Minutes – Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – March 3, 2026

REPORTS

Item No. 8 Report on "Places to Go" Framework (2025) and Downtown Washroom Initiatives

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Standing Policy Committee on Community Services concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and recommended to Council:

1. That this report be received as information.

Minutes – Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – March 3, 2026

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Durand-Wood,

That Rule 10(3) of The Procedure By-law No. 50/2007 be suspended in order that the following item, which was received less than four business days preceding the committee meeting, be considered by Committee.

Carried

Moved by Councillor Durand-Wood,

That the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service be concurred in and forwarded to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

Carried

COUNCIL DECISION:

On February 26, 2026, Council concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services and adopted the following:

1. That an extension of time of 30 days be granted to report back on the following:

    A. The three-tiered Places to Go Framework Annual Report.

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

On December 18, 2025, Council concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services and adopted the following:

1. That an extension of time of 60 days be granted to report back on the following:

    A. The three-tiered Places to Go Framework Annual Report.

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

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

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.

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: Report on “Places to Go” Framework (2025) and Downtown Washroom Initiatives

Critical Path: Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – Executive Policy Committee – Council

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
G. MacPherson	J. Dunford	N/A	J. Dunford

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On July 23, 2020, Council approved the Places to Go Public Washroom Strategy. This strategy improves access to public washrooms downtown. The Public Service has been providing an update every year, since December 2021.

In the following years, the City introduced related downtown washroom projects including:

- the Amoowigamig public washroom at 715 Main Street; and
- the Portable washroom project (temporary portable toilets in high traffic inner-city locations).

The report shares updates on the Places to Go Strategy and related downtown washroom projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That this report be received as information.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

On July 23, 2020, Council approved the Places to Go, Public Washroom Strategy. As part of this motion, the Public Service was directed to report annually on the status of this work.

Extensions for the 2025 report have been provided in December 2025 and February 2026 meetings of Council.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no immediate implications in receiving this report as information.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

The City of Winnipeg routinely explores approaches to improving access to public washrooms. These efforts have included reviewing successful models from other jurisdictions and consulting with local stakeholders. A comprehensive summary of research and program development was presented to the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks on July 10, 2020, in a report entitled Places to Go: Public Washroom Strategy (Places to Go).

Places to Go outlined a three-tier framework aimed at improving access to public washrooms for Winnipeg residents:

Tier 1 – Advertiser-funded public restrooms
Tier 2 – Public-private partnerships with local businesses and Business Improvement Zones
Tier 3 –Reducing regulatory barriers for private businesses to install temporary public washrooms

On July 23, 2020, Council directed the Public Service to report annually on the implementation of Places to Go, beginning in December 2021.

Places to Go: Public Washroom Strategy

Places to Go was developed in response to conditions that continue to evolve. Its three-tier framework relies in part on investment from downtown businesses; shifting economic and operational realities have affected the feasibility of this approach. While washroom access was a key concern for downtown businesses prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, many are now focused on broader recovery and operational challenges. As a result, opportunities to update and modernize the strategy to better align with current conditions and anticipated outcomes are being considered. Concurrent efforts to improve washroom access have included theopening of a permanent public washroom, Amoowigamig, located at 715 Main Street, and the introduction of a portable washroom initiative which places temporary units in key inner city locations.

The following sections provide updates on the successes and challenges of these two downtown public washroom initiatives during the 2024–2025 reporting period.

Amoowigamig

Since opening, Amoowigamig,has experienced steadily increasing utilization and demonstrable public health and social development outcomes. Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre (Ma Mawi) was contracted to deliver onsite Peer Support services that address the unique needs of the facility and the surrounding community. The Peer Support model ensures that at least two staff are present at the facility during operating hours for security purposes while also providing a range of services and resources tailored to vulnerable populations, particularly Indigenous community members experiencing unsheltered homelessness in this area of downtown.

Amoowigamig is open and staffed seven days per week for 16 hours per day, from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. These operating hours represent an increase from the previous 10-hour schedule and were made possible through a three-year funding commitment from the Winnipeg Foundation to Ma Mawi in 2023, matching the City’s funding during this period. It is important to note that the Winnipeg Foundation’s funding is due to conclude at the end of 2026 and talks have begun between the Public Service and Winnipeg Foundation about the future of this funding partnership.

