

REPORT

Engineering Services

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: June 17, 2024

From: Kwaku Agyare-Manu
Acting Director, Engineering Services
File: 05.1035.10
(EDMS # 2498971)
Item #: 2024-360

Subject: **Permanent Free-Standing Toilet (PFT)**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council direct staff to proceed with the installation of a Permanent Free-Standing Toilet (PFT) as outlined in this report.

PURPOSE

To recommend that a Permanent Free-Standing Toilet (PFT) be installed on Begbie Street, on the sidewalk on the west side of the street, between Columbia Street and Front Street, and to identify the 'Next Steps' to installation, should the recommendation of the report be accepted.

BACKGROUND

The Permanent Free-Standing Toilet Project was developed as a Pilot Project to provide a city-owned & operated public washroom available for use in the Downtown Area.

In late 2022, Hyack Square was recommended to Council as the preferred location for the installation of the toilet unit. Once surveyed and studied by Civil Engineering Consultants and in consultation with City Utilities staff, Hyack Square was identified as not-technically feasible for installation of the PFT due to a number of technical challenges.

Subsequently, work began to identify alternate locations for installation of the PFT. A Project Timeline is outlined in ***Attachment 1***.

Key Objectives

Key objectives for the project include:

- to acknowledge provision of toilets as a basic human right (including universal and barrier free access),
- to serve the whole community,
- to provide service that is clean, maintained and available.

Pilot Project

The PFT Project was developed out of an identified need for a permanent city-owned and operated toilet in the Downtown area as part of Downtown Livability Strategy (2021). This project is considered a ‘Pilot Project’ as it is proceeding in advance of a citywide public washroom strategy and as the City does not currently own or operate a similar type of toilet unit. Evaluation criteria and success metrics for the Pilot Project will be developed as identified in the ‘Next Section’ of this report.

‘Urbaloo’ Toilet Unit

The ‘Urbaloo’ Toilet Unit was selected through a pre-qualification procurement process as the preferred toilet unit for this project. The Urbaloo is a prefabricated product from BC-based company Adam Integrated Industries Inc. An image of a similar toilet unit is included in **Attachment 1**. The unit will be designed for universal and barrier-free access.

Operating Hours

The operating hours are proposed to align with Park washrooms operating hours (generally sunrise to sunset). Staff will have the ability to modify operating hours if there is a desire to do so. Similar to other Park washrooms, the unit will not have a 24/7 attendant. The cleaning and maintenance schedule will be developed by operational staff in parallel with the project delivery.

ANALYSIS

A number of factors and criteria were considered in a thorough analysis of potential locations such as:

- considering only City-owned sites,
- required clearances to existing services, including the Municipal Sewer and Water lines, and the Metro Vancouver Sewer Line,
- challenges with sloping topography,
- maintaining key transportation sight lines and considerations of future transportation improvements;

In addition to the technical challenges, site guiding principles were identified as informed by the project Key Objectives, including:

- allowing for universal access to the toilet, including a barrier-free path of travel from Columbia Street and Hyack Square,
- considering visible, well-trafficked areas,
- economic development considerations, such as active and vibrant commercial areas as identified through consultation with the City’s Economic Development staff.

The analysis eliminated all but one site from consideration.

DISCUSSION

Recommended Location- West Side of Begbie Street (South of Columbia Street)



Figure 1 (above): The rendering above shows the recommended location for PFT at Begbie Street (between Columbia Street and Front Street)

Based on the analysis work, the location on Begbie Street (in the sidewalk on the west side of the road, between Columbia Street and Front Street), is recommended as the location for installation of the PFT for the following reasons:

- the location is feasible from a technical perspective; connection to the City’s municipal and water line are feasible in this area and the toilet connections do not

need to cross the Metro Vancouver Sewer line (eliminating the need for Metro Vancouver approval),

- the site is relatively flat (the slope is less than 5%¹) which means it allows for accessible, barrier-free access from Hyack Square and Columbia Street and the toilet can be installed with minimal site modifications,
- the location has good visibility from Columbia Street and pedestrian traffic is expected to increase in this area as the new developments near the riverfront are completed,
- the location is in relatively close proximity to Hyack Square with access via Columbia Street or by Front Street,
- the location is situated adjacent to a blank building wall with minimal impact on street activation to existing windows. Consideration was made to place the unit as far as possible from the adjacent building entry door without impacting transportation sight lines,
- the location aligns with future plans for the area, such as plans for a future planned Begbie Street Plaza as identified in the [New Westminster Downtown Building and Public Realm Design Guidelines and Master Plan](#),
- the west side of the street is recommended as a bi-directional bicycle lane is planned for the east side of Begbie Street through the [Active Transportation Network Plan](#) (ATNP), as shown in Figure 1 and coordinated with the Bosa Development work already underway,

