4 Park, Dundas Driving Park and Gage Park, these top three sites represented 50% of the reported use. More than half of respondents (55%) said the washrooms were open when they needed to use them, half of respondents said availability of daylight hours was a sufficient level of service, more than half of respondents preferred extended hours in the morning and evening with responses favouring extended evening availability.

Year two – the washroom program was again seen as a value-added service and supported an increase to the Public Works budget to see it continue. The survey received 184 responses, and the comments provided were very close to those received in year one. The top three sites visited by respondents were: Pier 4 Park, Dundas Driving Park and Gage Park, these top three sites represented over 50% of the reported use. Most visitors who participated in the survey reported that having parks washrooms in the winter allowed them to stay longer in the park, they found generally that they were clean and had supplies available when they utilized the washroom, and they felt safe using the washroom. The survey found that washrooms were not always open when they needed them and wished that the washrooms were open beyond daylight hours and earlier in the morning and later in the evening. Most users reported a preference for a washroom building versus a portable washroom, but they were willing to use the portable washroom if they needed it.

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Upgrade and operational costs for the two-year pilot program were as follows:

Activity to support winter washrooms	Cost 2021-2022 Season	Cost 2022-23 Season
Building upgrade costs, including heater supplies	\$ 9,889.85	\$5,681.02
Portable toilet rental	\$3,785.86	\$11,125.00
Building Cleaning	\$55,801.00	\$261,986.49
Building Security Guard Services	\$36,629.10	\$61,347.06
Building Property Management open/closing costs	\$35,761.10	\$79,226.34
Building Repairs	\$142,457.80	\$159,740.13
Supervisor	\$62,000.00	\$62,000.00
Vehicle cost	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00
Expense Total Per Season	354,324.71	\$649,106.04
Total cost of two-year pilot		\$1,003,430.75
Anticipated annual ongoing cost (including additional 0.5 fulltime employee) to fund the program at the two-year pilot program service level (14 washrooms and nine portable toilets)		643,425.02 (cost to add in Confederation Beach Park and switch Mountain Drive Park to a building facility add \$80,323.58)
Approximate Cost per additional washroom location	\$40,164.29 operational costs for buildings and \$1,000 per portable location. Upgrade costs will vary by location.	

In year two of the pilot project Facilities staff experienced challenges entering buildings safely to complete repairs. Additional measures, such as a security escort, was provided for City staff while onsite to complete ongoing building repairs at certain locations. Work consisted of repairs to plumbing, heating replacement, graffiti removal and addressing ongoing vandalism to buildings. Year two costs were higher due to increased security response, additional locations needing cleaning, additional portable washrooms, and increased needs for repairs.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Alternative 1

Winter washroom facilities can be made available exclusively using portable toilet rentals. This alternative is not recommended by staff as it does not align with the

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feedback provided by the public, which indicated a preference for washroom building access over portable toilets.

Financial: The financial implications of a single accessible portable toilet are estimated to be \$1,000 per winter season, therefore the total cost for 23 portable toilets is approximately \$23,000 per winter season.

Staffing: N/A

Legal: N/A

Alternative 2

Provision of winter washrooms be expanded to other specific sites beyond the phase two pilot locations when it is determined that they are equipped to provide winter washroom access at minimal costs (with the addition of heaters). It was noted in phase one that some sites would require extensive renovations or redevelopment to provide access. If this alternative is approved, it is recommended that locations be upgraded with resilient design to reduce the costs of tampering and vandalism.

Financial: The Public Works Department, Environmental Services Divisions, 2024 Tax Operating budget be increased by \$40,164.29 per additional washroom location to cover costs to expand the winter washroom program; and all capital upgrade costs be referred to the 2024 Capital Budget process.

Staffing: N/A

Legal: N/A

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” to report PW21031(b) – Engage Hamilton, Engagement Results