

## Service Level Options – Riverfront Rotary Park Noise Concerns and Mitigation Strategies

### ISSUE

Concerns regarding excessive noise have been raised by residents adjacent to Rotary Park and City Council has approved the installation of lockable gates to be installed at the entrance to the parking lot. This report provides service level options for operations of the gate.

### BACKGROUND

#### History

At the City Council meeting on April 25, 2022, Councillor Block made the following inquiry:

Would Administration please report back on options for a plan to mitigate noise concerns at Rotary Park, including a CPTED review and a security gate, as well as costs associated with potential options.

At its meeting on May 24, 2022, City Council considered a report from the General Manager, Utilities and Environment and resolved:

That Administration be instructed to have a gate erected to close Rotary Park, funded through Reserve for Capital Expenditure, with a report back outlining options for parameters for operations prior to locking the gate.

#### Current Status

The installation of a gate at Rotary Park is in process and will be installed by the end of June 2022.

The following table shows attributes of various parking lots along the river including if a gate is present, and the hours of operation of both the washrooms and the gates. All sites have washrooms except the Weir. Gate operations are seasonal occurring April 15<sup>th</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup> each year.

Park Name	Washroom	Washroom		Gate	Gate	
		Summer Hours	Winter Hours		Summer Hours	Winter Hours
Rotary	Yes	8am to 10pm	Seasonal	No	TBD	TBD
Meewasin	Yes	8am to 10pm	8am to 8pm	Yes	Not in use.	
Weir	No	n/a	n/a	Yes	5:30am to 11pm	Seasonal
Gabriel Dumont	Yes	8am to 10pm	8am to 8pm	Yes	5:30am to 11pm	Seasonal
Wonderhub/Shakespeare	Yes	8am to 10pm	10am to 8pm	No	n/a	

### Public Engagement

No public engagement is planned at this time. Communication activities, including the installation of signage at the site, a public service announcement, and information on the City's website, will be conducted once the gate is installed and hours of operations have been finalized.

### City of Saskatoon's Current Approach

The current approach to gate operation at parking lots along the river is to open the gates at 5:30 a.m. and close at 11:00 p.m. between April 15 and October 31 each year. During the winter months, the gates are locked open.

### Approaches in Other Jurisdictions

**City of Calgary:** parks are open from 5:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Park gates are closed and locked at 11:00 p.m. and reopen at approximately 5:00 a.m. the next day. Any vehicles left in the parking lot will remain there until the following day. The washroom hours in Calgary parks vary in opening times, with the hours of operations at Prince's Island and Edworthy Park being 7:00am to 9:00pm, which are both located along the Bow River.

**City of Edmonton:** William Hawrelak Park, situated along the river, is open from 5:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. and washrooms are open from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. (June to September). William Hawrelak Park has a gated parking lot which is open the same hours as the park. Not all of the parks along the North Saskatchewan River have gated parking lots.

## OPTIONS

### Option 1 – Alignment with Current Gate Operating Hours

Operating hours for both the gate and the washrooms would align with the current operating hours of gates at other parks along the river (5:30 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.).

#### Pros

- Public access to both the parking lot and the river early mornings and late evenings.
- Gate operating hours are aligned at all riverfront parking lots.
- No additional operating cost to open the gates and washrooms at the same time.
- No increased private or administration costs for early set-up of Outdoor Special Events.
- Longer washroom operating hours at this location.

#### Cons

- Washroom operating hours would be different than other public washrooms along the riverfront, possibly resulting in public confusion.
- Historically extension of washroom operating hours has resulted in increased vandalism and repairs.

- Extension of washroom operating hours (3.5 hrs/day) would require an additional daily cleaning at a cost of \$40/day (\$3,600 for approximately 3 months in 2022, \$7,200 for 6 months in 2023).
- Extending washroom hours until 11:00 p.m. may promote access to the park, possibly resulting in increased activity and noise complaints.

**Option 2 – Alignment with Current Washroom Operating Hours**

Operating hours for the gate and the washroom would align with the current summer operating hours of the public washrooms along the river, from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

**Pros**

- Washroom operating hours would align with nearby public washrooms at River Landing, North Kiwanis Park, and Gabriel Dumont.
- No impact to existing washroom service levels or potential for increased vandalism or repairs.
- No additional operating cost due to the gates and washrooms opening at the same time.
- No additional cleaning required.

**Cons**

- Gated parking lot hours would be different than every other gated parking lots along the river, possibly resulting in public confusion.
- Limited public access to the parking lot prior to 8:00 a.m., resulting in reduced park service levels (park and river activities).
- Increased civic services/administration costs to ensure gate is opened early in the morning for Outdoor Special Events.

**Option 3 – Varying Gate and Washroom Hours**

Operating hours for the washroom would align with the current operating hours of other public washrooms (8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.) and the gate operating hours align with current gated parking lots (5:30 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.) at other parks along the river.

**Pros**

- Operating hours of the gate/parking lot would align with other gated parking lots along the river.
- Operating hours of the washrooms would be aligned with other public washrooms along the river.
- Minimal public education as both washrooms and gate operating hours align with the current City approach in other parks along riverbank.
- Public access to the parking lot (and river) early in the morning and late evening supports river-based activities and special events.
- No change to washroom service levels.

**Cons**

- Increase in operating costs for Commissionaires to open the gates and washrooms at different times (\$3,000 for 3 months in 2022, \$6,000 for 6 months in 2023).

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Standing Policy Committee on Environment, Utilities and Corporate Services recommend to City Council that Option 3 – Varying Gate and Washroom Hours be approved as the service level for the gate installed at the parking lot near Rotary Park.

**RATIONALE**

As has been identified above, Option 3 is recommended based on the following:

- There would be no disruption or confusion by the public, as the washroom and gate operating hours would be consistent throughout the parking lots along the river.
- There would be minimal public education required as the hours are consistent with current approaches.
- There would be no increases in costs due to an increase in vandalism and repairs due to the washrooms being open three and a half additional hours.
- The Public would be able to access the parking lot early in the morning, which allows them direct access to the river and parks.
- Outdoor Special events would not be affected with the consistent hours of operation.
- Reduce the hours that people would use the washrooms for inappropriate acts, vandalism, or repairs.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The direct costs associated with the recommended service level for gate operations are estimated at \$3,000 in 2022 and \$6,000 in 2023.

Given the risks assumed in the current operating budget, as highlighted in the 2022 Budget Implementation Update report to Governance and Priorities Committee in March 2022, and the need to find savings to address some shortfalls, there is no funding source readily available for this request. Administration could manage this within existing operational budgets for 2022 and 2023, with the additional expenses included as a year-end variance. Future budget submissions beyond 2023 would be submitted for City Council’s consideration during the 2024 Business Plan and Budget Deliberations.

**NEXT STEPS**

Upon approval, Administration will arrange for services to unlock the gates as per the service level and undertake communications activities outlined in this report.

Report Approval

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