

Update on Opening Park Washrooms

Date: April 15, 2021

To: Infrastructure and Environment Committee

From: General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report responds to the request for the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR) to report back to the April 28, 2021 meeting of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee with a plan to open all parks washrooms earlier than the Victoria Day long weekend, and as quickly as possible.

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the heavy use of parks through the summer and winter months. In support of the need for essential fresh air and exercise, seasonal washrooms closed during the winter will be opened early this spring. Staff began preparing seasonal washrooms for opening in late March and expect all to be open by May 7, 2021.

In 2020, 187 park washrooms were open from spring to fall and this year approximately the same number will be open to the public. As park washrooms are opened, the City's website has been updated with information about washroom location and hours.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends that:

1. The Infrastructure and Environment Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications as a result of the recommendations of this report. Any additional maintenance costs associated with opening the washrooms earlier will be accommodated within the 2021 Operating Budget for Parks, Forestry and Recreation.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the Financial Impact section.

DECISION HISTORY

On April 7 and 8 2021, City Council adopted item MM31.46 which requested "the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to report back to the next meeting of Infrastructure and Environment Committee on April 28, 2021 with a plan to open all parks washrooms earlier than the Victoria Day long weekend, and as quickly as possible."

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.MM31.46>

On November 25, 2020, City Council amended a report from Parks, Forestry and Recreation on options for keeping park washrooms open and accessible, including clearing pathways of snow and ice, through the upcoming winter.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.CC26.9>

On October 27, 2020, City Council adopted item HL22.1 with the amendment: "1. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry, and Recreation to report back to the November 25 and 26, 2020 meeting of City Council on the impacts of, and options for, keeping more public washrooms open and fully accessible including clearing pathways of snow and ice in our parks through the upcoming winter."

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.HL22.1>

On October 27, 2020, City Council adopted item HL22.1 with the following amendment: "City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry, and Recreation to evaluate the potential to retrofit all public washrooms to ensure they can withstand winter temperatures and remain open year-round."

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.HL22.1>

On October 18, 2020, the Board of Health adopted HL22.1 "Response to COVID-19: Update on Resurgence."

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-157451.pdf>

COMMENTS

There are 187 park washrooms of which 46 can operate year round and were open during the winter months. The remaining 141 are seasonal park washrooms that operate spring through fall due to infrastructure that does not allow for winter operation.

The timing for opening seasonal park washrooms varies from year to year dependent on weather conditions. Parks staff closely monitor the temperatures for temperature changes and seasonal washrooms are opened incrementally before the Victoria Day long weekend.

Given the favourable weather conditions and long-term forecast for this spring, Parks staff expect to complete opening all seasonal washrooms by May 7, 2021 as weather permits.

Parks staff began work on opening seasonal washrooms in March which included inspection of all the water assets, inspection of electrical components and completing

identified repairs. In early April, once warmer temperatures arrived and the risk of freezing passed, staff began the installation of plumbing components, water connections, deep cleaning of buildings and initializing water source. The opening of seasonal washrooms as soon as the weather permitted work to commence was a priority and staff were redirected to these efforts.

Parks staff began the incremental opening of park washrooms on April 16, 2021 and expect all to be open by May 7, 2021. Staff are targeting 75%, or 140 of 187 seasonal washrooms to be open at the time the Infrastructure and Environment Committee considers this report. As park washrooms are opened for public use the City's website will be continually updated with status of open washrooms. Portable washrooms installed over the colder months will remain in place until seasonal park washrooms are open.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS
