

A10

CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT



Report Date: August 29, 2006
Author: Grant Woff
Phone No.: 604.871.6966
RTS No.: 05923
VanRIMS No.: 13-4700-11
Meeting Date: September 12, 2006

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: General Manager of Engineering Services
SUBJECT: Installation of 8 Automated Public Toilets

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Automated Public Toilets be installed at the locations outlined in this report, and that the Park Board be requested to approve installation of an Automated Public Toilet on Pigeon Park.
- B. THAT TransLink again be requested to provide publicly accessible toilet facilities at all major transit terminals.
- C. THAT additional funding of \$180,000 for utility connections to the 8 Automated Public Toilets be provided from increased revenue from the 2006 Street Furniture Program.

COUNCIL POLICY

There is no applicable Council Policy.

SUMMARY

The City has ordered 8 Automated Public Toilets (APTs) to be supplied by CBS Decaux (previously Viacom/JCDecaux) under the Street Furniture contract. Locations for these toilets have been selected to maximise usefulness, while minimising impacts on adjacent development.

PURPOSE

To obtain Council approval of sites for the installation of 8 Automated Public Toilets (6 small, 2 large).

BACKGROUND

The City is currently in the third year of a 20 year contract with CBS Decaux to implement a co-ordinated suite of street furniture. Under this contract CBS Decaux provide, install, service and maintain a number of elements, including bus shelters, litter containers, benches, bike racks, and Automated Public Toilets. This furniture is provided at no cost to the City (in fact the City receives a revenue stream), and CBS Decaux provide the furniture in return for the exclusive right to sell advertising space on designated street furniture.

At present, the public toilet situation in Downtown Vancouver is much the same as it has been for many years, and even with just two on-street public toilets, the level of service provided is similar to, or better than, the central areas of other Canadian cities. City wide, the majority of Vancouver's public toilets are provided by the Park Board at the many City parks and recreational facilities. There are over one hundred public toilets in parks and community centres around the city. Accessible toilets are also available to the public in some civic buildings (such as City Hall and the Library), VIA Rail station, malls and shopping centres.

The City also operates two large washroom facilities under the street at Hastings and Main and at Hastings and Hamilton. These two comfort stations are open from 6am to 6pm, and each has a staff of two that supervise and ensure the facilities are at a high level of cleanliness 365 days per year.

On the City's rapid transit system, toilets have been built into the stations on the Millennium line (but not the Expo line). However, these toilets are kept locked, and require a key for use, so they do not function as readily available public toilets.

As many businesses restrict access to their paying customers, there is a general need for public toilets throughout the downtown area for both shoppers and tourists. Accessibility to the existing public washrooms becomes more restrictive at night.

In Vancouver, the lack of public washrooms has become a major issue in the Downtown Eastside (DTES). This area has severe social problems due to drug addiction, mental illness and homelessness. The lack of public toilets has compounded the intense problems of this area where the result is defecation and urination in the lanes. Downtown and DTES lanes have to be flushed nightly by Engineering Services, to remove garbage, urine and excrement and to reduce odours. The flushing is not completely effective, and the lanes remain smelly and unsightly. There are also similar problems, largely with urination, in the entertainment area around Granville Mall.

This issue of defecation and urination in lanes and on public property is complex, and will require a broad approach to resolve. A staff group (combining Engineering, Coastal Health, Park Board and Housing expertise) has been struck to deal with this, and will present recommendations to Council in the near future.

San Francisco has had 25 Decaux Automated Public Toilets installed for the last 10 years. Their experience indicates that Automated Public Toilets can help reduce the instances of public defecation etc, but they do not solve the problem. They have had to limit operation to 12 hours per day in areas where drug abuse and prostitution were problems. Seattle has had 5 APTs in service for around 2½ years. All units in Seattle are in use 24 hrs per day, and operate without constant monitoring. To this point, vandalism has been less than anticipated. Los Angeles has had 3 Decaux APTs in service for 2 years. All units are in use 24 hrs per day, and operate without constant monitoring. As with Seattle, the experience in Los Angeles to this point has been very positive, with minimal operational concerns.

DISCUSSION

Installation of public toilets is one of a number of options that could be employed to help deal with the problems of urination/defecation in public areas, and it is not expected that they will solve the problem. Improvements in housing and treatment for mental illness and drug addiction offer greater scope for effectiveness, however installation of public toilets is something that can be done relatively quickly, and it will be a positive step. To achieve a significant reduction in public urination/defecation within the City will require a concerted, combined effort from a number of major agencies and levels of government - City, Health Dept, Park Board, Translink, Provincial Govt. etc.

