Minutes – Executive Policy Committee – March 13, 2023

REPORTS

Item No. 20 Report on the Status of Downtown Public Washroom Initiatives

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and recommended to Council:

1. That the Public Service be directed to prepare text amendments for the Winnipeg Zoning By-law No. 200/2006 and the Downtown Winnipeg Zoning No. 100/2004 to facilitate the development of new public washroom facilities, as set out in Attachment 1.

2. That the Public Service be directed to renew efforts within Tiers 1 and 2 of the Places to Go Framework, and report back on this matter in March 2024.

3. That, subject to Council approval of the 2023 Operating Budget, the number of temporary washrooms provided by the City of Winnipeg in areas of identified need be reduced from six units to three units, and that the residual funds (estimated $20,000), be provided to Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre to increase the 2023 grant from $200,000 to $220,000 for peer support services at the permanent public washroom facility, Amoowigamig (715 Main Street), through an amendment to the current grant agreement.

4. That the funding necessary to expand the provision of peer support services at Amoowigamig from 10 hours per day to 24 hours per day, estimated at a minimum of $650,000 per year, be referred to the 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget Process.

5. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to maintain a sole source agreement with Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre for the provision of peer support services at Amoowigamig, and to engage Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre in exploring options to reduce the cost of on-site services, particularly between 6pm and 6am.

6. That the Public Service be authorized to explore a shared funding model with the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority for the continued provision of Peer Supports at Amoowigamig.

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

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE DECISION:

Further, the Executive Policy Committee referred the additional $18,000 required to maintain 10 hour per day operations at Amoowigamig (715 Main Street) for 2023 to the 2023 budget review process.

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Orlikow,

That the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service be concurred in.

Yea:	Gillingham, Browaty, Lukes, Mayes, Orlikow	5
Nay:	Rollins	1

Carried

Moved by Councillor Orlikow,

That the additional $18,000 required to maintain 10 hour per day operations at Amoowigamig (715 Main Street) for 2023 be referred to the 2023 budget review process."

Yea:	Gillingham, Browaty, Lukes, Mayes, Orlikow	5
Nay:	Rollins	1

Carried

The following persons submitted communications with respect to the matter:

- Rachel Laurendeau
- Deborah Zanke
- Eric Rae
- James Jones
- Margaret Kampff
- Bob Plamondon
- Jake Matheson
- Sierra W

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Report on the Status of Downtown Public Washroom Initiatives

Critical Path: Executive Policy Committee – Council

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
T. Knowles Yarnell	C. Fernandes	L. Pablo, acting for C. Kloepfer	M.Jack

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On July 23, 2020, Council concurred with the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks (SPC-CS), directing the Public Service to implement the 'Places to Go' Framework (Public Restroom Strategy).

On July 23, 2020, Council concurred with SPC-CS's recommendation to support the allocation of $670,000, gifted to the City of Winnipeg 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 facility closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A thorough update on the 'Places to Go' Framework and Temporary and Permanent Washrooms is provided in a separate report to the SPC-CS. This report is intended to recommend next steps for all ongoing public washroom initiatives for Council's consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Public Service be directed to prepare text amendments for the Winnipeg Zoning By-law No. 200/2006 and the Downtown Winnipeg Zoning No. 100/2004 to facilitate the development of new public washroom facilities, as set out in Attachment 1.

2. That the Public Service be directed to renew efforts within Tiers 1 and 2 of the Places to Go Framework, and report back on this matter in March 2024.

3. That, subject to Council approval of the 2023 Operating Budget, the number of temporary washrooms provided by the City of Winnipeg in areas of identified need be reduced from six units to three units, and that the residual funds (estimated $20,000), be provided to Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre to increase the 2023 grant from $200,000 to $220,000 for peer support services at the permanent public washroom facility, Amoowigamig (715 Main Street), through an amendment to the current grant agreement.

4. That the funding necessary to expand the provision of peer support services at Amoowigamig from 10 hours per day to 24 hours per day, estimated at a minimum of $650,000 per year, be referred to the 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget Process.

5. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to maintain a sole source agreement with Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre for the provision of peer support services at Amoowigamig, and to engage Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre in exploring options to reduce the cost of on-site services, particularly between 6pm and 6am.

