Minute No. 541
Report – Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – May 31, 2023

Item No. 5 Options for Staffing at the City of Winnipeg's Stand-alone Public Washroom and Community Resource Hub

COUNCIL DECISION:

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

1. That this report be received as information.

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – May 31, 2023

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Orlikow,

That the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services be adopted by consent.

Carried

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On June 12, 2023, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services and submitted the matter to Council.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On May 31, 2023, the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

Lanna Many Grey Horses, Program Support Manager, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, submitted a communication in support of the matter.

COUNCIL DECISION:

On March 22, 2023, Council adopted the recommendation of the Executive Policy Committee, which included the following:

1. That the following recommendations with respect to the 2023 Preliminary Operating Budget be approved by Council:

    CC. That regarding the public washroom called Amoowigamig (715 Main Street):

        ii. The Public Service report back on increasing hours, including to 24/7 operation, including types of services to be provided, by whom and investment for each option within 90 days.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Options for Staffing at the City of Winnipeg's Stand-alone Public Washroom and Community Resource Hub

Critical Path: Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – 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

At its March 22, 2023 meeting, Council reviewed a report on the City of Winnipeg's stand-alone public washroom, known as Amoowigamig (715 Main Street). Council directed the Public Service to report back within 90 days on options for increasing hours, including to 24/7 operation, and including types of services to be provided, by whom and investment for each option.

This report offers a brief history of the Amoowigamig project, an overview of several programming options for it, with corresponding costs, risks, and other key considerations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That this report be received as information.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

At its March 22, 2023 meeting, Council directed the Public Service to report back within 90 days on options for increasing hours at the public washroom called Amoowigamig (715 Main Street), including to 24/7 operation, and including types of services to be provided, by whom and investment for each option.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

At its March 23, 2023 meeting, Council concurred in the recommendation of the Executive Policy Committee 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. As this report provides

additional options for staffing at Amoowigamig, including several with daily scheduling below 24 hours and corresponding annual budgets below $650,000, Council's decision on this matter may trigger an amendment to the amount of funding being referred to the 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget Process.

Depending on the timing of Council approval of the 2024 - 2027 Multi-Year Budget, there is potential in early 2024 for a gap in peer support services at Amoowigamig. If funding for peer support services is not confirmed before January 2024, this permanent public washroom and community resource hub will need to close. Operating without on-site staff is not advised due to significant safety risks to both the public and the facility.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

In 2020, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) on behalf of the Canadian Medical Association Foundation (CMAF) awarded the City of Winnipeg (the City) a one-time grant of $670,000 to provide COVID-19 related support to vulnerable populations. Utilizing $634,778 of this funding and with an additional grant of $241,202 from Circle of Life Thunderbird House Whaka Pimadiziiwii Pinaysiiwigamic Inc. (Thunderbird House), funded by the Community Foundations of Canada, the City initiated the development of a stand-alone public washroom facility to be located at 715 Main Street, adjacent to Thunderbird House.

Critical Component - On-site Facility Staffing

In preparation for launching the stand-alone public washroom initiative, the Public Service initiated a series of engagements in the fall of 2021 with stakeholders of the neighbourhood surrounding Thunderbird House. Understanding the unique circumstances, barriers, and dynamics of this community, these engagements sought advice for how best to program operations of the new washroom facility, then under construction at 715 Main Street. Based on feedback received, on-site staffing was highlighted 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.

Sole Source Agreement

At the December 16, 2021, meeting of Council, the Chief Administrative Officer was granted authority to enter into a sole source grant agreement with an agency or agencies selected by the Public Service, to provide on-site staffing of the planned permanent washroom. As facility construction moved toward completion, the Public Service was permitted to forgo engaging in a lengthy competitive bidding process, relying instead on the ongoing consultation process mentioned above to identify a qualified and appropriate community agency for this work.

