Minute No. 105
Report – Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks – December 7, 2021

Item No. 1 Funding for Vulnerable Populations in Response to COVID-19: Public Washroom Access

COUNCIL DECISION:

Council concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks and adopted the following:

1. That this report be received as information.

2. That subject to available funds in the 2022 and 2023 Operating Budget, that delegated authority to the Chief Administrative Officer be approved, to enter into a sole source grant agreement with an agency or agencies selected by the Public Service, to provide Peer Support Services at the planned permanent washroom in accordance with the draft terms and conditions outlined in Attachment 2.

3. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Rollins,

That the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks be adopted by consent.

Carried

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On December 8, 2021, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks and submitted the matter to Council.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On December 7, 2021, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

On September 16, 2021, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks provided an extension of time to its December 7, 2021 meeting for the Winnipeg Public Service to report back on the matter.

COUNCIL DECISION:

On July 23, 2020, Council concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks and adopted the following:

1. That of the $670,000.00 already gifted to the City from the Community Response Fund for Vulnerable Populations (CRFVP), up to $620,000.00 be allocated to the creation of one or more permanent public washrooms and hand washing stations as follows:

    A. The design, construction, and installation of permanent public washrooms that would be accessible to the public 24 hours a day / 7 days a week / 365 days a year;

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

B. Location(s) to be approved in consultation with the EHW and the Public Service; and

C. Construction to be completed by February 2021.

2. That operational costs associated with these permanent public washrooms be determined and any amounts that cannot be defrayed through funding or revenue from other sources be referred to the 2021 operating budget process.

3. That the remainder of the $670,000.00 gifted to the City from the CRFVP be allocated for the immediate rental of temporary, portable washrooms and hand washing stations in areas of the city which will best serve the needs of homeless individuals, with locations to be identified through consultation with EHW and the Public Service.

4. That, if additional funds become available to the City from the CRFVP, authority be delegated to the Chief Administrative Officer to determine whether to allocate those additional amounts to either the creation of permanent public washrooms outlined in Recommendation 1 or the immediate rental of temporary, portable washrooms outlined in Recommendation 3.

5. That authority be delegated to the Chief Administrative Officer to apply for funding from the ECSF through Francofonds.

6. That, if any funds are made available to the City in 2020 from the Emergency Community Support Fund (ECSF), authority be delegated to the Chief Administrative Officer in consultation with the Société de la francophonie manitobaine ("SFM"), Entreprise Riel, Festival du voyageur and Division scolaire franco-manitobaine ("DSFM") to:

A. determine whether to allocate those additional amounts to either the creation of permanent public washrooms outlined in Recommendation 1 or the immediate rental of temporary, portable washrooms outlined in Recommendation 3; and

B. if these funds are allocated to the immediate rental of temporary, portable washrooms, to approve suitable locations for these washrooms within Francophone communities in Winnipeg.

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

7. That the City of Winnipeg enter into, execute and deliver such agreements as are necessary to implement the foregoing and that the Chief Administrative Officer be authorized to negotiate and approve the terms and conditions of said agreements, including such terms and conditions as are determined by the City Solicitor to protect the interests of the City.

8. That the Public Service report back in September 2021 on all outcomes resulting from the initiatives proposed by this motion, including a summary of ongoing budgetary requirements for continued operation of any washroom facilities constructed.

9. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

On July 23, 2020, Council concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks and adopted the following:

1. That the three-tiered Places to Go Framework as detailed herein be approved and direct the Public Service to:

    A. work with external stakeholders to:

        i. conduct a public restroom facility analysis to determine existing gaps and high-needs areas;

        ii. determine best locations for installation of public restrooms, for all Winnipeggers inclusive of vulnerable persons on a priority basis; and

    B. work with external stakeholders to create a program and criteria to encourage private and public building owners to provide public washroom access; and

    C. identify all potential barriers within City By-laws, processes or procedures inhibiting the establishment of public restroom facilities, along with any proposed amendments to address same and report back in December of 2020 to the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks.

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

2. That the Public Service report back annually on the matter commencing in December 2021.

3. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Funding for Vulnerable Populations in Response to Covid-19: Public Washroom Access

Critical Path: Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks – Executive Policy Committee – Council

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
C. Brens	C. Fernandes	N/A	M. Jack

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On July 10, 2020, Council concurred with the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks (SPC-PCSP), supporting the allocation of $670,000, gifted to the City from the Community Response Fund for Vulnerable Populations for the creation of one or more permanent public washrooms and the rental of temporary washrooms to support vulnerable populations impacted by the COVID19 pandemic. This funding was paid for by the Canadian Medical Association Foundation (CMAF), and administered through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM),

The Public Service was directed to report back in September 2021 on all outcomes resulting from the initiatives, including a summary of ongoing budgetary requirements for the continued operation of any washroom facilities once constructed.