6. That the Public Service be authorized to explore a shared funding model with the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority for the continued provision of Peer Supports at Amoowigamig.

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

REASON FOR THE REPORT

Council approval is required to re-direct 2023 Operating Budget funding from operating expenditures to Grants.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications as a result of the Recommendations of this report.

Recommendation 3 seeks to reduce the number of temporary washroom units based on usage rates, and provide the remaining funds in 2023 to Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre for peer support services at Amoowigamig (715 Main Street).

Recommendation 4 outlines financial implications which are to be referred to the 2024 – 2027 Multi-Year Budget Process in order to continue and expand peer support services at Amoowigamig. Additional mill rate support of $650,000 annually will be required in 2024 and each year beyond.

Depending on the timing of Council approval of the 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget, there is a potential for a gap in service in early 2024 for peer support services at Amoowigamig (715 Main Street). If funding for peer support services is not provided in early January 2024, this permanent public washroom would need to close, as operating unsupervised is not advised.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

This report includes a summary of the history and status of the Places to Go Framework and recommended next steps. A thorough update on the ‘Places to Go’ Framework and Temporary and Permanent Washrooms is provided in a separate report to the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services (SPC-CS).

The 'Places to Go' Framework (Public Restroom Strategy)
On July 23, 2020, Council approved the "Places to Go" – Downtown Public Restroom Strategy report. Taking into consideration the various difficulties that previous programs have encountered, the Places to Go Framework included three tiers:

- Tier 1: Advertiser-funded public washrooms.
- Tier 2: Public-Private Partnerships with local businesses and BIZs.
- Tier 3: Removing red tape for private businesses to install their own temporary public washroom facilities.

The COVID-19 pandemic's social and economic impact has been particularly severe for the residents and businesses of Winnipeg's inner-city. Many pre-pandemic conditions that informed the three-tier framework of 'Places to Go' have diminished and are only beginning to reemerge after two unexpected years of lockdown, illness and physical distancing. Areas of high need have shifted, and locations that had been previously identified as well suited to the introduction of new washrooms, are in some cases no longer suitable. As a result, progress on Tier 1 and Tier 2 has been minimal.

With pre-pandemic conditions returning to downtown, the Public Service will renew efforts within Tier 1 and Tier 2 over the coming year, as described in Recommendation 2.

Regarding Tier 3 of the Places to Go Framework, the Planning, Property and Development Department has undertaken preliminary review of barriers within City By-laws, processes or procedures that may inhibit establishment of new public washroom facilities and implementation of the Places to Go Framework. A summary of the analysis to date is included as Attachment 1.

The Public Service will continue to explore possible solutions to identified regulatory and procedural barriers, and will work to implement recommended zoning amendments and process improvements as described in Recommendation 1.

The Temporary and Permanent Public Washroom Projects

On June 1, 2020, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), on behalf of the Canadian Medical Association Foundation (CMAF), awarded the City of Winnipeg $670,000 in one-time funding to provide COVID19 related support to vulnerable populations. On July 23, 2020, Council allocated this funding to support vulnerable populations impacted by the COVID19 pandemic by increasing access to public washroom facilities.

The Public Service led and supported the delivery of two distinct projects related to the above Council direction:

- The rental, placement, and management of temporary washrooms.
- The development, construction, and operation of permanent washrooms.

Temporary washroom units have been located at the following sites (not concurrently), and monitored by corresponding sponsor agencies:

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 Avenue	Bear Clan	1 unit

St John's Park	City of Winnipeg	1 unit
44 Higgins Avenue	Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata	1 unit
185 Young Street	Broadway Neighbourhood Centre	1 unit
685 Maryland Street	Spence Neighbourhood Assn	1 unit
Main at Higgins NE corner	City of Winnipeg	1 unit

Over the past two years, the temporary washroom project has evolved in response to frequently changing conditions and the realities of each site. Washroom units have been removed frequently from incompatible sites, often in response to limited usage or 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. Frequent complaints were received, including 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. City staff worked with the vendor and sponsor agencies to identify ways to address some of these challenges, including the relocation and removal of units when necessary.