Recognizing that the majority of area residents and those projected to visit the washroom facility would be Indigenous, noting proximity to Thunderbird House (a community and cultural hub for Indigenous people) the Public Service sought partnership with an Indigenous organization, one

with capacity to undertake this work, to hire staff and launch in short order, and to bring meaningful cultural presence to operations at the new facility.

Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc.

In April of 2022, the City of Winnipeg entered into a contract with Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc., to provide on-site services at the washroom for 2022 and 2023. Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc.'s capacity and professional reputation, its existing office space at Thunderbird House and its ongoing commitment to the development of Astum Api Niikinaahk (transitional housing units being built next to Thunderbird House) brought significant weight to this selection.

The facility, given the name Amoowigamig, the Ojibwe word for 'public washroom,' by leadership at Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc., was opened to the public on June 3, 2022. Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc.'s on-site programming model features two community members with lived experience providing support as 'peers' to the facility's target population, with hours of operation from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. seven days per week.

Pilot Phase: 2022 and 2023

By all accounts, delivery of washroom services with on-site peer supports has been a remarkable success, with Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc. reporting 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. At the time of writing, it is estimated that Amoowigamig has been visited approximately 30,000 times.

In addition to water and toilet access, Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc. 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 eight 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 become a destination and a community resource 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 Inc.'s on-site support, referrals, and cultural connection. Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc. 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, securing shelter openings, and in over 30 instances, permanent housing.

Further detail of Amoowigamig's history, output and achievements to date can be found in the March 13, 2023, report to the Executive Policy Committee on the Status of Downtown Public Washroom Initiatives. The 2023 funding for this program is $250,000.

Facility maintenance service is provided by the Public Service's Municipal Accommodations Division with an annual maintenance operating budget of $50,000 which began in 2022.

Phase Two - 2024 and Beyond

The annual requirements for facility maintenance will be reviewed by the Public Service with any required increase to the maintenance budget referred to the 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget process in accordance with the City's Multi-Year Budget Policy. The grant agreement for on-site peer support expires on December 31, 2023, and this cost has not yet been accounted for moving forward.

The following section provides an overview of several programming options for Amoowigamig, with corresponding costs, risks, and other key considerations.

Option One - Retain Current Model with 10 Hours Per Day Support

Provision of on-site peer support for the current schedule of ten-hour days costs $270,500 annually. This model, delivered by Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc. features a full-time coordinator and a crew of peer support workers that ensures two workers are in attendance at all times during hours of operation from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., seven days per week. Also included are administrative costs such as hiring, training, accounting, insurance and overall management as well as costs associated with programming such as cellphones, computers, a fax machine, etc. Staff, all of whom are employed by Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc., are paid between $21 and $25 per hour, and receive a modest benefits package.

In April 2023, the Public Service engaged partner organizations from the community around Amoowigamig in a review and evaluation of the facility's impact during its first 10 months of operations. Speaking anonymously, all partners pointed to Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc. as a key factor, attributing much of the facility's stability and success to the presence of the organization and its peer support model. This engagement also captured strong sentiment that Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc. should be retained as the facility's attending service provider, with all respondents expressing confidence in Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc. specifically and noting that extended hours of peer support service should be a goal moving forward.

Strengths of Option One:

- While the peer support model provides a foundation of security, with two attendants present during hours of operation this model adds several layers of complimentary services that distinguishes it from a basic attendant model. Most notably, peer support workers bring many years of lived experience and specialized training, they provide on-site advocacy, systems navigation, access to Indigenous ceremony, and improved access to key services (income, health, family supports, etc).
- The positive impacts and functionality of this model have been demonstrated during the pilot phase.
- This model has been tailored to meet the needs of this specific community, delivering positive outcomes that extend well beyond what might be expected from a simple washroom facility.

- Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc. is well established and has capacity to support this project long term, bringing several layers of added value to the project, the facility, and the neighbourhood.
- Costs are reasonable given the range and strength of health, social, and economic outcomes being generated on-site.
- Daytime hours of operation have lower staffing costs than evening and night time shifts, as well as reduced risk of violence and other dangers associated with delivery of overnight services.

