

Access to Public Washrooms and Drinking Water – Summer 2025

ISSUE

On May 21, 2025, City council resolved to provide funding to operationalize the 2025 Pleasant Hill outdoor washroom facility. This report provides an update on the operational plan the Administration and community partners have developed. The washroom and shower site in Pleasant Hill is planned to open on June 15, 2025, and operate through to October 31, 2025. The City's funding will only operate the washrooms until the end of September. However, due to the urgent need for the facility, community partners requested it open as soon as appropriate staffing could be in place, while additional funding sources to cover the full time period to October 31, 2025, and navigation services, continue to be explored.

BACKGROUND

The Standing Policy Committee on Planning Development and Community Services, at its [meeting](#) on June 7, 2023, received a report regarding Public Drinking Water Access. This report included a review of publicly available water in Saskatoon and advised that Saskatoon Emergency Management Organization received funding through the Government of Canada's Reaching Home Program for a pilot project to provide bottled water distribution, misting tents and a water bottle filling station, in partnership with the Westside Community Clinic.

City Council, at its Regular Business [meeting](#) on June 28, 2023, received a report regarding the Public Washroom Navigator Program Pilot and resolved:

"That the Scope of the Public Washroom Navigator Program Pilot be broadened to accommodate complementary uses which includes funding projects that address priority issues related to overall community wellbeing."

City Council, at its Regular Business [meeting](#) on May 29, 2024, received a report regarding Expansion of Access to Public Washrooms and Drinking Water and resolved:

"That the Administration proceed with the three options described in this report including

1. Option 4 – Contracted staffed purchased, used washroom trailer;
2. Option 6 – Pilot project for one contracted staffed Riverbank Public Washroom;
3. Option 7 - Additional drinking water; and
4. \$702,400 be allocated from the Reserve for Capital Expenditures to Capital Project 2652 to enact these options."

City Council, at its Regular Business [meeting](#) on May 29, 2024, also resolved, in part:

“That the Administration report back for the 2025 budget deliberations with proposed investment for City-led ongoing provision of 24/7 washrooms in the Pleasant Hill/Riversdale area including a transition to 365 days of operation.”

City Council, at its 2025 Preliminary Business Plan and Budget [meeting](#) on December 2, 2024, received a report regarding Expansion of Access to Public Washrooms and Drinking Water – Report Back Items, and resolved:

“That Approach 4: Exploring partnerships and options to expand public washroom options in the Pleasant Hill and Riversdale areas as outlined in the report, be approved.”

City Council, at its Regular Business [meeting](#) on January 29, 2025, resolved:

“That the December 2, 2024 resolution of Council “*That Approach 4: Exploring partnerships and options to expand public washroom options in the Pleasant Hill and Riversdale areas as outlined in the report, be approved*” be rescinded, with the following motions then made in place:

1. That Approach 4: Exploring partnerships and options to expand public washroom options in the Pleasant Hill and Riversdale areas as outlined in the report, be approved;
2. That an extension of the existing pilot of supervision at North Kiwanis be approved as per the December 2, 2024 report, to December 31, 2025 at a cost of \$239,000, with funding to come from the Reserve for Capital Expenditures; and
3. That reporting be brought forward for consideration as part of the 2026/27 budget regarding options for public washrooms as contained and updated from the December 2, 2024 report”.

City Council, at its Regular Business [meeting](#) on May 21, 2025, resolved:

“That the City of Saskatoon provide funding in the amount of what is unspent in the capital project that was used for public washroom project in 2024, to operationalize the 2025 Pleasant Hill outdoor washroom facilities, and that Administration and partners continue to seek funding for navigation services.”

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

2024 Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. Washroom Pilot Site

The piloted washroom trailer was located at the Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. (CUMFI) office, at 315 Avenue M South. It operated from August 27, 2024, to October 31, 2024 and was accessed over 14,304 times by people of all ages.

There were no incidents of vandalism or significant damage throughout the pilot, due to the site being staffed 24/7 by Saskatoon Tribal Council’s Sawēyihotān Outreach and Peacekeepers. Their presence created a safe and welcoming place for people to use

the washroom, clean their clothes, and bathe. The Sawēyhtotān Outreach team also provided navigation services for anyone looking for help, shelter and stability. They tracked visitor data, which identified that young children and youth also used the washroom, spent time with Peacekeepers and considered this site a safe place in the community.