The first section of this report provides an overview of the history and context of the gifted funding and the initial work completed by the Public Service in response to Council's direction. The second section provides an update on the current state of both the temporary and permanent washroom projects and identifies an operating model with funding requirements. The final section concludes the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That this report be received as information.

2. That subject to available funds in the 2022 and 2023 Operating Budget, that delegated authority to the Chief Administrative Officer be approved, to enter into a sole source grant agreement with an agency or agencies selected by the Public Service, to provide Peer Support Services at the planned permanent washroom in accordance with the draft terms and conditions outlined in Attachment 2.

3. That the proper officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the foregoing.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

On July 23, 2020, Council concurred with the recommendation of SPC-PCSP, supporting the allocation of $670,000 for the creation of one or more permanent public washrooms as well as the rental of temporary washrooms to support vulnerable populations impacted by the COVID19 pandemic. As part of this disposition, the Public Service was directed to report back in September 2021 on all outcomes resulting from the initiatives proposed by the motion. At its September 16, 2021 meeting SPC-PCSP approved an extension of time to its December 7, 2021 meeting for the Public Service to report back on this matter.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no implications resulting from the recommendations of this report. The City will enter into a sole source grant agreement for the provision of Peer Support Services at the planned Permanent Washroom only if funds become available through the 2022 and 2023 budget process.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

Background History and Context

On June 1, 2020, the City's interim Chief Administrative Officer was contacted by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) on behalf of the Canadian Medical Association Foundation (CMAF) to award the City of Winnipeg $670,000 in one-time funding to provide COVID19-related support to vulnerable populations. On July 10, 2020, Council concurred with the recommendation of SPC-PCSP to allocate this funding to support vulnerable populations impacted by the COVID19 pandemic by increasing access to public washroom facilities. More specifically, the motion identified that:

- Of the $670,000 gifted to the City, up to $620,000 would be allocated to the creation of one or more permanent public washrooms and hand washing stations.
- The operational costs associated with the permanent public washrooms would be determined and any amounts that could not be defrayed through funding or revenue from other sources would be referred to the 2021 operating budget process.
- The remainder of the $670,000 would be allocated for the immediate rental of temporary portable washrooms in areas of the city that will best serve the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness, with locations to be identified through consultation with End Homelessness Winnipeg (EHW).

Over the past 16 months, several City departments including Community Services, Assets and Project Management, Legal Services, Corporate Finance – Risk and Insurance, Planning Property and Development, and the CAO's Office have led and supported the delivery of two distinct projects related to the above Council direction. This includes one project focused on the rental, placement, and management of temporary washrooms, and a second project focused on the development, construction, and operation of permanent washrooms. The history and development of each project is described in detail below.

Temporary Washroom Project
Led by the Community Development Division in the Community Services Department, staff began planning for the temporary washrooms by first engaging with EHW to identify locations where units could be placed across the City. Through this engagement, seven areas were identified as initial locations for the washrooms. These included:

- Selkirk Avenue, near Powers Park
- Main Street, near Jarvis Avenue
- Portage Avenue, near the Portage Place Mall
- Osborne Street, near River Avenue
- Marion Street, near the Dominion Centre
- Higgins Avenue, near Austin Street or Maple Street
- Martha Street, near Thunderbird House

Following the identification of the areas noted above, the public service worked to identify specific sites within these areas. Based on lessons learned from previous public washroom pilot projects in 2018 and 2019, City staff worked to identify sponsor agencies who would be willing to help monitor each site, and possibly locate a temporary washroom on or near their property. It is important to note that the success of this project would not have been possible without the in-kind support of each of the sponsor agencies. The finalized sites and sponsor agencies at the start of the project were as follows:

Location	Sponsor Agency	Total Washroom Units
345 Portage Avenue	Downtown Biz	1 unit
26 Osborne Street	Osborne Biz	1 unit
75 Martha Street	Main Street Project	3 units
222 Furby Street	Crossways in Common	1 unit
473 Selkirk Ave.	Bear Clan	1 unit
Total Units		**7**

While working to identify the locations for the units, the Public Service met with representatives from possible vendors who would be able to provide the temporary washrooms as well as regular cleaning and maintenance. The City's currently-approved contractor for temporary washrooms, Gotta Go, supported this initiative. The budget originally identified for the temporary washrooms project was $50,000 of the $670,000 gifted to the City. However, in working with Gotta Go it was determined that the rental cost of the seven units noted above, until December 31, 2021, would total only $36,913. The remaining $13,087 was redirected to support the overall cost of the permanent washroom project. It should also be noted that Gotta Go provided the City with liability coverage for the units for a minimal monthly cost. This is not normal practice for the vendor, but Gotta Go identified their willingness to do so in support of this initiative.