Installation of the proposed 8 Automated Public Toilets is intended to assist the situation in the Downtown Eastside and the Granville Mall entertainment area, help provide for the need of the significant homeless population throughout the Downtown area, and as well, generally improve amenities for tourists and shoppers. Specific locations have been sought that will not unduly impact adjacent business.

This program will not deal with the needs of the transit system. Some of the highest pedestrian concentrations in the City are around major public transit facilities (e.g. Broadway/Commercial Skytrain Station), and a single automated public toilet will have little impact considering the volume of people in these areas. Instead it is recommended that Council again request TransLink to step forward and provide facilities for transit patrons within the station areas etc. (on May 24th 2005 after receiving a presentation on "Women in Transit", Council approved recommendation A. to refer to TranLink for consideration: iv - Provide washrooms at close proximity to every major bus stop and SkyTrain station). It should be noted that these major transit interchanges (Skytrain, Seabus etc) have station areas with sufficient room to accommodate toilet facilities appropriate for the pedestrian volumes involved. Most major cities in the world provide toilet facilities in these sorts of transit interchanges.

Automated Public Toilets offer an innovative approach to providing public restrooms. Each toilet is self-contained, and following each use, is automatically cleaned, disinfected and dried. There are 2 styles provided by CBS/Decaux, a larger wheelchair accessible unit which is approx. 12' by 7' in footprint, and a smaller unit, approx. 5' by 3½' in footprint. As with all elements in the Street Furniture contract, CBS Decaux is responsible for all maintenance and servicing of the toilets, including internal and external cleaning, and removal of graffiti etc. Both units are fitted with internal garbage receptacles. There is a possibility that needles will be deposited into these containers. If so, this will be problematic for CBS Decaux, as all garbage will then have to be treated as dangerous waste. Hopefully the

experience in Vancouver will mirror that of Los Angeles, and Seattle where there has not been a problem with needles in the APTs. If problems of this nature do arise, Installation of a “sharps” container within the toilet could be contemplated.

Under the Street Furniture contract, 17 toilets are to be supplied and installed in Vancouver over the next 10 years. Because of the complexity of the mechanisms involved, these units are expensive, and form a significant part of CBS Decaux’s commitment. At this point, the City has ordered 8 units, to gauge how they will function in Vancouver. They are being manufactured in France, shipped to Vancouver, and as these will be the first units in Canada, CBS Decaux are including CSA approval as part of the installation process. Future deployment of the remaining toilets will be guided by the experience gained in this initial rollout.

Under Provincial law, these public toilets must be available for use free of charge.

Large Automated Public Toilet



Small Automated Public Toilet



Experience in San Francisco, and to a lesser extent in Seattle, indicates that in areas with social issues, the units are subject to misuse with regard to drugs/prostitution, and particularly with regard to vandalism. CBS Decaux have indicated a willingness to be flexible and prompt when facing these challenges. Measures that are available to address this misuse include:

- the units come with a time limit on occupation - after a set (and adjustable) time, the occupant is warned, and the door opens (the time limit is always in effect). A balance needs to be maintained between providing sufficient time for the occupant, but not so much time that impatience for waiting patrons increases to the point of vandalism.

-between 8am and 8pm, CBS Decaux are providing dedicated staff that will travel among the 8 units providing maintenance and stocking of supplies etc. This staff presence will not be in place during the night however.

-every endeavour has been made to locate the toilets in areas where a higher level of street activity will create 'eyes on the street'.

-if night-time misuse becomes severe, as an option, the 24 hours per day availability can be reduced.

-it is anticipated the Police will be called from time to time to deal with behaviour around the toilets.

-a further option would be on site monitoring by dedicated staff, or a working arrangement with an adjacent business to keep a watch over the unit. For the Downtown Eastside in particular, on site monitoring could possibly be provided with peer supervision through community organisations (however, experience with this supervision at Main & Hastings in 2001 indicated it can be costly).

