Jurisdictional Scan: Public Washroom Systems in Canada

February 2020

Research Highlights

- **Fourteen (14)** municipalities across Canada were included in the jurisdictional scan.
- Based on information obtained through secondary research (primarily council reports and related municipal documents), **7 of 14** municipalities have a public washroom system in place for the municipality's downtown / high-density areas:
    1. Victoria
    2. Vancouver
    3. Calgary
    4. Edmonton
    5. Regina
    6. Montreal
    7. Toronto
- Of the **seven (7)** municipalities with a public washroom system**, five (5)** are currently addressing the status of their systems through a report, strategy, initiative, contractual agreement or project (herein referred to as '*strategy*'). **These five municipalities are to be the focus of this report and include:**
    1. Vancouver
    2. Calgary
    3. Edmonton
    4. Regina
    5. Toronto
- See ***Appendix 1*** for individual municipal public washroom system strategy details
- See ***Appendix 2*** for example images of public washroom systems in Canada

Municipal Points-of-Note

- Municipalities across Canada offer a range of public washroom designs, including:
    - Automated Public Toilets (APTs)
    - Monitored, climate-controlled buildings
    - Solar-powered trailer systems and port-a-potties
- Washroom per-unit acquisition costs vary greatly across Canada depending on facility-specific design and construction specifications, etc.
- The **Vancouver** and **Toronto** strategies are partially or wholly funded through a "*street furniture* program" contract between the municipality and an outside firm.
- **Vancouver** works directly with a local *drug use support organization* to implement that municipality's strategy.
- **Vancouver's** APTs have inclusive signage for trans and gender diverse individuals, are designed to be unheated (if possible) or heated only to prevent freezing, and do not provide garbage or recycling within the APTs.

- **Victoria's** Langley Loo gained national recognition and won 2012's Best Restroom in Canada award.
- **Calgary's** APTs are winterized. Two of the three APTs play music when the door is closed and locked.
- **Edmonton's** Whyte Ave. public washroom attendant serves as host to the washroom users and is responsible for maintaining the facility.
- **Edmonton's** 2018 *temporary washroom sites* help reduce public urination during major events.
- **Toronto's** APTs are available 24/7, year-round. The units require water and sewer connections and hydro. They are heated in winter and air conditioned in summer.
- **Toronto's** APTs cost 25 cents per use. As per the municipality's street furniture contract, tokens are provided to Toronto's homeless via the Streets to Home Program.

Vancouver - Overview

- **Focus:** "Toilet Accessibility in the Downtown Eastside". Project partnership in place with the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU) to improve toilet accessibility.
- **Scope:** Vancouver has **eight (8)** APTs, mostly scattered around the downtown core. Vancouver's long-term plan is to install 17 APTs.
- **Stakeholders:** City of Vancouver's Engineering Services-Street Activities and Parks & Recreation, Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU), CBS / Decaux (advertising firm)
- **Funding Details (2006 dollars):** Funded through revenues from Vancouver's Street Furniture Contract with CBS / Decaux. Under the Street Furniture Contract, the City receives 20% of the gross revenue generated by the street furniture advertising sold by CBS Decaux.
    - Total cost per unit installed = $65,000 (maintenance costs extra)

Calgary - Overview

- **Focus:** Calgary's "Public Toilets in the Centre City" report was developed in 2008 to evaluate existing pilot projects, review the state of public toilets and make recommendations.
- **Scope:** Calgary's downtown area offers **three (3)** APTs (built in 2008 and 2011)
- **Stakeholders:** City of Calgary's Parks Business Units and Calgary Transit, Calgary's Uptown 17th Business Revitalization Zone, Participants in the Centre City Vision Congress, The Calgary Downtown Association
- **Funding Details (2008 dollars):**
    - Total cost per unit installed = approx. $470,000
    - Annual Maintenance costs per unit = $35,000-$40,000

Edmonton - Overview

- **Focus:**
    1. In 2018, the municipality ran a temporary washroom pilot project to provide services in places identified as high-need by citizens, businesses and social agencies. Additional effort was made to ensure sufficient services during major events, including at Commonwealth Stadium.
    2. Edmonton is also working on a municipality-wide pubic washroom strategy, "Public Washroom Pilot & Whyte Avenue Washroom Attendant and Monitoring Pilot".