Over the past 16 months, the temporary bathroom project has evolved in response to frequently changing conditions and the realities of each site. At the time of the writing of this report, there are now 6 units in operation and the locations and site sponsors of some sites have changed. The current locations and sponsors for each site are listed in the below chart:

Location	Sponsor Agency	Total Washroom Units
222 Furby Street	Crossways in Common	1 unit
75 Martha St.	Main Street Project	3 Units
185 Young St.	Broadway Neighbourhood Centre	1 unit
473 Selkirk Ave.	Bear Clan	1 unit
Total Units		**6**

Although the change of location for some of the temporary units was in response to limited usage, in other cases the units were moved due to challenges with the units themselves. Throughout the course of the implementation of this project the temporary washrooms were subject to vandalism, structural damage, fire, and the theft of internal components including, but not limited to, toilet paper holders, the urinals, and exhaust piping. In two separate instances, units were set on fire with one requiring major repairs, and the other burning in its entirety.

It is important to note that the sponsor agencies, and in particular the vendor Gotta Go, experienced frequent and often difficult challenges with the operation of the temporary washrooms. This includes vandalism to sponsor agency buildings, complaints from neighbouring businesses and private residents, and in some cases verbal threats from individuals using or located near the washrooms. In the summer of 2021, the vendor identified to the City that their staff were often confronted with challenging working conditions including verbal threats, the presence of sharps, and extreme odious conditions of the units themselves. Staff with the vendor identified cases of mental and physical burnout associated with the

management of this project. In one instance, a Gotta Go staff member identified an unresponsive individual in one of the units, who was later pronounced dead at the hospital due to an overdose. Following these instances, City staff worked with the vendor and sponsor agencies to identify ways to address some of these challenges. This included regular monthly meetings with the vendor to address ongoing issues, the removal of one unit to offset the cost of more frequent cleaning of the other six units, and the relocation of a number of units to alternative spaces.

The implementation of this initiative would not have been possible without the ongoing in-kind support of the sponsor agencies, as well as the dedication of Gotta Go to ensure the completion of this contract. Should this initiative continue beyond 2021, the involvement of sponsor agencies is a critical requirement. As well, throughout the implementation of the temporary toilet project, the risks of continuing with the project was consistently weighed against the need and benefit of providing access to washrooms for those experiencing homelessness during the COVID19 Pandemic.

During the implementation of the temporary washroom project, efforts were taken to assess the daily usage of each unit. As noted above, theft or removal of washroom components was a consistent and ongoing challenge. For this reason, automated counters were not affixed to the units. However, to meet reporting requirements of the FCM, in the winter of 2020 the Public Service partnered with Main Street Project (MSP), and clients of MSP, to complete a point in time count of the units. Through this collaboration, clients were provided with an hourly wage to assess the usage of the washrooms during a 4-day period. Through this initiative, it was identified that the units were being accessed on average 10 times each day. However, it is important to note some units were used more than others. For example, the units located at 75 Marth Street were used roughly 25 times each day, while the unit at Air Canada Park was only used 2 or 3 times a day. As well, during the period the count was completed, Winnipeg was experiencing a cold snap with average temperatures below -35. The count was completed at this time to align with the reporting timelines of the FCM. Moving into the spring and summer of 2021, the point and time count was not repeated; however, based on the required cleaning of the washrooms, each unit was used significantly more, and if a unit was underutilized, it was relocated.

Permanent Washroom Project

Led by the Municipal Accommodations Division, in the Department of Assets and Project Management, work on the permanent public washroom began immediately following the July 10, 2020 Council decision. A Site Selection Evaluation Committee was formed to begin the process of selecting a site, who established a set of selection criteria. A site selection geographical assessment was completed that included a property inventory consultation and analysis, leading to site short-listing, and tours of possible locations. Following this, the sites were scored and evaluated and a Procurement Strategy Assessment was developed.

Consultations with community stakeholders, including the Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development Inc., Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, Thunderbird House, EHW, and Astum Api Niikinaahk identifying a preferred location at Henry Street and Main Street were also completed. Through this process, 715 Main Street was selected as the recommended site for the permanent public washroom. A draft Lease Agreement with Terms and Conditions was then

completed and reviewed by Legal Services in conjunction with the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg for the use of the land at 715 Henry Street.