In 2025, Amoowigamig welcomed a total of 48,400 visitors, or an average of 4,033 each month. This is an increase of roughly 4,000 people compared to 2024. See Attachment 1 (2024 and 2025 Amoowigamig Data Dashboard).

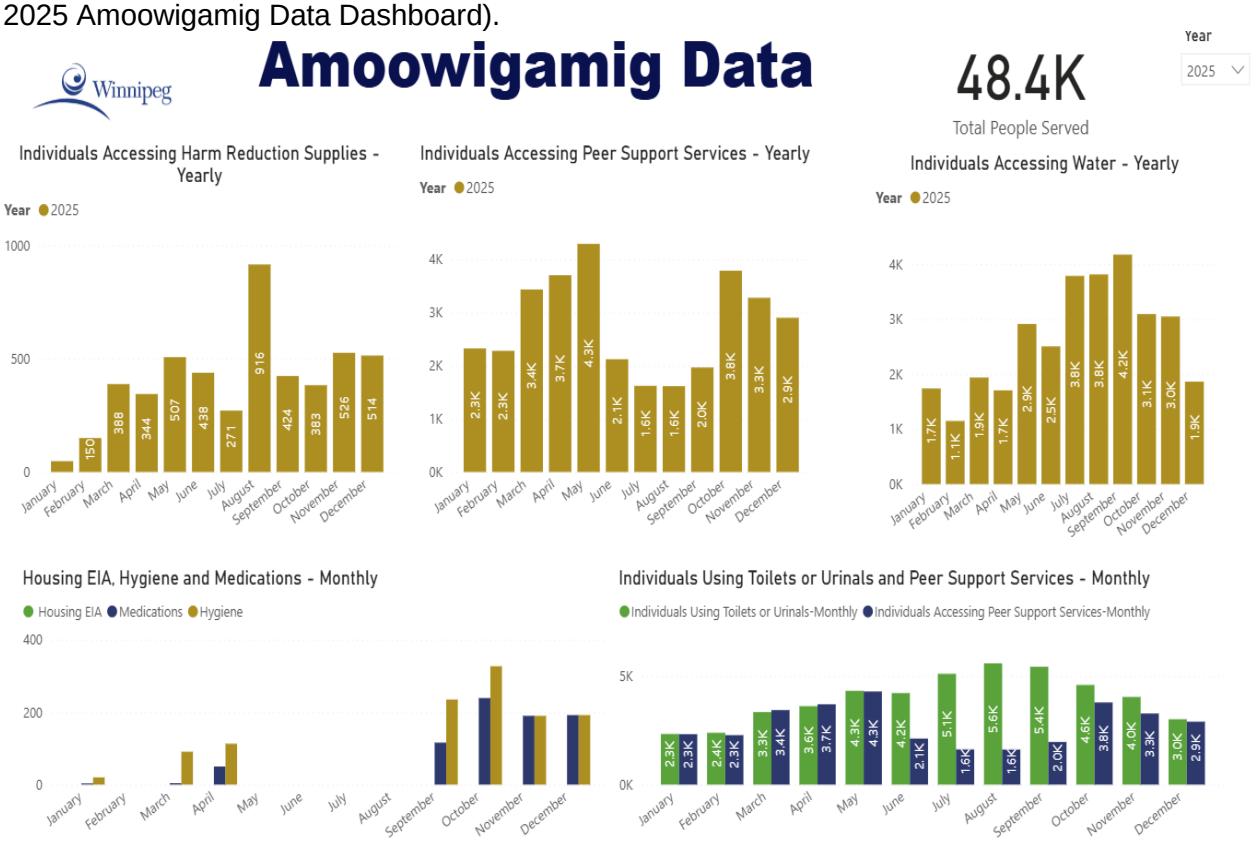

Figure 1. 2025 Amoowgigamig Data Report

As depicted in Figure 1, above, Amoowigamig is meeting several basic needs for vulnerable Winnipeggers in addition to toilet and freshwater access. Peer support workers routinely work with visitors to build relationships and address concerns, including improving access to medications, providing harm reduction supplies, and supporting people to regain housing and Employment Income Assistance. This unique approach goes well beyond providing onsite security, transforming the facility from simply a place to use the toilet to establishing it as an important resource centre and community hub.

Ma Mawi provides monthly reports on the challenges and successes of onsite service delivery. Key themes and trends identified in 2025 include:

- **Safety protocols:** Operations were adjusted in response to changing community needs and safety concerns, including behaviours ranging from verbal threats to physical assault. New measures include limiting the number of people in the space at one time, keeping doors locked to manage entry and allow for one-on-one support, and temporarily suspending access for individuals exhibiting violent behaviour.