Drawbacks of Option One:

- There is a demonstrated need for this facility beyond current hours of operation. 10 hours per day falls short of achieving the City's original goal for the facility of being open and accessible 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
- The price of Amoowigamig and its services, tailored to this specific community, will be difficult to replicate in other locations.

Option Two - Retain Current Model and Expand to 12, 16, or 24 hours per day

The following table illustrates the differences in staffing and costs associated with providing the Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc. peer support model at Amoowigamig for 10, 12, 16, and 24 hours per day:

HOURS PER DAY	STAFFING	ADDITIONAL COSTS	ANNUAL BUDGET
10 hrs x 7days/week *(current model)*	2 staff x 40hrs/week 3 staff x 30hrs/week Cost - $232,500	$38,000 (includes admin fees, program materials, insurance, etc)	$270,500
12 hrs x 7days/week	3 staff x 40hrs/week 3 staff x 30hrs/week Cost - $279,000	$45,600 (includes admin fees, program materials, insurance, etc)	$324,600
16 hrs x 7days/week	4 staff x 40hrs/week 4 staff x 30hrs/week Cost - $372,000	$60,800 (includes admin fees, program materials, insurance, etc)	$432,800
24 hrs x 7days/week	7 staff x 40hrs/week 6 staff x 32hrs/week Cost - $558,000	$91,200 (includes admin fees, program materials, insurance, etc)	$649,200

Strengths of Option Two:

- Many of the strengths noted for Option One remain for Option Two.
- It is reasonable to assume that many of the outcomes delivered during the facility's day time operation would continue into the evening and possibly overnight.
- Expanded hours of operation bring the project closer to achieving the City's original goal for the facility of being open and accessible 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

- Longer operating hours will expand the visible presence of the facility and increase its impact as a stabilizing factor for a neighbourhood and population with significant challenges.

Drawbacks of Option Two:

- Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc. has expressed concern about the safety of delivering peer support services overnight at Amoowigamig. As this is still a relatively new service with less than a year of the pilot phase complete, Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc. has indicated strong preference to avoid undue risk by keeping the facility closed between 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. This perspective supports immediate expansion of the current model to 12 or 16 hours per day but not to 24/7 until the facility is more firmly established.
- Evening and overnight operations require a shift premium for staff as well as additional training and on-site safety measures.
- High risk that night shifts will see violence and other dangers associated with delivery of overnight services.
- 12 and 16 hours operating hours still fall short of achieving the City's original goal for the facility of being open and accessible 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
- The price of Amoowigamig and its services, tailored to this specific community, will be difficult to replicate in other locations.

Option Three – Shared Model with Peer Support 16 hours per day and Attendant Service Overnight

Anticipating lower facility use between 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., it is worth considering a lower cost model of on-site service during these hours of operation. A private security company or community-based not-for-profit organization are examples of entities that could provide overnight staffing at Amoowigamig, allowing the City to reach its goal of 24-hour operation with modest savings, while retaining or expanding peer supports during the day.

As illustrated in the above table, 16 hours of peer supports, as provided by Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc. would cost $432,800 while 24 hours of this model is roughly $649,200. If a safe, functional service model that works in tandem with Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc. can be identified for less than the additional $216,400 required for expanded peer supports during overnight hours, the City could find cost savings.

Strengths of Option Three:

- Many of the strengths noted for Option One remain for Option Three.
- This model achieves the City's original goal for the facility of being open and accessible 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
- Longer operating hours will expand the visible presence of the facility and increase its impact as a stabilizing factor for a neighbourhood and population with significant challenges.
- Potential cost savings if an overnight service provider can be secured at lower rates.

Drawbacks of Option Three:

- Overnight shifts are generally more expensive to staff, manage and support, with shift premiums and challenges associated with sick-time coverage and nighttime incidents.
- Examples of current security contracts in other City facilities show costs of between $30 and $40 per hour for each security guard. This translates to an annual cost of between $180,000 and $233,000 for two guards working 8 hours per day, seven days per week, with additional costs expected for overnight premiums.
- Amoowigamig is located in a neighbourhood with one of the City's highest rates of violent crime and it is expected that opening the facility overnight will present a range of workplace safety and security concerns. As a small facility with limited sightlines from the inside, it will require additional planning and security measures to ensure the safety of staff and visitors beyond traditional day and evening hours of operation.
- Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc. has expressed concern about the safety of delivering peer support services overnight at Amoowigamig. As this is still a relatively new service with less than a year of the pilot phase complete, Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc. has indicated preference to avoid undue risk by keeping the facility closed between 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.

Option Four – 24/7 Attendant or Security Service

While Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc.'s peer support model has delivered unexpected and remarkable health, social, and community economic outcomes at Amoowigamig, this model may not be easily replicated for public washroom facilities at other locations due to cost and the unique fit between the current service model and this specific community. It is worth examining other less cost and application-intensive options as the City works to improve public washroom access for its citizens.

One possibility could be to replicate the basic 'attendant' model found in public washroom facilities in other major cities. Two attendants present 24 hours per day, seven days per week earning $18 per hour each with 15 percent added for benefits and mandatory employment costs (CPP, EI, etc), five percent added for overnight and weekend shift premiums, and an additional 10 percent administrative fee for the managing organization, would cost a minimum of $420,000 annually.

Strengths of Option Four:

- This model requires the lowest financial investment of all those considered.
- In many potential locations, where risk to staff and safety of the public and facility are not urgent concerns, this model could offer cost-effective and reasonable on-site service for public washroom facilities.

Drawbacks of Option Four:

- This model would not provide the positive social, health, cultural and community economic outcomes associated with Amoowigamig's current peer supports model.
- Feedback from neighbourhing partner organizations points to Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc.'s unique approach as a key reason for the stability of the site and absence of vandalism and violence during its first year in service. Partners note that the social and cultural foundation of the peer support model respects the specific dynamics of this neighbourhood and there would be risk associated with removing this service or replacing it with security guards or lower paid attendants with less training. Specifically,

staff at Amoowigamig note that facility visitors are often living with extreme trauma and personal, social and economic barriers. This presents a high level of added stress and difficulty for staff and for the project's manager, leading to frequent staff turnover and the need for higher wages and added support to retain workers through challenging circumstances. It is expected that a wage higher than the $18 projected above for attendant services will be necessary at Amoowigamig and at future washroom locations in areas with similar risks and vulnerabilities. Higher wages will increase the stability of staffing but the base annual budget will rise in proportion to the pay scale. At $21 for example, the annual cost for staffing would rise to a minimum of $487,350.

Additional Considerations

The partnership between Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc. and the City of Winnipeg at Amoowigamig has been an opportunity to explore a service model that is unique to Winnipeg and has 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.

Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc. 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 have improved the stability and positive momentum of hundreds of residents who have come to trust and rely on Amoowigamig's peer supports.

Noting the risks of overnight service provision at this specific location, and that the facility has only be operating since June of 2022, Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc. has recommended that any expansion of hours of operation be limited to 16 hours per day until 2026. This time frame would allow for a thorough evaluation of onsite services and for Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc. to test and establish adequate night time safety and security protocols.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement **Date:** May 16, 2023

Project Name:

Options for Staffing at the City of Winnipeg's Stand-alone Public Washroom and Community Resource Hub

COMMENTS:

There are no financial implications associated with this report, the report is to be received as information.

Ozzy Garrett CPA, CGA - May 16, 2023
Ozzy Garrett CPA, CGA
Manager of Finance
Community Services Department

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

- Ma Mawi-Wi-Chi-Itata Centre Inc.
- Legal Services

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

Consideration was given as to whether this report connects to the Winnipeg Climate Action Plan (CAP), and it was determined that the CAP is not applicable to this specific report.

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: May 16, 2023
File No: CMS-2023-19