

Attachment 2

City-wide Toilet Strategy Situational Analysis

City-wide Toilet Strategy: Situational Analysis

Contents

Research Methodology	3
Rationale.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Search Method	3
Search fields and information gathered	4
Findings	5
General Findings	5
Washroom Capacity at all Sites	5
Geographic Distribution of Toilets.....	6
Neighbourhoods that are Well-Served by Toilets.....	6
Neighbourhoods that are Poorly Served by Washrooms (“Washroom Deserts”)	7
In-stream and Proposed Future Toilets	9
Hours of operation and seasonal availability	8
Facilities Management, Cleaning and Maintenance	9
Attendant Services	10
Applicability of Findings for Target Populations	10
People living with mobility challenges, such as seniors and people living with disabilities	11
People experiencing homelessness.....	11
Families with young children	12
Gender	12
Limitations	12
Map Quality and Wayfinding.....	13
Conclusion.....	13
Proposed Next Steps for the Situational Analysis.....	14

Research Rationale and Methodology

The situational analysis aims to gain an understanding of the status of all toilets across the City of New Westminster to understand gaps in their geographic distribution, availability, hours of operation, seasonal availability, accessibility and maintenance and cleaning schedules. This will support a deeper understanding of areas of the City which are currently “well served” by toilets, as well as areas that are underserved. The findings of the situational analysis will further supplement findings from other engagement activities, including the Be Heard Survey and focus groups, which will gather information about community members’ direct experiences.

To understand the landscape of toilets in the City of New Westminster, we sought to gather information on all publicly available toilets in the city, broken down into three “types” of toilets:

- **Public toilets:** toilets that are available to all members of the public, and do not require a purchase or membership in an organization to access them. This includes toilets that are available in City-run buildings, such as parks, recreation centres, and the library.
- **Semi-public toilets:** toilets that do not require a purchase or membership in an organization to access them, but are located on private property. This includes toilets in non-City run buildings, such as shopping centres, malls, and post secondary institutions.
- **Toilets in private settings:** toilets in private buildings such as in businesses, restaurants, and non-profit organizations where the business owner/operator has indicated (through participation in the [GoHere](#) program¹) that their toilet is open to members of the public.

Toilets in the latter two categories are beyond the City’s scope and responsibility to manage. However, by including them in our situational analysis, we hoped to gain a more fulsome picture of the overall landscape of toilet availability in the City.

Search Method

The search consisted of a rapid scan of publicly available documents, including websites, maps, and apps. In certain cases and as specified below, additional follow up was conducted with individuals and/or organizations who oversee toilets to supplement

¹ The [GoHere washroom access program](#) is an app operated by Crohn’s and Colitis Canada that maps the closest available washrooms, or available washrooms along a planned route. The app primarily serves people living with underlying health conditions, though it is free and available for any community member to download and use. As a participating member in the GoHere program, the City of New Westminster has provided information about the City’s public washrooms to GoHere for inclusion on the app. Private businesses can also register their toilets with GoHere, indicating that they are open and available to app users without having to make a purchase.

publicly available information. The following sources were consulted as part of the situational analysis:

- Online maps and websites, including [New Westminister's public washroom map](#); [City Parks website for New Westminister](#) and [Metro Vancouver Municipal and Regional Parks Washroom map](#), and various websites;
- The [GoHere Washroom Access App](#), which provides information about public toilets as well as participating private businesses that offer toilets to the public;
- Staff at the [Crohns and Colitis Society](#) for information about the GoHere Washroom Access program and app;
- Staff at Translink, to confirm information about the availability of toilets at transit hubs;
- Internal City staff from various departments at the City of New Westminister, including:
 - GIS;
 - Parks and Recreation
 - Building and Facilities, and;
 - Engineering.

Search fields and information gathered

Information on the following fields was gathered:

- **Geographic information:**
 - name of location (e.g., Anvil Centre)
 - address of location (e.g., 511 Royal Ave)
 - neighbourhood (based on [New Westminister neighbourhood statistical areas](#))
- **Hours of operation information:**
 - hours of day and days of week available
- **General washroom characteristics:**
 - type of washroom (e.g., public toilet)
 - status of washroom (permanent or temporary/portable)
 - managed by (e.g., Jiffy John Rentals Ltd, City of New Westminister, etc.)
 - accessibility information
 - cleaning frequency
- **General Washroom characteristics/amenities:**
 - gender (male/female/universal washrooms)
 - number of toilet(s) and urinal(s)
 - number of baby change table(s)
 - number of free menstrual product dispensers
- **Map listing information**
- **General notes**

Findings

General Findings

The situational analysis found 39 unique sites across the City that offer publicly available toilets across New Westminster. This includes 30 City parks and civic facilities where public toilets are offered, and 1 public toilet that is funded by BC Housing and operated by a non-profit organization. The situational analysis also identified a number of other sites where some members of the public can access toilets, including in semi-public settings such as shopping centres, malls, and post secondary institutions (6 total), as well as some private businesses that have indicated that their toilets are available to members of the public without requiring a purchase (2 total).

