



COMMUNICATION UPDATE

TO:	Mayor and Members City Council
DATE:	October 1, 2021
SUBJECT:	Parks Washrooms (ES21007) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
SUBMITTED BY:	Cynthia Graham, Acting Director, Environmental Services Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

At the General Issues Committee meeting of September 22, 2021, staff were directed to report on the park washrooms that are opened and closed daily and include the hours of operations for each washroom. This update is being provided to outline the Council approved provision of access to washrooms and maintenance service levels for the City of Hamilton's (City) park washrooms, performed by the Parks and Cemeteries Section of the Environmental Services Division.

INFORMATION

The provision and maintenance of washroom facilities in parks throughout the City is an important part of the parks program and delivery of clean park spaces. City Park staff travel on specified routes to ensure that washrooms are opened and closed at designated hours, that they are stocked with supplies and are cleaned on a routine basis.

The provision and maintenance of washrooms is directly related to the type of park washroom facility. For instance, washroom facilities that are opened for sport-use only operate on a defined schedule. Regular Public Use washrooms operate on a different schedule, as their hours are not tied to when sports groups make their bookings. The hours of operation for both types of park washroom facilities are outlined in the table below:

Washroom Facility	Opened	Closed
Regular Public Use Facilities	Between 8:00am and 10:00am	Between dusk and park closing
Sport Use Facilities	Determined by bookings.	Determined by bookings, no later than 11:30pm

Appendix “A” attached to Communications Update ES21007 lists the park washroom facilities that are operated by Parks staff as Regular Use facilities.

Appendix “B” attached to Communications Update ES21007 lists the park washroom facilities that are operating by Parks staff as Sport Use facilities.

Appendix “C” attached to Communication Update ES21007 lists the washroom facilities that are located in City parks and operated by other groups. The hours of operation are determined by the keyholders for these locations. These washrooms are not publicly accessible unless the keyholders have allowed it; for example, bocce and other sports groups maintain the access for their membership, subcommittees and supie programs have their own schedules for access to support specific programming.

The opening/closing and cleaning/sanitizing of washroom facilities involves crews of parks staff travelling from location to location. Each Park District uses route optimization to attend the sites in a systematic approach to reduce the impact of travel time and aim to have the facilities opened/closed as close to the designated times as possible. Morning crews travel their routes cleaning/sanitizing and opening the washrooms with an aim to have washrooms open between 8am and 10am. Afternoon Crews travel their routes closing the washrooms with an aim to have washrooms closed between dusk and park closing or to support the scheduled user group bookings which close no later than 11:30pm. The cleaning/sanitizing of washrooms can be completed in the evening after closing if it is safe to do so and time allows; however, generally, washrooms remain open as late as possible and it is safer for staff to lock up, leaving the cleaning/sanitizing for the morning. Staff working in the evening have other work duties, such as turning off lights and locking gates, that makes cleaning/sanitizing at night often unfeasible. In the peak season, staff are stationed at some of the satellite locations which helps to facilitate more prompt completion of duties as travel time is eliminated. User groups may also have keys to the facilities and be delegated the responsibility of opening and closing the facilities. The chart below outlines the schedule for cleaning/sanitizing of washrooms:

Maintenance Item	City Maintenance Standards – Regular Use	City Maintenance Standard Sport Use
Open Facilities	Daily from May to October	Determined by bookings
Close Facilities	Daily from May to October	Determined by bookings
Cleaning/Sanitizing	Daily from May to October	Daily from May to October, when in use.
Stocking Washrooms with Supplies	As required from May to October	As required from May to October

Impacts to the Program that Affect Operating Hours:

Delays in opening sites according to the schedule are typical where additional cleaning/sanitizing are required at a site due to vandalism and mis-use. Examples include cleaning broken glass, cleaning of soiled surfaces, removal of graffiti, removing blockage in drains (sinks and floor), mopping up intentional flooding and the safe removal of drug paraphernalia. It is paramount that staff complete their work carefully to avoid injury as drug paraphernalia in particular can be hidden. Staff have been pricked by hidden needles while completing washroom duties.

Delays in closing sites or situations preventing the staff from completing cleaning/sanitizing at closing time can also include individuals not vacating the facility to permit staff to do their work. In these instances, Park staff call security services to assist staff and in severe instances, Police are called by security services when additional support is needed. Staff are still required to remain on-site or return once the situation is resolved, which impacts the route schedule, creates overtime and requires staff in parks later than intended.

Impacts to the Program that Affect Facility Availability:

A crew will not open a washroom facility if there is significant cleaning/sanitizing or repairs are needed to ensure the facility is operational and safe for the public to use. Examples include: damaged or broken fixtures, damage to plumbing, damage due to intentional flooding, damage due to fire set to the facility.

COVID Impacts to the Program that Affect Service Delivery:

During COVID, a second cleaning/sanitizing per day was added at the start of the afternoon shift to ensure a minimum standard of two visit per day; however current has changed to sanitize once a day based on loosening of restrictions. To complete the work safely, staff are wearing additional PPE and the cleaning and sanitizing protocol has changed, resulting in an increased task time as it takes longer for staff to protect themselves appropriately and longer to clean and sanitize the facility safely.

Impacts on Other Parks Programs:

The Parks Washroom Program has become more complex in recent years as identified by the impacts above. The pressure on the Parks program is felt even more in September and October when Student workers leave their positions after Labour Day. The duties in the fall are performed by a skeleton crew of Parks full time staff which are responsible for all tasks of the Parks Program. In order to cover weekends and evenings Parks can occasionally keep some students working but when they are unavailable, staff work on unfunded overtime to complete those duties. With the increased use of parks in the winter staff have been asked to assess potential washroom availability; a Recommendation Report respecting Winter Washrooms will be presented to Public Works Committee on October 18, 2021.

Publicly accessible washrooms are also available throughout the City in libraries, recreation centres and arenas. When COVID restrictions permit, they are available as follows: Hamilton Public Library offers accessible washrooms at Central Library and all library branches during [open library hours](#) and during Cool Place and Warm Place hours. Masks are required for entry into library spaces. Publicly accessible washrooms are available at Recreation Centres, Senior Centres and Arenas during their normal weekly operating hours.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A”– Regular Use Washrooms Operated by Parks

Appendix “B” – Sport Use Washrooms Operated by Parks

Appendix “C”– Washroom Facilities Operated by Other Keyholders