



Downtown Accessible Washroom Update

Date	June 16, 2021
To	Operations and Community Services Committee
From	City Planning & Community Development
Service Area	Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services
Item No.	OCS21-21

RECOMMENDATION

The Operations and Community Services Committee recommends that City Council:

1. Direct Administration to include the capital funding for the planning and design of a permanent, stand-alone, accessible washroom in the downtown as part of the proposed 2022 capital budget.
2. Direct Administration to include the capital and operating funding for the construction of a downtown washroom facility as part of the proposed 2023 capital budget.
3. Approve these recommendations at its meeting on June 23, 2021.

ISSUE

In October 2019 (CR19-92), Council approved a motion directing Administration to move forward with a downtown accessible washroom pilot project. The pilot project was to involve placement of an accessible washroom trailer in the vicinity of Victoria Park and Pat Fiacco Plaza, to assess public use of the facility before proceeding with a permanent solution.

The pilot project was put on hold due to COVID and since then Administration has had issues securing an accessible washroom trailer to move forward with the pilot. At the same time, the need for a downtown washroom has become more apparent during COVID. Council's recent adoption of the Winter City Strategy, with additional winter programming in the downtown that would require access to support facilities, further supports the need for washrooms. For these reasons,

Administration is recommending that rather than moving forward with a pilot project, the City of Regina (City) proceed with the design and construction of a permanent washroom facility.

IMPACTS

POLICY IMPACTS

While the provision of accessible public washrooms is not referenced explicitly in *Design Regina*, *The Official Community Plan Bylaw 2013-48 (OCP)*, or the *Regina Downtown Neighborhood Plan (RDNP)*, such facilities are intended to contribute to the quality of life in the city and to support the activation of the downtown, helping to create a complete, liveable, healthy, accessible, inclusive community for all of Regina's residents and visitors. The provision of a year-round accessible washroom facility is consistent with Regina's Winter City Strategy goals.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

The estimated capital costs for a permanent facility based, on the City's recent experience with the Welcome Services Pavilion constructed on the plaza, are \$50,000 for design and \$500,000 for construction. Currently there is a placeholder in the Recreation & Culture Capital Plan for this capital investment.

The operational and maintenance costs of a permanent facility are unknown at this time and will depend on facility design and maintenance levels. Cleaning costs are understood to be a minimum of \$100/day for twice-daily cleanings year-round (approximately \$37,000), with separate costs for security services to lock and unlock the facility daily and address any security-related issues that arise. Based on the experience in other cities, the best way to ensure safety, security, and the ongoing functioning of the facility is to provide a permanent staff presence whenever the facility is open to the public. If this were to be considered, operational funding would be required for staffing as well beginning in 2023 and on an on-going basis. Opportunities to tie this in with the City's safety and wellbeing work will be explored as part of the evaluation.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

If a permanent washroom facility is constructed it will be designed to be accessible.

There are no environmental, strategic or other impacts of this report. The environmental impacts of the development of a permanent washroom will be addressed through the design process and will vary depending on the location chosen for the facility and its size.

OTHER OPTIONS

1. Purchase a trailer and initiate the pilot project in 2022
 - Proceeding with the pilot project will allow Administration to gather data to gauge the scope of the need for a stand-alone public washroom in downtown Regina. By purchasing the trailer instead of renting, which has been unsuccessful, Administration will have the ability to continue to operate the pilot project seasonally until a permanent facility is complete. The trailer could then be redeployed to other locations or it could be sold. The costs for a four to five month pilot are outlined below and are roughly 14 per cent of the planned cost of a permanent facility.

Item	Cost
Purchase of a stand-alone accessible washroom trailer	\$45,000
Cleaning costs of a minimum of \$100 per day, 7 days per week	\$15,300
Septic servicing costs of \$180/service 4-5 times per month	\$4,000
Security to open and close the facility daily	\$5,000
Maintenance and operations contingency	\$5,000
Total:	\$74,300

2. Cancel plans for a permanent, stand-alone washroom in the downtown.
 - Cancelling plans will allow Administration to allocate any resources that would have been dedicated to this project to other priorities. However, this is not recommended as it does not support those requiring access to public washrooms and does not support the recently approved Winter City Strategy.

COMMUNICATIONS

Over the course of Administration's attempts to lease an accessible washroom trailer, Administration has kept the Regina Downtown Business Improvement District (RDBID) up to date on the project. The RDBID continues to support the development of a permanent, year-round, stand-alone washroom facility in the downtown.