¹ The [CSA/ASC B652:23 National Standard of Canada for Accessible Dwellings](#) identifies that accessible exterior routes shall have a running slope not steeper than a ratio of 1:20 (5%) (5.2.1). Accessibility will be considered during the detailed design stage and the Accessibility Advisory Committee may be consulted, if required, at this time.

Urban Design Features

The project is currently in the schematic design phase. This work primarily involves siting the toilet location. If the recommendation of this report is supported, through the next design phase, urban design opportunities will be explored, such as considering shrubbery, greenery or other opportunities to activate this area of the public realm. (See Figure 1). The area is undergoing transformation with the introduction of the bicycle lane and other intersection improvements arising from the Bosa development to the south. The toilet placement and urban design treatment will consider and enhance the changing characteristics of this gateway setting.

NEXT STEPS

Pending Council approval to proceed with this location, the next steps are as outlined below with an estimated total completion schedule of approximately 7-12 months from Design Development to project completion.

| Project Work | Timeline |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Schematic Design | (we are here) |
| Design Development | (total 7-12 months); <i>note: some tasks listed may overlap.</i> |
| Building Permits Application and Issuance | |
| Toilet Manufacturing by Toilet Supplier (3-4 months) | |
| Operational Approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further consultation with municipalities with installed PFTs on operational approaches and lessons learned, • Development of Operational Strategy | |
| Tender & Construction | |
| Pilot Project: Develop Pilot Project Evaluation Criteria and success metrics. | |

**note: project timeline is subject to weather, external resource availabilities and market conditions*

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Efforts will be made to include sustainability-informed design considerations into the project during the detailed design phase such as the option for low-flow fixtures, LED lighting etc., where possible. The Toilet will not be heated and will not utilize fossil fuels, and therefore it is not anticipated to impact the City’s greenhouse gas reduction targets.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A total project budget of \$650,000 was approved by Council for this project. The budget was prepared as a ‘Class D’ rough order of magnitude cost estimate prior to commencement of the design and before a location was identified or toilet unit selected, considering assumptions on location, risk, requirements, procurement, project timing, and escalation. The budget amount was based on the following: to purchase the Toilet unit (estimated \$200,000), Design Consultant Fees (estimated \$60,000), soil assessment and remediation (if required, estimated \$20,000), site surveys and site assessment analysis (estimated \$15,000), construction by external resources, including construction management support, overhead contractor costs, demolition, connection to services and associated site work (estimated \$185,000). The remaining amount is for a project contingency in line with estimating range of between ±20% and ±30% (Canadian Construction Association) for ‘Class D’ estimates, escalation (5%) and public art contribution as per the Public Art Policy.

The project is currently on track to be completed within the project budget. A ‘Class B’ Cost Estimate, estimating range of between ±10% and ±15% (Canadian Construction Association) will be created after the design development phase is complete to provide further clarity on the budget in advance of construction.

There may be future opportunities through cooperation with City Public Art staff to explore partnerships and opportunities to further activate and animate this area of Begbie Street. This work and associated costs would be considered outside of this project budget.

The operating budget for the toilet was approved via an operating budget enhancement in 2022.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

Staff from multiple departments were consulted for this work including the Senior Management Team, the Downtown Livability Working Group as well as staff from Engineering and Engineering Operations, Economic Development, Community Planning, Parks & Open Space Planning, Anvil Centre, and Integrated Services.

OPTIONS

The following options are presented for Council's consideration:

1. **THAT** Council direct staff to proceed with the installation of a Permanent Free-Standing Toilet (PFT) as outlined in this report.
2. That Council provides alternative direction to Staff.

Staff recommends Option 1.

ATTACHMENTS

1. **Attachment 1:**
Project timeline, Urbaloo Toilet Image, Downtown Area Map, Location Map, Schematic Design Study

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:

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This report was reviewed by:

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