

Report to Council



Date: November 27, 2017
File: 0100-00
To: City Manager
From: Ian Wilson, Infrastructure Operations Manager
Subject: Inclusive Washrooms

Recommendation:

THAT Council receive for information the November 27, 2017 report of the Infrastructure Operations Manager on inclusive washrooms.

Purpose:

To help ensure that Kelowna washroom facilities are inclusive and comply with the BC Human Rights Code.

Background:

Council has made developing an active and inclusive City one of their priorities. This includes considering the diverse needs of our community.

In 2016, the BC Human Rights Code was amended to include "gender identity or expression" among the protected grounds covered by the Code. This is an emerging issue across Canada and a number of organizations are modifying their practices and policies to ensure inclusivity, including the creation of "gender neutral washrooms". Previous decisions in Canada have found that everyone has the right to define their own gender identity and to use the washroom that conforms with their chosen identity.

A 2013 survey conducted by the Vancouver Park Board identified some of the major challenges and barriers specific to the trans and gender variant community when using public recreational facilities, including social anxiety (53%), lack of change rooms/washroom options (42%) and feeling unsafe/afraid (34%)¹. At least one smartphone "app" has been developed to help users find gender-neutral, safe

¹ <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/REPORT-TGVIWorkingGroupReport-2014-04-28.pdf>

washroom facilities. This is an issue not only for the public, but also City staff (or staff employed by contracted partners), if there are inadequate options in their workplace.

A number of organizations have developed a new approach to single-stall washrooms. Many school districts across Canada have adopted new policies and School District 23 approved a motion in November, 2016 to label single-stall washrooms as gender neutral. The Vancouver Park Board launched a trans-inclusive campaign in 2015 which included educational brochures, postcard and posters, new signage (including washrooms and change rooms), staff training and policies. The City of Calgary approved a motion in July, 2016 to develop new signage for single-stall washrooms, and new policies for washrooms in City-owned buildings to become gender neutral, when buildings are renovated or newly built.

An inventory of existing washroom facilities in City of Kelowna buildings, contracted sites, parks, stadiums and at Kelowna International Airport, found that the majority of sites already have accessible, single-stall washrooms (108 washrooms out of 290 are single-stall), but existing signage and messaging is inconsistent (Appendix A). A total of 22 public locations (all in parks or stadiums) do not have any single stall option (Appendix A). Only one City building with staff washrooms (Rutland Firehall) did not have any single stall options.

Universal spaces are beneficial to everybody, including users with accessibility needs, parents with young children, or other individuals regardless of gender identity. It allows caregivers of adults with various cognitive impairments, including dementia, to accompany and assist the individual in a private space. This change benefits all residents and visitors and helps to ensure that public spaces and workplaces are accessible and inclusive.

City staff recommend the adoption of consistent signage which focuses on the function of the washroom facility (rather than gender) and the message that all users are welcome, similar to the example in Figure 1. For existing facilities that lack single-stall options, or new facilities, staff recommend that as facilities are renovated, re-built or developed, inclusive and accessible options be explored whenever possible. Parks and Building Planning conducted an accessibility audit of public parks and buildings in 2017, and staff are working on new guidelines which can also incorporate the recommendations for inclusive washroom spaces.

Existing Policy:

Council Policy No. 360 includes a section on Equity and Inclusion and states that the City will “collaborate with other agencies to deliver programs and services which improve diversity, equity and inclusion”.

Council recently endorsed the “Community for All Action Plan” which promotes inclusivity and accessibility for all ages.

Communications Comments:

The proposed changes will be shared with the local transgender community, City facility user groups and contract partners, as well as City of Kelowna staff working in facilities with single stall washrooms.

City staff (particularly staff who work in public facilities) recently received training on this topic so that they are better prepared to answer questions from the public.

Internal Circulation:

Communications
Human Resources
Building Services
Airport
Park and Building Planning
Policy and Planning

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

The cost of replacement signage can be handled through existing budgets. The installation would be phased in over approx. 3-6 months during the course of routine operations and maintenance activities. Future costs of renovations or new facility construction will be submitted through the normal budgeting process.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Legal/Statutory Authority:

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:

Personnel Implications:

External Agency/Public Comments:

Alternate Recommendation:

Submitted by:



Ian Wilson,
Infrastructure Operations Manager

Approved for inclusion:



Joe Creron, Deputy City Manager

Figure 1. Sample signage for single-stall washrooms. The bilingual version would be used at Kelowna International Airport due to federal regulations.



Appendix A. Inventory of Current Washroom Facilities in City buildings and public spaces.

Washrooms in parks and City facilities were tallied, including all City-owned or maintained buildings, buildings operated by contract partners (e.g. H₂O), and washrooms at Kelowna International Airport. This inventory does not include temporary / portable toilets. Some of the washrooms are intended for staff use (e.g. in fire halls), while others are open to the public. Approximate numbers include:

- 100 washrooms or change rooms labelled “male” (may include multiple stalls);
- 90 washrooms or change rooms labelled “female” (may include multiple stalls);
- 108 single stall washrooms that are labelled in a variety of ways. Most commonly, these washrooms are labelled with both male / female symbols, and may also include a “wheelchair accessible” symbol.

Sites that have public male or female washrooms but no single stall option are listed below. All of the locations that lack single stall options for the public are in parks or stadium facilities:

Locations that have public male or female washrooms but no single stall option nearby:

1. Apple Bowl Stadium washrooms / Changerooms
2. Belgo Park
3. Cameron Park
4. Centennial Park (SE Kelowna)
5. East Kelowna stadium
6. Edith Gay Park
7. Elks Stadium Grandstand washrooms / Changerooms
8. Jack Robertson Park
9. King’s Stadium
10. Kinsmen field house (in Mission Recreation Park)
11. Kinsmen Park
12. Knox Mountain Park Pavilion
13. Cook Road boat launch
14. Lions Park
15. Lombardy Park
16. Osprey Park
17. Rotary Beach Park
18. Rutland Sportsfield
19. Sarsons Beach Park
20. Strathcona Park
21. Sutherland Park
22. Waterfront Park

For City staff (or contract partners), the Rutland Firehall appears to be the only building with staff washrooms where there are no options for single-stall washrooms