In December 2020, Bridgman Collaborative Architecture was approved as the Consultant to design the new permanent public washroom facility. On March 24, 2021, the tender closed with 7 bids received. The lowest responsive bid, in the amount of $634,778, was submitted by U Build Inc. On March 31, 2021, the Public Service reviewed the project scope of work with U Build Inc. and determined they had the resources and expertise to complete the requirement of the tender.

On May 11, 2021, the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development, Heritage and Downtown Development (SPC-PDHDD) approved the increase of the project budget from $633,087 to $818,087 through the realignment of existing, Council-approved capital program budgets. The Chief Administrative Officer was authorized to enter into, execute, deliver and award a contract to U Build Inc. for the construction of the new public washroom at 715 Main Street. On June 1 2021 the City awarded the contract in the amount of $634,778 to U Build Inc. Due to prevailing construction market conditions, consultant services, and project administration expenses (e.g. financing charges, overhead and administrative fees, etc.) the total estimated project budget increased to $874,289.

In response to the added budget cost, in September 2021 EPC concurred with the motion of SPC-PDHDD to accept a grant from the Circle of Life Thunderbird House Whaka Pimadiziiwii Pinaysiiwigamic Inc. in the amount of $241,202, funded by the Community Foundations of Canada on behalf of the Government of Canada for the purpose of the City completing the public washroom facilities. This grant allowed for the City to carry out all construction of the project as planned. It is important to note that the scope of the project would need to have been amended to meet the public budget without this generous grant from Thunderbird House.

Following the above work, pre-construction planning was completed and construction began at the site in the summer of 2021. At this time, total completion of the washrooms is expected by the end of December 2021.

Throughout the construction process, regular meetings were held with stakeholders including, but not limited to; Thunderbird House, Main Street Project, The Down Town Biz, The Salvation Army, Bridgman Collaborative, and the Downtown Community Safety Partnership.

As outlined in the attached renderings (Attachment 1), the facility features two exterior urinals, one universal toilet stall and three additional toilet stalls. The common sink area features pedestal sinks, drinking fountains and feet wash stations. There is an office for potential washroom staff and a storage space for supplies. The space has been designed to be safe, secure, easy to clean and meets the City of Winnipeg Accessibility Design Standards. The main level features glazing on the overhead doors and ample lighting for maximum visibility. All glazing is thick tempered glass which is difficult to break. The overhead doors can be opened in the warmer months for fresh air. The second level houses all the mechanical and electrical equipment. The main floor slab has in-floor heat that is also combined with forced-air heating.

Based on lessons learned from previous public washroom pilot projects in 2018 and 2019, as well as the first 16 months of the temporary washroom project, the Public Service identified that it is critical to have staffing personnel, or some type of supervisory capacity, at the washroom facility. Operations will need to have two components: building operations (i.e. cleaning, utilities, and maintenance) and program operations.

In addition to work related to the physical construction of the washroom facility, in the fall of 2021 the Public Service, through the Community Development Division, initiated a series of engagements with a group of stakeholders to discuss the program operations of the washroom facility. During the engagement, the City met with representation from Main Street Project, Salvation Army, the Downtown Biz, Bridgman Collaborative, Siloam Mission, Thunderbird House, EHW, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, Street Connections, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc. and the Downtown Community Safety Partnership. The engagement included two meetings and a questionnaire to solicit specifics about program planning. Through this process, it was identified that:

- The washroom facilities should utilize a harm reduction approach.
- A minimum of two staff are required to be present at the washroom facility at all times.
- The role of the staff would be to support individuals accessing the washroom area, refer individuals to nearby supports and services, and provide oversite of the facilities including monitoring the safety of individuals using the site and the facility itself.
- The staff would be required to have a background in peer support or social work, with experience in models of harm reduction, de-escalation, conflict resolution, anti-oppression, Indigenous cultural awareness, and cultural safety.
- The staff would be hired and supervised by a community-based agency, but funding for the staff would be provided by the Municipality or other funding body.
- It was identified that ideally the washrooms should operate on a 24/7 basis, with staffing on site at all times.

- If the model was to run on a 12-hour basis, operational hours should complement the operational hours of nearby shelters, and some form of security should be provided when not open.

- If the washroom is to operate on a 12-hour model, traditional security was not supported as a model to supervise the site while not operational.