Efforts were also made to assess the daily usage of each unit. In late 2020, a point-in-time count was undertaken, illustrating usage ranging from three visits per day in some locations to over 25 in others.

Through 2021 and 2022, evaluation of each unit was based both on the extent of the vendor's cleaning efforts and on corresponding sponsor agency's assessment of usage and overall impact. If a unit was underutilized, it was relocated. At the time of writing this report, there are units at four sites. The two remaining units were removed from previous sites and efforts are underway to locate sponsor agencies at two proposed sites.

There have been mixed results with the portable washrooms. Sponsor agencies have noted the benefits of providing a dignified option for Winnipeggers to use the restroom but negative outcomes listed above as well as the additional administrative cost for the City (associated with fielding complaints, sourcing new locations that include sponsor agencies, and executing legal contracts for those placed on private lands) also weigh against positive outcomes, particularly at sites with modest usage.

As it is anticipated that the ongoing cost to maintain these washrooms beyond 2022 is $40,000 annually, the Public Service recommends reducing the number of temporary units in circulation from six to three, retaining two of the units at sites with strong, ongoing usage levels, and placing the third unit in 'pop-up' locations to meet seasonal and situational shifts in demand (Recommendation 3). Proposed budgetary savings from this project, estimated at $20,000 for 2023, could be utilized to support what have been much stronger outcomes at the new permanent public washroom facility.

Permanent Public Washroom (Amoowigamig, 715 Main Street):

Work on the permanent public washroom began in July 2020 and, after thorough consultation, 715 Main Street was selected as the recommended site for the permanent public washroom.

On May 11, 2021, the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development, Heritage and Downtown Development (SPC-PD) approved an increase of the project budget from $633,087 to $818,087 through the realignment of existing, Council-approved capital program budgets. On

June 1, 2021, the City awarded a construction contract in the amount of $634,778 for the project to U Build Inc.

On September 29, 2021, Council approved the acceptance of a grant in the amount of $241,202 from the Circle of Life Thunderbird House Whaka Pimadiziiwii Pinaysiiwigamic Inc. for the purpose of the City completing the public washroom facilities; this grant revised the total capital project cost to $874,489.

Construction began at the site in the summer of 2021 and was completed in April 2022. Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre was contracted to provide on-site peer support programming, and the facility opened to the public on June 3, 2022. The facility was given the name Amoowigamig, the Ojibwe word for 'public washroom,' by leadership at Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre.
In the fall of 2021, the Public Service initiated a series of engagements with a group of stakeholders to discuss the program operations of the washroom facility. Based on feedback received, on-site staffing was recognized as critical to the project's success and the overall safety of facility users and the building itself. An unsupervised site would 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.

In April of 2022, the City of Winnipeg entered into a contract with Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, to provide Peer Support services at Amoowigamig.

Facility Operations Costs

The preliminary estimated annual cost for facility operations was $54,280. This cost aligned with the proposed 24-hour, seven-day per week, operational programming model. With the facility running only 10 hours per day, seven days per week but with higher volumes of usage than anticipated, actual cost for facility completion and operations in 2022 was $74,044. As with any new facility, adjustments were made over the first few months of usage, including: improvements to air circulation, adding on-site communications infrastructure (Wi-Fi, fax-line), increasing frequency of solid waste pick-up, purchase of office supplies (cork board, pamphlet holders), and installation of industrial-quality air fresheners. Municipal Accommodations reports that roughly $29,000 in technical expenses that were incurred in 2022 are associated with problem-solving and completion of the new facility and unlikely to repeat moving forward. An annual budget of $50,000 for facility maintenance has been included in the City of Winnipeg's Multi-Year Budget moving forward and it is anticipated that this amount is a realistic and accurate projection of this cost for 2023 and beyond.

Peer Support Services Costs

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre projects that the cost to provide on-site peer support programming 24 hours per day, seven day per week is approximately $650,000 annually. This amount is higher than the annual baseline initially identified by the Public Service, which did not account sufficiently for a full complement of support staff, administration, and additional costs associated with staff turnover in a high-trauma work environment. Provision of on-site peer supports for the current schedule of ten-hour days requires approximately $270,000 annually, and likewise, a 16-hour model could be offered for $432,000.

