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PUBLIC WASHROOM ACCESS DURING THE PANDEMIC

Heather Morgan, Vice-Chair advised that she was approached by a member of public regarding concerns related to access to public washrooms during the pandemic.

Ms. Morgan described the challenges of trying to access a public washroom in a timely fashion during the pandemic particularly for those people who may have a medical condition. She suggested that moving forth from the pandemic making sure there is good signage so that members of the public can locate public washrooms in the City. Ms. Morgan mentioned an online program in the City of Ottawa entitled GottaGo! at www.ottawapublictoilets.ca so that members of the public and tourists can easily locate public washrooms in the municipality.

Kevin Datema, Manager of Recreation and Culture Services provided an overview of the washrooms and services as it relates to the Community Centres and Sports Fields. He explained that because of the lockdown during the pandemic that Community Centres have been closed which normally would have public washrooms available. He mentioned that Southshore Community Centres public washroom has been open but only during specific times. He discussed that when there are sports fields in the City that do not have access to public washrooms then normally there are two portable toilets are deployed one of which is accessible to the location.

Gus Diamantopoulos, Manager of Corporate Facilities provided an overview of the public washrooms as it relates to the Corporate Facilities including City Hall, Barrie Public Library and Transit Terminal. He explained that the Corporate Facilities Department is responsible for maintenance and cleaning of the public washroom facilities in the parks. He mentioned that because of the pandemic that some of these facilities have either been closed or with limited access has impacted the amount of available public washrooms. He mentioned that some of these facilities have either been closed or with limited access during the pandemic has impacted the amount of available public washrooms.

Mr. Diamantopoulos described some of the challenges with trying to provide year-round public access to public washroom facilities which would include additional costs to maintain and there would be some of the facilities dependant of age that would need to be either rebuilt, renovated and winterized for accessibility purposes.

The Committee asked a number of questions of Mr. Datema and Mr. Diamantopoulos and received responses.

The Committee discussed preparing an accessibility washroom strategy for all City of Barrie Public Facilities to determine the current conditions and potential costs associated with accessible renovations for each location.