Based on the above feedback, and additional concerns raised through the engagement process, staffing is critical to the success, sustainability and safety of the users and for the washroom building going forward. An unsupervised site will pose safety concerns for community members, and particularly women, girls, transgender and non-binary individuals, and greatly increase the risk of damage and vandalism to the facility and infrastructure.

Current State and Ongoing Costs

As of the writing of this report, both projects are nearing completion. The contract with Gotta Go for the temporary washrooms will end on December 31, 2021. At that time, the washrooms will be removed from service. These washrooms were originally installed in response to the COVID19 pandemic and the immediate need to provide increased access to washroom facilities for those experiencing homelessness. It is anticipated that the ongoing cost to maintain these washrooms beyond 2021 is $40,000 annually.

As identified above, the construction of permanent public washrooms is expected to be completed by the end of December 2021. The total operating cost for the permanent public washrooms can be broken down into two components. This includes the facility operating costs, and the operational programming costs. The facility operating costs include all of the hard-operational costs such as water and energy use, as well as maintenance, and cleaning. The estimated annual cost for facility operations is $54,280.

The operational programming costs include those costs associated with the staffing requirements noted in the previous section. Based on an assessment of the average hourly wage for peer support workers both nationally and locally, an estimated cost of $23 dollars an hour was identified. This cost would incorporate considerations for administrative fees as well as increased rates during evenings, weekends, and holidays. Utilizing a 24/7 model of service, the above estimated hourly wage for staffing, and the requirement for two staff, the annual cost for operational programming for the permanent washrooms would be $402,960, increasing by inflation annually. If a 12-hour model was utilized, this cost would decrease to $201,480, increasing by annual inflation. If supported, funding for the operational programming would be provided as a grant to a community-based organization.

The combined annual cost, inclusive of building operations and programming for a 24-hour-a-day model is estimated at $457,240. The combined annual cost of a 12-hour-a-day model is estimated at $255,760. Each model would need to be increased by annual inflation.

When Council approved the construction of the permanent washroom in June 2020, the operational model and costs were unknown and this was identified at that time. The Public

Service has, and is continuing, to explore partnerships and other grant funding opportunities, but to date none have materialized. As the planned opening date for the washroom is in January 2022, it is the recommendation of the Public Service that should funds become available through the 2022 and 2023 Operating Budget, Council approve delegated authority to the CAO to enter into a sole source grant agreement with an agency or agencies selected by the Public Service to provide the operational programming services at the washroom. Doing so would enable the washrooms to be operationalized rapidly, and align with the planned opening date of the facility.

Summary Discussion

The onset of the global COVID19 Pandemic in March of 2020 necessitated the closure of many public and private buildings during the first year of the pandemic. These closures were in response to provincial public health orders intended to keep Manitobans safe, and limit the spread of the COVID19 virus. The closure of these spaces however also meant that for Winnipeggers experiencing homelessness, traditional spaces that were available to find shelter and use the washroom were no longer accessible. In this way, the pandemic simultaneously increased the challenges of unsheltered homelessness while also bringing the issue of homelessness to increased public attention and visibility.

The development of the temporary and permanent public washroom projects was in direct response to this issue, and the need to provide a basic level of washroom access and dignity to all residents. The temporary washrooms have demonstrated a significant need in the community for enhanced access to public washrooms. Moving forward, and as of January 1, 2022, the permanent public washrooms will tentatively be ready to open from a physical infrastructure perspective. The allocation of the operational and programming funding noted above is critical to ensure the success, sustainability and safety of the permeant washroom facility. If achieved, the washrooms will not only be a much-needed civic facility, but also a focal point from which new and existing partnerships can be developed in the area, creating a more welcoming and safer City for all Winnipeggers.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement **Date:** November 25, 2021

Project Name:

Funding for Vulnerable Populations in Response to Covid-19: Public Washroom Access

COMMENTS:

There are no implications resulting from the recommendations of this report. The City will enter into a sole source grant agreement for the provision of Peer Support Services at the planned Permanent Washroom only if funds become available through the 2022 and 2023 budget process.

Original signed by K. Lemoine
Kelly Lemoine, CPA, CA
Manager, Finance and Administrative Services
Community Services Department

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

- Assets and Project Management

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

- Theme 3-1 - Opportunity:
    - Direction 3: Work with community partners to foster an inclusive and equitable community.
    - Direction 4: Work within municipal service areas as a collaborator on poverty reduction.

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

N/A

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Community Services
Division: Community Development
Prepared by: Chris Brens, Denae Penner, Leslie Richards
Date: 2021-11-25
File No: CMS-2021-15

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Permanent Washroom Renderings

Attachment 2: Draft Program Operations Terms and Conditions