The Public Service and its partners have explored the potential of accessing external grants to support onsite services but this has not been fruitful to date. With a Council-approved budget of $200,000 annually for both 2022 and 2023, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre has been operating

Amoowigamig for 10 hours per day, seven days per week since June 3, 2022. As a result of City funds not covering the full cost of current operations, facility hours will be reduced on May 16, 2023, from 10 hours per day to 8 hours per day. This scheduling was mutually agreed upon and forms part of the current grant agreement, which ends on December 31, 2023. To maintain 10 hours of service until December 31, an incremental grant of $38,000 is required.

By all accounts, the delivery of washroom services with on-site peer supports has been a tremendous success at Amoowigamig. Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre has reported monthly visitor counts that range between just over 3,000 in the first month of operations to as high as 5,000 in the summer months, falling only slightly through November and December as colder temperatures set in. Reports from neighbouring organizations have highlighted the positive impact of Amoowigamig, with particular emphasis on Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre as an asset to ongoing success.

In addition to water and toilet access, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre reports that a significant quantity of harm reduction supplies has been exchanged on-site. Thousands of clean needles, pipes, feminine products, and condoms have been distributed by peer support staff, and Narcan has been successfully administered seven times to reverse the effects of opioid poisoning and prevent death. The site has also been fitted with sharps receptacles, and many individuals have begun to utilize Amoowigamig as a drop zone for a steady volume of used needles.

Amoowigamig has quickly become a destination and a community hub for the residents and visitors of this neighbourhood, the majority of whom are Indigenous, and many unsheltered. The level of social, economic and health struggle, and personal trauma among this population is significant, and it is difficult to overstate the value of Amoowigamig and Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre's on-site support, referrals, and cultural connection. Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre reports that staff routinely and successfully assist visitors in accessing Employment and Income Assistance, Legal Aid, finding a family doctor, navigating challenges with Child and Family Services, and securing shelter openings.

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre brings additional value to this partnership through its numerous adjacent programs and initiatives, including providing Amoowigamig visitors with access to clothing donations, hygiene donations, and winter clothing donations, and more significantly rapid housing supports and low barrier housing access through Wi Che Win and Niikinaahk. This element of service provision is responsible for hundreds of the reported monthly visits and all notable social, health, and economic outcomes since the facility's opening in June of 2022.

Amoowigamig staff bring many years of lived experience and specialized training, and they have become known and respected by visitors. This level of trust and community connection has translated to several additional outcomes:

- There has been only one incident of vandalism at the site, occurring within the facility's first month of operation. Peer Support management attributes this to community members recognizing the facility as their own and self-policing disrespectful or harmful behaviour.

- Staff report several interactions with community members who have provided critical information about the existence and whereabouts of firearms. These interactions have led to illicit weapons being apprehended by the Winnipeg Police Service.

- Numerous community members, who for personal or systemic reasons, will not report criminal activity to police, have approached Amoowigamig staff for support and service referrals. Several of these interactions have led to positive and meaningful interactions with WPS members.

- Peer support staff have personally secured housing for 30 previously unsheltered individuals since the project's launch.

The partnership between Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre and the City of Winnipeg at Amoowigamig has been an opportunity to explore a service model that is unique to Winnipeg and has the potential to be studied and replicated in jurisdictions across Canada and elsewhere. Sincere collaboration with Indigenous community members, particularly those with lived and living experience, has gifted this project a relevance, effectiveness and legitimacy within a community that has been historically excluded while often being impacted most directly by policies and programming of this kind.

Continued partnership with Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre and allocation of the operational and programming funding noted above is critical to ensure the success, sustainability and safety of the permanent washroom facility. It is the recommendation of the Public Service that the 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget Process support Amoowigamig increasing to a 24/7 model of service, commencing in 2024, at a total annual operating cost of $650,000 (Recommendation 4). Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre has been a critical component of the site's credibility and impact among residents with significant barriers; its approach and spectrum of services are not easily replicated, and a change in on-site service provider risks derailing the stability and positive momentum of hundreds of residents who have come to trust and rely on Amoowigamig's peer supports. The Public Service recommends that the City maintain a sole source agreement with Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre for the provision of peer support services after December 31, 2023, and that Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre be engaged to explore options for reducing the cost of on-site services, particularly overnight and at other times when this robust peer support model may not be as readily accessed (Recommendation 5).