- **Harm reduction and naloxone:** Access to naloxone has been a critical overdose prevention measure, helping to save dozens of lives both inside the facility and in the surrounding area.

- **Demand for hygiene and wellbeing supplies:** Amoowigamig continues to provide essential hygiene supports, including free menstrual products through the City of Winnipeg's permanent program. The site is one of nine approved locations established by the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development on January 11, 2023.

Throughout 2024 and 2025, the Public Service coordinated several facility upgrades, including landscaping improvements, installation of sharps containers, and enhanced lighting. These improvements were made to strengthen safety, functionality, and overall site conditions.

Portable Washroom Initiative

The City of Winnipeg currently provides temporary washrooms (porta-potties) at the sites outlined in the table below.

Location	Community Host Agency	Total Units	Notes
185 Young Street	Broadway Neighbourhood Centre	1 unit	Current
400 Cumberland Ave.	Knox Day Nursery	1 unit	Current

Evaluation of each unit is based on usage, overall impact and benefit to the community, and the extent of operational challenges encountered. As in previous years, results have varied by location. While the sites identified above have demonstrated the most consistent success, temporary washrooms have continued to experience significant challenges, including vandalism, structural damage, fires, improper disposal of sharps and other waste, and theft of internal components such as toilet paper holders, urinals, and toilet seats.

These conditions have made it increasingly difficult for the third-party contractor responsible for servicing the units to maintain them in a safe and operational condition. Ongoing misuse and damage have frequently required units to be removed from service or relocated, contributing to service disruptions and increased operational strain.

In addition, commitments from several community host agencies have proven difficult to sustain over time due to the challenges associated with keeping the units clean, secure, and functional. While initial placements often showed promising results, many sites ultimately experienced escalating issues that led to negative outcomes and the need to withdraw services. As a result, the program has cycled through multiple locations and community partners over successive reporting periods.

The Public Service works closely with community host agencies and the service provider to relocate or remove units when a site becomes unsuitable due to damage beyond repair or when the location is no longer effective. The locations at 185 Young Street and 400 Cumberland Avenue have shown greater success largely due to the high level of involvement and ongoing support from their respective host agencies, which have invested significant time and resources to promote safe use of the facilities and support surrounding community members.

The number of active portable washroom units during the reporting period has decreased from as many as six units in prior years. This reduction reflects the difficulty in identifying and sustaining appropriate host sites given the operational challenges described above. Unused funding from this project has been redirected to support improvements at Amoowigamig, the

City’s permanent public washroom facility, and to assist with broader homelessness response efforts.

Moving forward, the Public Service will continue to explore viable site and partnership opportunities for the placement of portable washrooms, while prioritizing Amoowigamig as the primary focal point for existing and future resources.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement

Date: February 9, 2026

Project Name:
Report on 'Places to Go' Framework (2025) and Downtown Washroom Initiatives

COMMENTS:

There are no financial implications with receiving this report as information.

Guillermo Resnik for Randy Bernard

Randy Bernard, CPA
Manager of Finance & Administration (Campus)
Corporate Finance Department

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with: N/A.

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

The information in this report align with the following OurWinnipeg 2045 goals as follows:

Leadership and Good Governance

- Objective 1: Establish and implement priority actions through evidence-informed decision-making processes. Evidence-informed actions require transparent and accountable decision-making to determine the long-term public impact and the appropriate trade-offs in levels of service, taxation, and budget priorities.
- 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. Objective 2: Build social cohesion through community development solutions, coordinated, effective partnerships, and responsive service delivery.

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

Consideration was given as the 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 in this report aligns with and advances 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.

Goal 4: Community Well-Being Supports for those in Greatest Need are Increased 10-year Objective:

- 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.

Action 4.4.1 of the Implementation Plan: Expand the focus of the Places to Go Public Washroom Strategy three-tiered framework beyond downtown to include other areas of high poverty and review the current framework to provide opportunity to include innovative solutions and best practices from other jurisdictions, with emphasis on improving toilet and washroom access for vulnerable populations.

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
Division: Community Development Division
Prepared by: Greg MacPherson
Date: February 8, 2026

Attachment:

Attachment 1 – 2024 and 2025 Amoowigamig Data Dashboard