The table below shows the publicly available washrooms in New Westminster by type:

Publicly available toilets by type	
Public	
Parks and recreation	20
City Facilities	10
Non-profit managed	1
Semi Public	
Post-Secondary Institutions, Shopping Centres, etc.	6
Private	
Businesses	2
Totals	39

Preliminary discussions with some facility staff or owners of semi-public and private toilets revealed that many of operators do not consider their toilets to be for public use, even if a purchase is not required to access them. As semi-public and private toilets are located on private property, access can be restricted or granted at the owner's discretion.

For this reason and due to limited ability to gather data on these settings, semi-public and private toilets were excluded from the remainder of the analysis. The sections below describe the situation of the 31 locations where public toilets are owned and operated by the City of New Westminster or by a non-profit provider.

Washroom Capacity at all Sites

Washroom capacity can be estimated by counting the amenities available at each site, including the number of available urinals and toilets. This provides an indication of how the toilets within the enumerated sites are able meet public demand. Among the 31 sites, we found a total of 284 toilets and urinals across the City.

Total number of toilets and urinals	
Toilets in Men's washrooms	46
Urinals in Men's Washrooms	71
Toilets in Women's washrooms	97
Toilets in Universal Washrooms	61
Toilets in Portable Toilets	9
Total	284

Unsurprisingly, sites that are larger or host large events, such as the Anvil Centre or Queen's Park Arena, have a higher washroom capacity than smaller facilities, such as small parks, which are sometimes serviced by a single portable toilet.

Geographic Distribution of Toilets

Neighbourhoods that are Well-Served by Toilets²

In general, more densely populated neighbourhoods and neighbourhoods with more shopping centres, recreation centres and large parks tend to have the highest washroom concentrations. Based on the findings in the table below, the Downtown, Kelvin, Glenbrooke South, and Sapperton have the highest distribution of public toilets.

Toilet location by Neighbourhood	
Brow of the Hill	1
Brunette Creek	0
Connaught Heights	0
Downtown	5
Glenbrooke North	1
Glenbrooke South	5
Kelvin	6
Massey Victory Heights	0
North Arm North	0
North Arm South	1
Queensborough	4
Queens Park ³	0
Sapperton	5
Uptown	2
West End	1
Total	31

² Neighbourhood boundaries are described in more detail on the City's website [here](#).

³ Queen's Park is included within the catchment of the Glenbrooke South neighbourhood, rather than the Queen's Park neighbourhood. There are seven separate toilet facilities located within Queen's Park which are [counted as part of the Glenbrooke South](#) neighbourhood. These toilets could serve residents of both Queen's Park and Glenbrooke South.

Some toilets are located on bordering neighbourhoods and may serve multiple neighbourhoods. Therefore, areas that may appear “underserved” in the table above, such as Queen’s Park, and Brow of the Hill *may not actually be underserved* as public toilets are offered in neighbouring areas. Public toilets which are located in Burnaby on the boundary of New Westminster, such as Rosemary Brown Arena and Cariboo Park, could serve community members living in border regions of the city.

Neighbourhoods that are Poorly Served by Washrooms (“Washroom Deserts”)

Neighbourhoods that are less densely populated have less public toilets. Some of the neighbourhoods that are fully industrial, such as Brunette Creek or partially industrial (North Arm North) have no public toilets. Neighbourhoods such as Connaught Heights, the West End, and most of Massey Victory Heights that have few parks and are mostly single-family homes very few public toilets. Additionally, the Uptown neighbourhood, which is densely populated and includes a large commercial district, has just 2 locations that offer public toilets. Uptown residents and visitors may partially be served by public toilets in neighbouring areas, such as Kelvin, which has 6 locations with public toilets. Similarly, in the West End and Massey Victory Heights, washrooms just over the city border in Burnaby may partially fill gaps in washroom availability. Finally, there is considerable variation in the geographic distribution of toilets *within* neighbourhood boundaries, with the following notable examples:

- Parts of Brow of the Hill near Moody Park area well-served but parts of Brow of the Hill near 12th St are very poorly served;
- Parts of Massey Victory Heights near 10th Ave and Cariboo Road and near McBride Boulevard are well-served but other parts of Massey Victory Heights are not;
- Parts of the West End near Grimston Park and near 10th Ave and 18th St are well-served but the rest of the West End is not; and,
- The Victoria-Hill Ginger Drive area within Glenbrooke South has good access to washrooms, but other parts of Glenbrooke South are not well-served by washrooms.

The concept of “washroom deserts” applies not only to the geographic distribution of toilet facilities, but also to the hours of operation and seasonal availability of public toilets. For instance, while densely populated neighbourhoods appear to have more toilets in general, availability becomes significantly limited outside of regular business hours in the fall and winter months. For instance, there are only two locations in the Downtown that provide access to toilets in the evenings (between 5pm and 9pm) and overnight (between 9pm-6am) year round. In the Kelvin neighbourhood, which borders Uptown, only four out of six toilets are available in the evenings year round, and no

toilets are available overnight. No washrooms in Uptown are available overnight year-round. Hours of operation and seasonal availability is explored more [below](#).

Hours of operation and seasonal availability

The hours of operation for each location vary greatly, with limited consistency across the City. For instance, in some cases, the hours of operation are dependent on services: public washrooms that are co-located with schools are not open to the general public during school hours, but have wider availability during the summer months when schools are not operational. In general, washrooms located in parks are available from dawn to dusk, meaning that operating hours vary significantly between the summer and winter months. The following trends were observed:

- Most publicly available toilets in the city are available during weekday mornings and afternoons. 84% (26) toilets are publicly available on weekends year-round, while some toilets are open just on Saturdays or on weekends on a seasonal basis only.
- Access to toilets in the evenings (between 5pm and 9 pm) is somewhat more limited, with only 42% (13) of publicly available washrooms open during the evening's year-round.
- Overnight access to toilets (between the hours of 9 pm to 6 am) is even more limited, with only 16% (5) of public washrooms open at night year around. This includes three portable toilets in parks, the hygiene trailer located outside the Purpose Shelter, one toilet at the Police Station, which requires being buzzed in to access.
- Access to public toilets is significantly more restricted during the winter months compared to summer months.

Hours of operation for New Westminster washrooms are shown in the tables below:

Open evenings (5pm-9pm)	
Yes	13
No	4
Spring/Summer Only	6
Spring/Summer/Fall Only	8

Open Overnight (9pm-6am)	
Yes	5
No	22
Spring/Summer Only	4
Spring/Summer/Fall Only	0

Open weekends	
Yes	26
No	1
Spring/Summer Only	4
Spring/Summer/Fall Only	0

In-stream and Proposed Future Toilets

The City of New Westminster is actively pursuing the expansion of public toilet availability through two distinct projects. These projects, while not yet operational and therefore excluded from the situational analysis, are strategically located to address identified gaps in public washroom access.

Westminster Pier Park Expansion: The construction of public toilets within the Westward Pier Park expansion project in the Downtown/Quayside area is currently in the tendering phase. These toilets were tendered as separate price items within the larger park expansion project. The tender process closes in April 2025, after which we will have a clearer understanding of the cost implications and feasibility of installing one or two freestanding toilets within the new riverfront park. Construction of the park expansion is anticipated to commence in Spring 2025, with a final completion date to be determined following award of the project.

Uptown Plaza (Belmont Street and Sixth Street): A sanitary/water connection is being installed at the Uptown Plaza, located at Belmont Street and Sixth Street, as part of construction activities scheduled between February and June 2025. This infrastructure will facilitate the future installation of a freestanding public toilet. However, the installation of the toilet itself is contingent upon securing future funding.

The operational details, including hours of operation, seasonal availability, and maintenance schedules for these proposed toilets, will be determined once the tender process for the Pier Park toilets concludes and funding for the Uptown Plaza toilet is secured.

Facilities Management, Cleaning and Maintenance

Maintenance and servicing schedules vary significantly from location to location and seasonally. Most public toilets in the City cleaned at least daily, with some higher use areas such as tāmasew̱txw Aquatic and Community Centre (TACC), the Anvil Centre, and Queensborough Community Centre receiving multiple cleanings per day. Other public toilets in parks that are heavily used are cleaned once daily in the winter but twice daily in summer as foot traffic and park use increases. Locations that were serviced the least frequently, at once per week, include the portable toilets at Ryall Park and Thompson’s Landing Park, which are managed by Jiffy John.