The existing $200,000 annual budget will necessitate the facility's hours of operation falling from 10 hours per day to 8 hours per day, commencing May 16, 2023; and without ongoing funding, peer support services at the washroom will end entirely on December 31, 2023. Continuing operation of Amoowigamig beyond December 2023 without onsite staffing is not recommended, as it is anticipated that doing so poses inevitable safety risks for the public and for the facility itself.

As many of Amoowigamig's most significant outcomes relate directly to the physical and mental health of vulnerable populations, it is also the recommendation of the Public Service that the Chief Administrative Officer be authorized to explore a shared funding model with the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority for the continued provision of Peer Supports at Amoowigamig (Recommendation 6).

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement

Date: March 3, 2023

Project Name:

First Year of Program **2023**

Report on the Status of Downtown Public Washroom Initiatives

	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Capital					
Capital Expenditures Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Existing Budgeted Costs	-	-	-	-	-
Additional Capital Budget Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Funding Sources:					
Debt - Internal	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Debt - External	-	-	-	-	-
Grants (Enter Description Here)	-	-	-	-	-
Reserves, Equity, Surplus	-	-	-	-	-
Other - Enter Description Here	-	-	-	-	-
Total Funding	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Total Additional Capital Budget Required	$ -				
Total Additional Debt Required	$ -				
Current Expenditures/Revenues					
Direct Costs	$ 20,000	$ 650,000	$ 663,000	$ 676,000	$ 690,000
Less: Incremental Revenue/Recovery	-	-	-	-	-
Net Cost/(Benefit)	$ 20,000	$ 650,000	$ 663,000	$ 676,000	$ 690,000
Less: Existing Budget Amounts	20,000	-	-	-	-
Net Budget Adjustment Required	$ -	$ 650,000	$ 663,000	$ 676,000	$ 690,000

Additional Comments:

1) In 2023, there are no financial implications as direct costs for the $20,000 increase in grant funding provided to Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre for peer support services at the permanent public washroom facility Ammowigamig located at 715 Main Street is offset by savings as a result of reducing the number temporary washrooms from six to three units (recommendation 3).

2) In years 2024 onwards, the funding requirements to continue and expand the provision of peer support services at Amoowigamig from 10 hours per day to 24 hours per day, estimated at a minimum of $650,000 in 2024 (increasing incrementally each year) be referred to the 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget Process (recommendation 4).

Ozzy Garrett CPA, CGA - Feb 28 , 2023

Ozzy Garrett CPA, CGA
Acting Manager of Finance
Community Services Department

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

- Planning, Property and Development
- Assets and Project Management Department
- Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

Leadership and Good Governance

Objective 3: Achieve community-responsive service delivery through an aligned, integrated, collaborative and results-oriented organizational culture.

Good Health and Well-being

Objective 1: Enable access to basic needs for good physical and mental health.
Objective 2: Support positive health outcomes through the built and natural environments.
Objective 3: Proactively identify and address threats to community safety and well-being.

Social Equity

Objective 1: Uphold human rights so that no one is left behind.

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

N/A

WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

The information and recommendations presented in this report align with and advance the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy (2021 – 2031) as follows:

They embody the following **Guiding Principles**:

- We will Uphold Human Rights
- We will Honour Relationships and Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples
- We will Address Systemic Oppression, Trauma and Social Inequity
- We will Promote and Maintain the Welfare of All Residents
- We will Develop Trust and Meaningful Partnerships to find solutions and drive change.

They align with the following **Goals and Objectives**:

Goal 4: Community Well-Being Supports for those in Greatest Need are Increased

Related 10-year Objectives:

A. The immediate needs of residents experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness are met through collaboration with community partners and other levels of government.

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Community Services Department
Division: Community Development
Prepared by: Greg MacPherson
Date: March 3, 2023
File No: CMS-2023-10

Attachments:

1. Summary of Regulatory Barriers to New Public Washrooms and Possible Solutions for Further Review