DISCUSSION

There are two public washroom facilities in downtown Regina, one at City Hall and the other at the main branch of the Regina Public Library. Administration reached out to 18 municipalities in western Canada to survey them on the provision of public washrooms in their cities, specifically in the downtown. The survey was intended to enable Administration to document current practices in the region and specifically understand whether and what type of washroom facilities were being provided in other municipalities, along with operations and maintenance requirements. The survey resulted in nine responses.

Summary of Jurisdictional Research

All of the respondents indicated that their cities had multiple public washrooms in their downtowns, with most of these facilities located in year-round public buildings such as City Halls, recreation facilities, libraries, transit stations, galleries and museums.

- Eight of the nine cities had one or more stand-alone washroom facilities in parks or along road rights-of-way.
- Seven of the nine municipalities reported ongoing issues with illegal/illicit activity in their washrooms, including vandalism, squatting, prostitution, drug sales, drug use, and other forms of unlawful behaviour.
- Four respondents reported having increased security patrols and maintenance activities.
- Two of Saskatoon's five downtown washrooms have daily security checks coordinated with the cleaning of each facility.
- Only Victoria, BC, provides 24-hour access to some of their washroom facilities, with accompanying 24-hour on-site security.
- All other respondents reported that their washrooms were available during building hours similar to Regina or roughly dawn to dusk for stand-alone facilities. None of the respondents provided costs for in-building facilities; however, five provided recent costs for stand-alone facilities.
- Self-cleaning facilities have not been successful, as they washdown and disinfect the facility without someone picking up loose toilet paper, paper towels, needles and other debris, which necessitates additional cleaning.

While the physical needs of all washroom users are essentially the same, the design and location of a public washroom have a significant impact on who uses the facility. Similarly, maintenance levels also impact use, as those people who can choose an alternate facility will likely do so if their perceptions of a facility's level of safety or cleanliness are less than optimal. As Edmonton found in a 2018 survey, *"there is a general preference to avoid using public washrooms among those who are able to access alternative facilities."*

The City of Saskatoon is currently exploring adding two multi-stall, accessible portable washroom trailers to their inventory. They are also exploring how they can work more closely with social development organizations to determine suitable locations for these washrooms trailers where additional services could be provided to users. It is our understanding that this project will only move forward if grant funding is available.

Regina's Pilot Project

The accessible washroom pilot project was intended to address the immediate need for washrooms in the downtown, while helping Administration gauge potential usage and required maintenance levels in advance of planning a permanent facility. However, Administration has issued two separate Requests For Proposals (RFP) to initiate this project, one in March 2020 and another in January 2021. The 2020 RFP garnered a single response that exceeded the budget by over \$70,000 and was ultimately cancelled due to COVID. The 2021 RFP received no submissions. Administration reached out directly to suppliers of accessible temporary washrooms from outside the province. No company that Administration reached out to was willing to send an accessible washroom trailer out of their province for an extended time, as they were in high demand.

To continue to move forward with a pilot project this year, Administration would be required to seek approval for a non-standard procurement to try to sole source a contractor to have an accessible washroom trailer constructed in an effort to begin the pilot this year. It should be noted that Administration has not currently found a contractor able to complete the construction of a trailer before the fall of this year.

Recommended Next Steps

Since beginning the work to move forward the pilot project, the need for washrooms in the downtown has become more apparent. In addition, City Council recently approved the Winter City Strategy, which will encourage additional activity in the downtown during the winter months. For these reasons, Administration recommends that rather than continuing with a pilot project that approval is granted to consider funding the planning and design of a permanent downtown washroom in 2022 and construction in 2023. Currently, capital funding for the design and construction are accounted for in the Recreation & Culture Capital Plan, which was presented as an appendix to the 2021 budget. Administration will confirm program and costs through the design process and is confident that the budget will allow a minimum of two all-season stalls.

Options for the operation and security of the facility will continue to be explored. An operating ask will be included in the 2023 budget, once there is more clarity on the design of the facility and the preferred operating hours.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on May 9, 2019, the Community and Protective Services Committee considered item CPS19-7. The Committee directed *"That Administration return to Community and Protective Services Committee in Q4 2019 with a report on costing to provide washroom facilities in the downtown, including various options for both seasonal and year-round facilities, and that consultation with the stakeholders and research in other municipalities be completed."*

At its meeting on October 28, 2019, City Council considered item CR19-92 – Downtown Public

Washrooms and approved *"that funding of \$20,000 be requested through the 2020 budget process for a one-season pilot project to test stand-alone public washrooms in the downtown."*

Respectfully Submitted,

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Laurie Shalley, Director, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services



6/7/2021

Diana Hawryluk, Executive Director, City Planning & Community Dev.

6/10/2021

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