- **Scope:**
    1. The 2018 temporary washroom pilot involved **nine (9)** washroom locations operated from late June through early November (sites included solar-powered trailers and port-a-potties).
    2. The current Whyte Ave. pilot project is being conducted at one public washroom location with the intention that the project will inform operating practices and procedures for potential year-round service.
- **Stakeholders:** City of Edmonton, Boyle Street Ventures Inc., Old Strathcona Business Association
- **Funding Details:**
    1. Temporary Washroom Pilot: Total Costs for the term of the pilot for all nine washrooms combined = $79,592 (2018 dollars)
    2. Whyte Ave. building cost = $536,000 (2019 dollars) - maintenance costs unknown

Regina - Overview

- **Focus:** Regina has implemented a project for 2020 that will observe usage rates at a temporary washroom site that would aim to be more appealing than a normal porta-potty. The facility would be checked on by staff multiple times a day.
- **Scope:** One location confirmed for the pilot project, to run from May through September of 2020
- **Stakeholders:** City of Regina-Community and Protective Services
- **Funding Details (2020 dollars):**
    - Total cost for pilot project unit installed = approx. $20,000
    - Maintenance costs per unit = $600-$700 per week

Toronto - Overview

- **Focus:** To bring more washrooms into high-traffic areas through a 2007 contract agreement with Astral Media:
    - Install 20 APTs over 20 years
    - Fund the building, installation and maintenance of 20 washrooms
    - Maintain washrooms (3 cleaning visits per day and general maintenance)
    - Washrooms should be made available 24/7, year-round
- **Scope:** Three (3) APTs currently in service in addition to a permanent washroom facility at Nathan Phillips Square (outside of City Hall).
- **Stakeholders:** City of Toronto, Astral Media
- **Funding Details:** It would be Astral's responsibility to buy, install and maintain the washrooms. In exchange, the media conglomerate would own the exclusive right to sell advertising on Toronto transit shelters and information columns.
    - Total cost per unit to acquire = approx. $250,000