Facilities Management, Cleaning, and Maintenance Frequency	
Multiple times a day year round	7
Daily, Twice daily in summer	2
Daily year round	14
2 times per week	5
Weekly	2
Unknown	1
Total	31

Follow up conversations with staff that oversee public toilets revealed that maintaining washroom cleanliness can be challenging. Staff take a proactive approach and described systems where washrooms are checked and reviewed by staff for any concerns prior to opening to the public. However, staff shared that in high-traffic areas and during busy times, washrooms, particularly those in park settings, can get dirty quickly, even with enhanced cleaning schedules.

Attendant Services

Attendant services are defined as dedicated on-site staff that are hired with the primary mandate to oversee the supplies, cleanliness, maintenance, and overall operation of toilets. While many public toilets in New Westminster are located within City facilities, staff on site do not have a *primary mandate* to manage toilet use. There is only one public toilet in New Westminster that has dedicated attendant services. This is located in a trailer that includes sinks, showers and toilets (“the trailer”), and located on Front Street near the shelter at 502 Columbia Street. By providing both access to toilets, sinks and showers, the trailer aims to address critical gaps in hygiene services for people who are unhoused. The need for enhanced access to toilets, including 24/7 services to support people who are unhoused was identified in both the [Downtown Livability Strategy \(2021\)](#), the [Homelessness Action Strategy \(2022\)](#), and the [Crises Response Pilot Project \(2024\)](#). In July 2024, the trailer was installed near the nightly shelter at 502 East Columbia Street. The trailer is funded by BC Housing, is available on a 24/7 basis, and includes attendant services. The Purpose Society, which operates the adjacent nightly shelter, provides operational oversight for the trailer and collects data on its use. Since opening, the trailer has averaged approximately 1,300 visits per month.

Applicability of Findings for Target Populations

The City-wide Toilet Strategy identifies several priority populations who may face distinct challenges or barriers when accessing toilets. This includes seniors; people living with disabilities; people living with health conditions; families with young children; and people who are unhoused. The following section considers how the findings of the situational analysis may relate to some of the toilet experiences or needs of some of

these groups.⁴ Due to the lack of available data on specific amenities within washrooms, we were not able to assess the applicability of the findings to the needs of all target groups.

People living with mobility challenges, such as seniors and people living with disabilities

In general, there was limited information publicly available on accessibility features that are available in toilets. The analysis found that 77%, or 24 locations in New Westminster that are listed as accessible. This was interpreted as the location providing at least one accessible toilet stall within the washroom facility. It should be noted that accessibility needs vary greatly from one individual to another and that accessible toilet stalls frequently fail to meet the diverse needs of many people living with disabilities.

There were two toilet stalls at one location that included adult change tables in toilets, which are an important feature for caregivers of people living with disabilities.

People experiencing homelessness

Despite having no option other than to use public toilets, people who are unhoused experience a range of barriers in accessing public toilets, including lack of availability, lack of accessibility, safety concerns, concerns related to leaving belongings unattended, and experiences of stigma or discrimination from other washrooms patrons or others in accessing toilets. Regarding public toilets, the extremely limited availability of toilets in the evenings and overnights fails to meet the needs people who are unhoused during the hours.

Along with access to toilets, access to other hygiene service such as showers and laundry are important for people experiencing homelessness. In this regard, the aforementioned hygiene services trailer on Front Street provides a critical service. Additionally, showers are located in two parks in the city (Upper Hume Park and Sapperton Park), in three parks facilities (Queen's Park Arena, Queen's Park Sportsplex, Moody Park Arena), and in two recreation centres (Queensborough Community Centre and TACC). Of note, the showers in City recreation facilities typically require a pass or membership to access, though subsidized passes are available for eligible individuals. Recently, through the Crises Response Pilot Project, the Crises Response Team (CRT) has piloted a shower program with the Queensborough Community Centre to provide free access to showers during the Crises Response Team's drop-in hours.

⁴ The unique needs and considerations of equity-denied groups has been drawn predominantly from research. The specific needs of residents of New Westminster who are members of these groups will be further determined through engagement activities, including focus groups and interviews, with individuals from these groups.

Finally, for people who menstruate, particularly those who are low-income, access to menstrual products are important: menstrual products are provided free of charge at 10 locations across the city.

Families with young children

Baby change tables are an important washroom feature for families with young children. Research has suggested that men's washrooms do not always include baby change tables, which results in gaps in services for parents and caregivers, and contributes to an inequitable division of care labour. In New Westminster, 9 locations have washrooms with baby change tables. There are 4 locations that include baby change tables in men's washrooms, 5 locations that include baby change tables in women's washrooms, and 6 locations where baby change tables are located in universal washrooms.