Community support for this washroom approach was also significant, including:

- The Friendship Inn provided sandwiches daily for residents using the washroom;
- Large donations of toilet paper and feminine hygiene products were received; and
- Saskatoon Fire Department approving an ongoing fire pit to help people stay warm through the evening.

2025 Proposed CUMFI Outdoor Navigation Hub

The number of residents experiencing homelessness continues to rise across the city. The lack of access to services and resources is creating significant risk for the safety and well-being of these residents. With the closure of the two overnight warming locations on March 31, 2025, there are currently no public washrooms available in the Riversdale and Pleasant Hill neighbourhoods between 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m.

In response to increasing need and building on the success and community support for the 2024 CUMFI washroom pilot project, Administration has been working with Sawēyhtotān and CUMFI to establish similar operations and outreach supports this year. Both partners have confirmed their participation and interest in supporting the project this year.

An addition for this year is a donated trailer modified to include a shower stall and sink, secured by CUMFI.

City Council, at its Regular Business meeting on May 21, 2025, approved funding in the amount that is unspent in the capital project (\$230,000), for the operation of the public washrooms that can begin once appropriate staffing is secured by partners. A breakdown of the washroom site costs is provided in Appendix 1. Funding for the navigation services at the site is not yet secured and will continue to be sought from other sources.

Access to Drinking Water

The City provides water fountains and/or water bottle filling stations at parks and civic facilities across the city. Since 2023, the City has provided two water bottle filling stations located at:

- Westside Community Clinic, 1528 20th Street West; and
- Sawēyhtotān Supportive Family Housing - Kotawān I & II, 219 Avenue K South

The City has also coordinated community partners to distribute water bottles to individuals experiencing homelessness as part of their ongoing operations throughout the summer.

At a Special City Council meeting in June 2025, City Council will consider a report to fund \$35,000 from the Response to Homelessness Capital Project, to be used for water bottle distribution in 2025. This will allow for approximately 5,000 bottles per week over 12 weeks to be distributed to community partners.

Long-term Strategy for Public Washroom Facilities

A coordinated public washroom strategy for City operated washrooms is being developed to improve access to clean, safe, and inclusive facilities across Saskatoon. This strategy will assess existing City washrooms to identify opportunities for:

- Staff or supervised locations;
- Security enhancements or checks to prevent closures due to vandalism and damage; and
- Gaps in geographic coverage that may require additional facilities.

The goal is to ensure all residents, particularly those who are most vulnerable and require more frequent access to washrooms, such as pregnant women, children and elderly people, have consistent and equitable access to essential facilities. Current data from the staffed North Kiwanis washroom pilot indicate that staffed locations have significantly reduced incidents of vandalism and misuse, ensuring the washrooms remain open more consistently for the public.

A report on the long-term strategy will be brought forward later in 2025.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The operation of the CUMFI Public Washroom site is expected to run from June 15, 2025, to October 31, 2025. The City has provided \$230,000 in funding to support the operating and security costs. This will enable the washroom to operate only until September 30, 2025, with a reduced staff from last year. Additional funding support is required to extend the operations until the end of the October as well as provide the desired navigation supports at the site. The objective is to keep the washroom open until another washroom facility becomes available November 1, 2025, as part of the winter warming strategy.

Should additional funding become available, or unspent funding remains by September 30, 2025, Administration would extend the operation of the public washroom facility until October 31, 2025 or until the available funding permits.

NEXT STEPS

Administration will continue to work with CUMFI and the Saskatoon Tribal Council's Sawēiyhtotān program to operationalize the washroom site and seek other funding partners for the navigation services. Administration will also proceed with the distribution of bottled water to community partners and is preparing a city-wide public washroom strategy, which will include options for the ongoing operation of public washrooms, including the potential for future use of the washroom trailer. A report will be brought forward later in 2025 on this strategy and options will be brought forward for consideration as part of the 2026/2027 Business Plan and Budget Deliberations.

APPENDICES

1. 2025 Pleasant Hill Public Washroom Cost Estimate

REPORT APPROVAL

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