CITIES	VANCOUVER	CALGARY	EDMONTON	REGINA	TORONTO	VICTORIA	SASKATOON	HAMILTON	MISSISSAUGA	OTTAWA	MONTREAL	QUEBEC CITY	HALIFAX (HRM)	ST. JOHN'S
POPULATION (2016)	631,486	1,239,220	932,546	215,106	2,731,571	85,792	246,376	536,917	721,599	934,243	1,704,694	531,902	403,131	108,860
Is there a municipally-funded / supported public washroom system currently operating in the municipality's downtown and / or high-density neighbourhoods?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Has the municipality developed (or is developing) a strategy to oversee the design, funding, implementation and maintenance of downtown public washrooms?	Yes **Toilet Accessibility in the Downtown Eastside (DTES)**	Yes **City of Calgary: Public Toilets in the Centre City (2008)**	Yes **2018 Public Washroom Pilot & 2019-2020 Whyte Avenue Washroom Attendant and Monitoring Pilot (in development)**	Yes **Council approved Pilot Project (Scheduled for May-September 2020)**	Yes **Partnership contract in place with an external stakeholder (Astral Media) to install Automatic Public Toilets (APTs)**	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
If yes to the above														
What is the focus / objective of the strategy? What risks were considered in prompting the creation of a strategy?	• Reduce the amount of faeces in the area • Address the need for safe, clean washrooms available in the evening hours • Monitor two existing APTs in the neighbourhood into the evening • Inform patrons at bars and other establishments about the extended hours of five washroom locations in the DTES • Convince people likely to use alleys as toilets to use publicly-provided toilets instead	**The primary focus of this report is to:** • Evaluate pilot projects to-date (including portable toilets along the river bank, public toilets administered by Parks, and APTs) • Review of the state of public toilets in Calgary • Examine what is being done with regards to public toilets in other jurisdictions • Draw conclusions about how to proceed. **The Centre City Plan:** **Section (9)- Community Building** **2.** Improve amenities, including health and social services, to meet the needs of the growing and changing population. Specific services may include basic needs such as public washrooms and basic medical services, as well as higher order needs such as child and elder care facilities and health and wellness programs.	• Improve access • Improve user experience • Improve management of existing public washroom facilities through a three phase planning model: Phase 1: Improve how the current inventory is managed Phase 2: Increase access to washrooms through temporary facilities and partnerships Phase 3: Develop more permanent public washrooms To **improve user experience and safety as part of the overall strategy**, the City is piloting a 90-day attendant/ monitoring program for the public washroom located on Whyte Avenue. "This pilot project also supports our commitment to increasing washroom access for individuals who have higher health needs and increasing dignity for vulnerable Edmontonians."	The one-season pilot project will test the need, operational challenges and effectiveness of installing stand-alone washrooms in the downtown. During the pilot, the city would assess the need for the washrooms by tracking usage and maintenance challenges before committing to a permanent facility.	Unable to obtain the City of Toronto-Astral agreement to determine these details.								
Who are the key internal municipal stakeholders involved in the design, funding, implementation and maintenance of the strategy? What are their roles?	**Internal Stakeholders Identified:** 1) Engineering Services Department - Street Activities (Division) 2) Board of Parks & Recreation (Department)	**Internal Stakeholders Identified:** 1) Parks Business Unit 2) Calgary Transit	**Internal Stakeholders <u>Not</u> Identified**	**Internal Stakeholders Identified:** 1) Community and Protective Services Committee	Unable to obtain the City of Toronto-Astral agreement to determine these details.									
Who are the key external stakeholders involved in the strategy? What are their roles?	**External Stakeholder(s):** • VANDU (Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users) **About VANDU:** VANDU is a group of users and former users who work to improve the lives of people who use drugs through user-based peer support and education. VANDU is committed to increasing the capacity of people who use drugs to live healthy, productive lives. VANDU is also committed to ensuring that drug users have a real voice in their community and in the creation of programs and policies designed to serve them.	**External Stakeholder(s):** • Calgary's Uptown 17th Business Revitalization Zone (comparable to Winnipeg's BIZ groups, known as BIA's in Calgary-Business Improvement Zones) • Participants in the Centre City Vision Congress • The Calgary Downtown Association	**External Stakeholder(s):** • Boyle Street Ventures Inc. • Old Strathcona Business Association **Background Information on Stakeholders:** The City will work with **Boyle Street Ventures Inc. and the Old Strathcona Business Association** to evaluate the pilot. Findings will be used to provide input to the Community and Public Services Committee update report due in June 2020. Boyle Street Ventures Inc. (BSV Inc.) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Boyle Street Community Services, a registered charity organization in downtown Edmonton.	None publically identified	**External Stakeholder(s):** • Astral Media **Contract agreement with Astral Media to complete the following:** • Install 20 washrooms over 20 years • Fund the building, installation and maintenance of 20 washrooms • Maintain washrooms (3 cleaning visits per day and general maintenance) In exchange, none of the cost would be borne by the city. The media conglomerate would own the exclusive right to sell advertising on Toronto transit shelters and information columns.								
Is the strategy focused on specific geographic locations? Why have these locations been chosen?	Specifically the DTES (Downtown East Side) Area	City-wide. However the report reviews Centre City Plan, which will look at amenities within the downtown area specifically (made up of 6 communities). Land Use Planning and Policy and Transportation have developed guidelines built on Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to maximize safety and usability. Additional location criteria is available in the report.	Temporary washroom sites (not including Whyte Ave) were selected based on observations from citizens, businesses and nonprofit agencies, and on the availability of City-owned land. The pilot on Whyte Ave. will inform operating practices and procedures for potential year-round service. Reason for location not disclosed	City-wide focus Pilot will take place in City-Square Plaza (Downtown)	Not downtown specific.								
How many washroom locations are included as part of the strategy ?	**Eight APTs**. Vancouver's long-term plan is to install 17 APTs.	**Three APTs**	* **Nine temporary washroom sites operated late from June through early November** (solar-powered trailers, port-a-potties) * Additional game-day trailers were provided at Commonwealth Stadium through the 2018 CFL season * **One staffed, permanent building** location on Whyte Avenue	**One location confirmed for the pilot project**	**Three APTs**. Toronto's long-term plan is to install 20 APTS over 20 years. In addition to the APTs, Toronto has a year-round permanent 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. bathroom facility at Nathan Phillips Square.	**7 Toilets** • funded by tax dollars and open to the general public							
What are some of the unique attributes of the strategy or of the actual washrooms themselves?	**1.3 Equity of Access** • Washrooms shall have inclusive signage for trans and gender diverse individuals. • Function-based icons are used on signage, as opposed to gender figures. • Stall doors shall have minimal gaps on the sides to allow for maximum privacy. **1.4 Environmental Sustainability** • Public washrooms should be designed to be unheated, if possible, or heated only to prevent freezing. • Small public washroom buildings that are required to be heated shall use only low carbon fuel sources. **2.6 Garbage and Recycling** No garbage nor recycling shall be provided within washrooms. Any garbage and recycling will be accommodated either outside or within other areas of associated buildings.	Two APTs play music when the door is closed and locked, and a sanitized toilet seat emerges from the wall. (2011 installations)	Key learnings from temporary locations: * Event-specific washroom services strategically placed can help reduce public urination during major events. * Operational challenges with the management and servicing of washroom facilities need to be addressed in future washroom planning. Whyte Avenue: • The system's focus is geared towards monitoring washrooms (providing a washroom attendant). • Unique partnership with charitable organization (Boyle Street Ventures Inc.) for employment opportunities	n/a	n/a								
Has the municipality received any feedback (public commentary, usage statistics, annual incident reporting, etc.) that informs the effectiveness of the strategy to-date?	The results of a formal feedback process have not been published by the municipality	The results of a formal feedback process have not been published by the municipality	**Survey** currently being conducted online with the general public **(to June 2020)** **Police Comment:** "During nearly every visit (police) come across someone using the facility for something other than as a bathroom — whether as a place to shelter, or for drug and alcohol use". (Edmonton Journal, April 25, 2019)	The results of a formal feedback process have not been published by the municipality	The results of a formal feedback process have not been published by the municipality								