Gender

Gender-free or universal washrooms are facilities that can be accessed by anyone regardless of gender identity or expression. Research has shown that universal washrooms benefit a number of equity-denied groups. For instance, families, people living with disabilities, and seniors face challenges when providing or receiving care for someone of a different gender. Gendered facilities can also create barriers to access for non-binary people. Across all 31 locations, 13 locations offer gendered (male/female) facilities only, 5 offer universal washrooms only, and 6 offer both gendered and universal washrooms. There are 7 locations with 9 portable toilets throughout the city, which can be accessed by anyone regardless of gender identity or expression.

Limitations

The situational analysis relied on publicly available data. This was at times supplemented by additional information provided by City staff. Due to capacity limitations, no site visits were conducted to verify data provided. This leads to several limitations:

- **Data availability:** Information on all the required variables was not consistently available for all toilets in New Westminster.
- **Data accuracy:** Data from map sources is updated manually. As a result, information on the availability of all toilets may not be accurate or up to date. This is discussed in more details in the [Map Quality and Wayfinding section](#) below.
- **Applicability of the findings:** The situational analysis provides a high-level snapshot of toilet distribution and availability across the City at various hours and at different times of the year. These findings, however, do not reveal individual patterns of toilet usage, or patterns of mobility in the community.

Physical signage was not evaluated within the situational analysis. Concurrent to the City-wide Toilet Strategy, work is underway on a Public Restroom Signage Strategy for the Downtown and Quayside.

Map Quality and Wayfinding

None of the three main map and app sources provides a comprehensive list of toilets. Currently, members of the community can find information about publicly available toilets through three main maps:

1. [The New Westminster public washrooms map](#)
2. [The Metro Vancouver Parks Washrooms map](#); and
3. [The GoHere app](#).

There are several limitations to the data quality within these sources. Updates to the City of New Westminster's public washrooms map are initiated when an internal City staff notifies the GIS team to make updates. As a result, maintenance issues or closures are not reflected in real-time. The frequency of updates for the Metro Vancouver parks washroom maps is unclear. Finally, while the City of New Westminster is a participating member in the GoHere Washroom Access Program, the associated app is updated manually by volunteers.

Conclusion

The findings of the situational analysis provide a landscape of the location, hours of operation, seasonal availability, accessibility and maintenance schedules of all currently publicly accessible toilets in New Westminster. These findings reveal, at a high level, locations within the community, and times of the day where there are be gaps in public toilet availability.

Overall, the City of New Westminster has 31 locations with public toilets located in City-run facilities, the library, or parks across the City, with 284 total toilets and urinals. The analysis found an additional 8 locations across the City that may provide access to toilets to some members of the public, but these are located on private property and therefore not universally available to all members of the public.

Unsurprisingly, denser areas, such as the Downtown, Sapperton, and Glenbrooke South have more toilets compared to lower density and residential neighbourhoods.

The situational analysis also reveals significant gaps in the hours of operation of publicly available toilets. While most publicly available toilets provide fair availability during the daytime hours, availability becomes more limited during evenings and weekends, and varies significantly with the seasons. Toilets are more widely available in spring and summer months, compared to the fall and winter months. Access to toilets on a 24/7

basis is severely limited, with only 5 locations available overnight on year-round. Three of these toilets are portable toilets located in parks and are therefore do not meet the needs of people living with disabilities.

Proposed Next Steps for the Situational Analysis

The analysis alone cannot reveal patterns of mobility or toilet use, and individual experiences of toilet access may differ from the findings from the analysis. A proposed next step with this piece of work could be to compare population census data to the situational analysis, to compare population characteristics, including density, age, and family composition, to the findings from the situational analysis.

The analysis also reveals the importance of City-operated toilets to meet public need, as the private sector is currently playing a minimal role in the provision of toilets. This information is valuable to the City-wide Toilet Strategy as it points to a need to ensure existing facilities are well-maintained and meet community needs, but also reveals opportunities for partnerships or other strategies that could increase the uptake of businesses, the private sector, or other public sector actors in the provision of toilets for public use. This could include developing public-private partnerships with businesses, faith-based and non-profit organizations, promoting uptake in the GoHere program, or advocating for increased involvement of other sectors, such as public transit.⁵

⁵ None of the Skytrain stations in New Westminster provide public access to toilets. In rare circumstances, Skytrain attendants can provide access to staff toilets in “emergency situations,” but only if this does not take the attendant away from their regular duties. Translink is in the process of developing a [Customer Washroom Program](#).