

Giuliana Carbone
 Deputy City Manager

Parks, Forestry and Recreation
 City Hall, 4th Fl.
 100 Queen St. West
 Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

 Tel: (416-392-8182)
 Fax: (416-392-8565)
 Janie.Romoff@toronto.ca
 www.toronto.ca

2021 CAPITAL AND OPERATING BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

Winter Parks Use: The Cost to Retrofit Park Washrooms to be able to Operate in Winter Conditions and Provide Snow Clearing on all Park Pathways

Issue/Background:

- At its meeting on January 22, 2021, Budget Committee requested a briefing note on:
 - The cost of providing snow clearing on all park pathways.
 - The cost to retrofit park washrooms to be able to operate in winter conditions.
- This briefing note provides a summary of expanded snow clearing of park paths and trails and the increase in winter park washroom facilities made available in response to COVID-19 related increased park use.
- Further, this briefing note considers how additional park pathways can be snow cleared and which existing washrooms could be made operational for winter use in future years and what costs can be anticipated for implementation. Currently, winter operations includes maintenance of approximately 270 kilometres of paved pathways, trails and park roads and snow removal in parking lots at over 250 locations (e.g. community centres, arenas). This winter, the public has access to 143 washrooms, an increase over the usual number of 64 available in the winter.
- The 2021 Staff Recommended Operating Budget includes a total of \$1.600 million for expanded snow maintenance (\$0.875 million) and expanded winter washroom maintenance (\$0.725 million).
- An additional \$0.670 million would be required in operating funding in 2021 for existing maintenance and for expansion of snow maintenance (\$0.419 million) and winter washroom maintenance (\$0.251 million). To continue this throughout the remainder of the 2021/2022 winter season, funds of \$1.999 million would need to be submitted during the 2022 Budget Process for consideration including \$1.160 million for snow maintenance and \$0.838 million for winter washroom maintenance.
- Should Council wish to advance snow maintenance and washroom winterization and debt capacity is made available based on achievability and affordability, up to \$2.830 million in additional debt funding would need to be added to the 2021 Staff Recommended Capital Budget for PFR to make a one-time purchase of new equipment for snow maintenance (\$1.280 million); winterize 15 washrooms (up to \$1.050 million) and to develop an implementation plan for the winterization of additional washroom facilities (\$0.500 million).

- Continuing these programs into future years would require annual operating funding of approximately \$1.937 million including \$1.082 million for snow maintenance and \$0.855 million for winter washroom maintenance.

Key Points:

Park Pathways and Trails for Winter

- There are approximately 690 kilometres of pathways, trails and park roads in the City's 1,500+ parks, comprised of surface material that include asphalt, concrete, permeable pavers, limestone screening and other natural materials. Approximately 270 kilometres of paved pathways, trails and park roads are being maintained this winter. Further geospatial work outlined below is required to categorize and validate our current inventory of pathways, trails and park roads.
- It is not possible to clear snow from all park pathways for the following reasons:
 - Unpaved or natural trails cannot be cleared of snow as they are not paved
 - Pathways in environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs) are not cleared of snow as salt cannot be used in these areas.
 - Some park pathways cannot sustain snow removal equipment due to width, slope and surface material.
- Currently, winter operations in parks includes snow removal at parking lots at more than 250 locations (e.g. community centres, arenas) as well as park pathways, trails and park roads. Work is performed by staff that are also responsible for ongoing litter and general park maintenance.
- Snow is removed within 24 hours, after 8 cm of accumulation, from parking lots, park roads and paved paths in parks if the path provides a connection to a community link (e.g. school, recreation centre, TTC stop).
- Inspection and salting occurs after 48 hours of snowfall. Additionally, daily inspections and maintenance occur at sites that are sloping, high use, have water run off or are prone to freeze/thaw cycles. If staff find ice hazards at these locations, salt is applied.
- For 2021, an additional 64 kilometres of park pathways and trails (including 22 km of hydro corridor maintained in partnership with Transportation Services) were added to snow operations as well as 56,000 square meters of parking lots. Locations were selected to increase access in high use destination and district parks with multiple assets available for winter use, such as outdoor rinks and washrooms.

Expanded Snow Operations for Park Pathways Plan for Late 2021 and Beyond, and Anticipated Costs:

- Expanding snow operations to pathways and trails across parks requires a planned approach including assessing viable locations, additional staffing and procurement of equipment. Current work underway includes:

- A review of existing paved pathways and trails currently not winter maintained to determine if current infrastructure is suitable for snow removal. Considerations will include the type of surface material, width, depth, and slope.
- Exploring alternate maintenance options for winter maintenance in ESAs, ravines and bridges including environmentally friendly de-icers and equipment options to be piloted.
- A review of options to align winter maintenance activities with Transportation Services and streamline snow operations specific to hydro corridors, large trails, street to street connections and sidewalks adjacent to parks in the former City of Toronto.
- Additional work to be initiated includes:
 - Geospatial data composition to assist with reviewing and categorizing our current trail data, mapping, redesigning routes and determining state of good repair needs to enable snow maintenance based on a recently completed city-wide trails and pathways condition assessment.
 - Analysis of usage in parks due to COVID-19 impacts, focusing on winter use to determine high priority locations.
 - Improved tools including web access mapping capabilities for the public and communication strategy on service levels and activities in parks.
- In order to expand snow clearing on an additional 70 km of paved pathways and trails for the 2021/22 winter season and maintain this seasons expanded snow operations, the following new funding would be required:

Summary of Operating and Capital Funding Required for Expanded Snow Operations in Parks:

Budget	2021 Funds Required	2022 Funds Required	Future Years	Comments
Operating Budget	\$418,096	\$1,160,320	\$1,081,526 (annually)	Expansion of snow clearing at current enhanced level (parking lots and 64 additional km of paths and trails) and an additional approximate 70 kms (staffing, material costs and geospatial costs).
Capital Budget	\$1,280,000			One time capital cost for equipment

- The review work outlined above would continue through 2022 and any feasible further expansions would be brought forward for 2023 with implementation timelines

Park Washrooms for 2021:

- In addition to the 17 winterized washrooms typically open throughout the winter months, a further 28 washrooms were opened this winter. The public can also access washrooms at 47 outdoor artificial ice rinks (AIRs), at five City golf courses and more than 60 community recreation centres, many of which are adjacent to or near parks, and are available to the public for washroom use and in some cases showers.

- To further support the winter use of parks this season, portable toilets are provided at 51 locations.
- The following table provides an overview of expanded park washroom access for the winter:

	Year-round park washrooms	AIR washrooms (Late November - mid March, weather permitting)	Portable washroom locations	Total park washrooms available in winter
Prior years	17	47	0	64
Winter 2020/2021	45	47	51	143

Washroom Winterization Plan for 2021-2023 and Anticipated Costs:

- A condition assessment of Outdoor Recreation Facilities (which includes Parks washroom buildings) is currently underway and will be completed in 2021. This would serve as the foundation for developing a longer term winterization plan for washrooms for the 2022 and 2023 Capital Budgets should net new funding be allocated in the budget.
- As a first step for 2021, PFR would conduct an internal analysis of highest use/demand locations to evaluate which existing non-winterized washrooms (built for seasonal use) are most readily able to be winterized which would include:
 - Washrooms that have suitable infrastructure to allow for immediate installation of heating coupled with minor insulation improvements.
 - These winterizations could be advanced using existing blanket contracts and would be in the order of \$50,000-\$70,000 per washroom. Staff estimate that approximately 15 washrooms could be winterized, pending the further assessment for late 2021, at an anticipated cost of \$750,000 - \$1,050,000. This number and associated costs would have to be confirmed through further field investigations and internal analysis which could be completed by Q2 2021. The investigations and analysis would include a review of existing fresh water source and piping, available utilities for operating heaters and existing venting and insulation.
 - If additional funds are advanced, PFR would look to advancing a number of these winterizations before winter 2021-2022. Operational funding would also be required:

Summary of Operating and Capital Funding Required for Expanded Winter Washrooms:

Budget	2021 Funds Required	2022 Funds Required	Future Years	Comments
Operating Budget	\$251,497	\$838,323	\$855,089 (annually)	Expansion of 15 new winter access washrooms and continued operation of new winter washrooms added in 2020/2021; Future years includes ongoing staffing and material costs for increased winter access to washrooms of a total of 26 added winter washrooms.
Capital Budget	Up to \$1,550,000			Includes \$750,000 - \$1,050,000 for winterizing 15 additional washrooms and \$400,000 - \$500,000 for Professional Services to determine long term plan.

- In order to develop a winterization plan for more complex projects for 2022 - 2023 implementation, the following work would need to be undertaken:
 - A deeper review of the condition assessments would be required that would inform the prioritization process and provide valuable information in terms of what is feasible at various sites and where state of good repair (SOGR) needs are the greatest. These condition assessments would form the basis and costing for a longer-term implementation plan.
 - This would be conducted through 2021 and early 2022 with implementation occurring over 2022 and 2023. Depending on the scope of work identified the costs for professional and technical services would likely be in the range of \$400,000-\$500,000.
 - For any major renovations to a park washroom, the City would need to consider compliance with the Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines (TADG) and include funding for accessibility to meet provincial requirements and standards.
 - Given the level of investigation required it is difficult at this time and without further assessment, to determine with any accuracy what the cost and timeline would be required to make all the City's existing washroom buildings operational for winter use.

Prepared by: Ann-Marie Nasr- Director, Parks Development and Capital Projects, PFR, 416-395-7899, Ann-Marie.Nasr@toronto.ca

Donna Kovachis- Director, Parks, PFR, 416-394-2486, Donna.Kovachis@toronto.ca

Further information: Ann-Marie Nasr- Director, Parks Development and Capital Projects, PFR, 416-395-7899, Ann-Marie.Nasr@toronto.ca

Donna Kovachis- Director, Parks, PFR, 416-394-2486, Donna.Kovachis@toronto.ca

Date: January 25, 2021