Did your municipality have to amend or create by-laws to accommodate your public washroom strategy? Please provide the by-law or link.	Nothing identified	Nothing identified	Nothing identified	Nothing identified	Nothing identified									
Funding details for operating costs and capital cost	There is no direct cost to the City for purchase, maintenance and operation of the toilets – they are funded by CBS Decaux as part of the Street Furniture program. **2006 Funding Details (2006 dollars)** The City will have some obligation for utility connection costs. The commitment of CBS Decaux for APT installation and utility connection is limited to $40,000 plus CPI per location (currently approximately $42,320). For all 8 locations, this amounts to approximately $338,560. The total estimated cost of installation and utility connection is $520,000, requiring City funding of approximately $180,000 to make up the difference. It is proposed this funding be provided from the projected increased revenues from the 2006 Street Furniture program. Under the Street Furniture Contract, the City receives 20% of the gross revenue generated by the street furniture advertising sold by CBS Decaux.	**2008 Funding details (2008 dollars):** The acquisition cost of the APT was $194,000. Installation costs of approximately $ 275,000 included the cost of site preparation, creating a basement to ensure that the unit was cold weather ready, winterization of the unit, and hooking it up to utilities. Annual maintenance costs are anticipated to be $35,000 annually, plus utility costs of approximately $400 per month. (page 24 of the Report) The total cost of the Tompkins Park toilet was $469,000 which includes the unit site preparation and upgrades to winterize it. Cost savings from larger orders or by sharing with other municipalities means future installations could be as little as half that amount. Annual operating costs come in at $40,000 including $400 per month for utilities.	**2018 Funding Details (2018 dollars):** Temporary Washroom Pilot - Total Costs: $79,592 **2019 Funding Details (2019 dollars):** Whyte Ave Washroom Capital Construction Cost: $536,000 Whyte Ave Pilot Project Cost- funded in full by the City of Edmonton.	**2020 Funding Details (2020 dollars):** The pilot project will cost $20,000 (installation costs) , which would be requested through the 2020 budget	**Capital Costs (2007 dollars):** The bathrooms come prefabricated at $250,000 each; installation costs can near-match that amount.								
Do public washroom models employ staff to monitor washrooms full-time? Which models only provide maintenance funding (cleaning, etc.)?	No	No	Yes, the Whyte Ave. pilot will be a 90 day attendant/monitoring program.	Yes, the pilot site will be maintained daily at a cost of $600-$700 per week.	No									
How do cities with washrooms address issues with usage in winter / cold?	Excerpt from-City of Vancouver's PUBLIC WASHROOM **DESIGN & TECHNICAL GUIDELINES:** The following describes the City of Vancouver's sustainable design criteria for new buildings and shall be considered for the design of public washroom facilities only to the extent of economy and practicality: •Public washrooms should be designed to be unheated, if possible, or heated only to prevent freezing.	APTs are winterized	Whyte Ave. washroom heated to +5C in winter and have no summer air conditioning to avoid loitering but promote usage at the same time.	To be determined upon completion of pilot project- A motion was introduced at an April meeting to prepare a report outlining some of the cost of opening and operating either a seasonal or 24/7-accessible washroom for the public.	Washrooms are heated in winter and air conditioned in summer.								
Municipal Links	https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/toilet-accessibility-in-the-dtes.aspx	Centre City Plan Refresh https://engage.calgary.ca/centre-city-plan-refresh	https://www.edmonton.ca/projects_plans/communities_neighbourhoods/public-washroom-pilot.aspx		https://www.toronto.ca/explore-enjoy/recreation/recreation-community-facilities/winter-washrooms-in-parks/								
Documents	C:\Users\jhoney\Desktop\Vancouver APT s -	Calgary	I:\Strategic Services\Shared\Jurisdictional Scans\	I:\Strategic Services\Shared\Jurisdictional Scans\	I:\Strategic Services\Shared\Jurisdictional Scans\	I:\Strategic Services\Shared\Jurisdictional Scans\	C:\Users\jhoney\Desktop\CPS Public Report CPS19-15 -	C:\Users\jhoney\Desktop\Street Furniture Program -						

Examples of Public Washrooms Across Canada

VICTORIA:

Langley Street Loo



Urinal at Pandora and Government



VANCOUVER:

Example of Automated Public Toilet (Self-Cleaning Model)



Example of Automated Public Toilet (Self-Cleaning Model)



CALGARY:

Automated Public Toilet (APT) in Tomkins Park (built in 2008)



Automated Public Toilet: East Side of Downtown (built in 2011)



EDMONTON:

Edmonton Permanent Public Washroom: Corner of Whyte Avenue and Gateway Boulevard



TORONTO:

Example of Automated Public Toilet: (Self-cleaning model)



MONTREAL:

Example of Automated Public Toilet: (Self-cleaning model)