PROPOSED LOCATIONS

There are challenges associated with finding suitable locations to install the automated toilets; limited sidewalk width, as well as sewer, water and electrical connections required for each toilet limit the availability of practical sites. Unlike the glass CBS Decaux Transit Shelters, the toilets are not transparent, and can block the view of adjacent stores. In addition, stores may object to a toilet being located outside their premises for aesthetic and other reasons. The opinion has been expressed by some businesses that installation of an APT will increase drug/prostitution/homeless activity in their area; however, street conditions in some parts of the City have deteriorated to the point where extraordinary measures need to be taken in order to provide more accessible toilet options, particularly at night. It is hoped that if the City takes a leadership role in this area, conditions will be improved and other organizations (Translink, Provincial Govt. etc), will join in the effort.

All BIAs and NIST teams as well as the Vancouver Network of Drug Users (VANDU) have been contacted for input during the selection process. Members of the Police Department were part of the Toilet Location group which started this site selection process. All locations have been discussed with the adjoining property owner/business etc.

The proposed locations are detailed in Appendix 1, and are summarised as follows:

- | | | |
|----------------------|--|-------|
| 1. Pigeon Park | - Northwest corner, Hastings & Carrall | large |
| 2. Fire hall | - North side of Powell, West of Main | small |
| 3. Thornton Park | - East side of Main, North of Terminal | large |
| 4. Emery Barnes Park | - West side of Richards, North of Davie | small |
| 5. BC Tel Parkade | - North side of Robson, 55 ft West of Richards | small |

6. Post Office	- West side of Homer, South of Dunsmuir	small
7. Davie Village	- North side of Davie, 140 ft West of Thurlow	small
8. Royal Bank	- North side of Nelson, 15 ft West of Lane West of Granville	small

A map showing the individual locations is included as Appendix 2.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As mentioned previously, there is no direct cost to the City for purchase, maintenance and operation of the toilets - they are funded by CBS Decaux as part of the Street Furniture program. However, the City does have the opportunity to substitute different components as part of this program, so the toilets do represent an allocation of resources. The City will also have some obligation for utility connection costs. The commitment of CBS Decaux for APT installation and utility connection is limited to \$40,000 plus CPI per location (currently approximately \$42,320). For all 8 locations, this amounts to approximately \$338,560. The total estimated cost of installation and utility connection is \$520,000, requiring City funding of approximately \$180,000 to make up the difference. It is proposed this funding be provided from the projected increased revenues from the 2006 Street Furniture program. Under the Street Furniture Contract, the City receives 20% of the gross revenue generated by the street furniture advertising sold by CBS Decaux. For 2006, advertising sales have increased more than anticipated, and the City's share is projected to be in excess of \$180,000 above the 2006 budgeted income.

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct personnel implications as the toilets are operated and maintained by CBS Decaux; however, the Police Dept. have noted that they may be required to deal with issues arising from installation of the units. There is also the possibility of peer supervision if drugs/sex trade activity become problems.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

It is hoped the Automated Public Toilets will help in reducing the public urination/defecation problems in the Downtown Eastside and Downtown entertainment areas.

CBS Decaux have indicated they will use "green" cleaning products and supplies as well as low-flow water fixtures, energy saving light fixtures etc. where possible within the constraints of the toilet designs.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The units will provide a 24 hour toilet facility for those people in the Downtown area who may be homeless, or who otherwise cannot find accessible toilets.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

CBS Decaux will have the 8 toilets delivered to Vancouver in November of this year. Installation of all units is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year, except possibly for Pigeon Park. This location requires approval by the Park Board prior to placement, and also, the Park Board are currently completing a redesign of the area.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Working with the Corporate Communications Division, a communications plan will be developed to support a launch event after the installation of the first of these public toilet(s) in Vancouver.

Messaging will focus on the convenience for those who will use the facilities, and also the benefits to the public realm (improved cleanliness) and to the environment (by use of green products and technologies).

CONCLUSION

Installation of these 8 Automated Public Toilets will provide an improvement in the availability of public washroom facilities in Downtown Vancouver, at minimal cost to Vancouver citizens, and with minimum impact on adjacent development.

* * * * *

APPENDIX 1

Pigeon Park - Northwest corner, Hastings & Carrall



It is proposed that one of the large toilets be located in Pigeon Park (North West corner of Hastings and Carrall intersection). Although it is park property, it is a relatively small area, and functions largely as a popular gathering place. It has never been developed with a public toilet. The Park Board are currently redesigning this park and Park Board and Engineering staff have jointly determined a favourable site, generally adjacent the southern boundary of the park. This location is supported by VANDU. It is Recommended that Council approve this location, and that similar approval be sought from the Park Board.

Fire hall - North side of Powell, West of Main



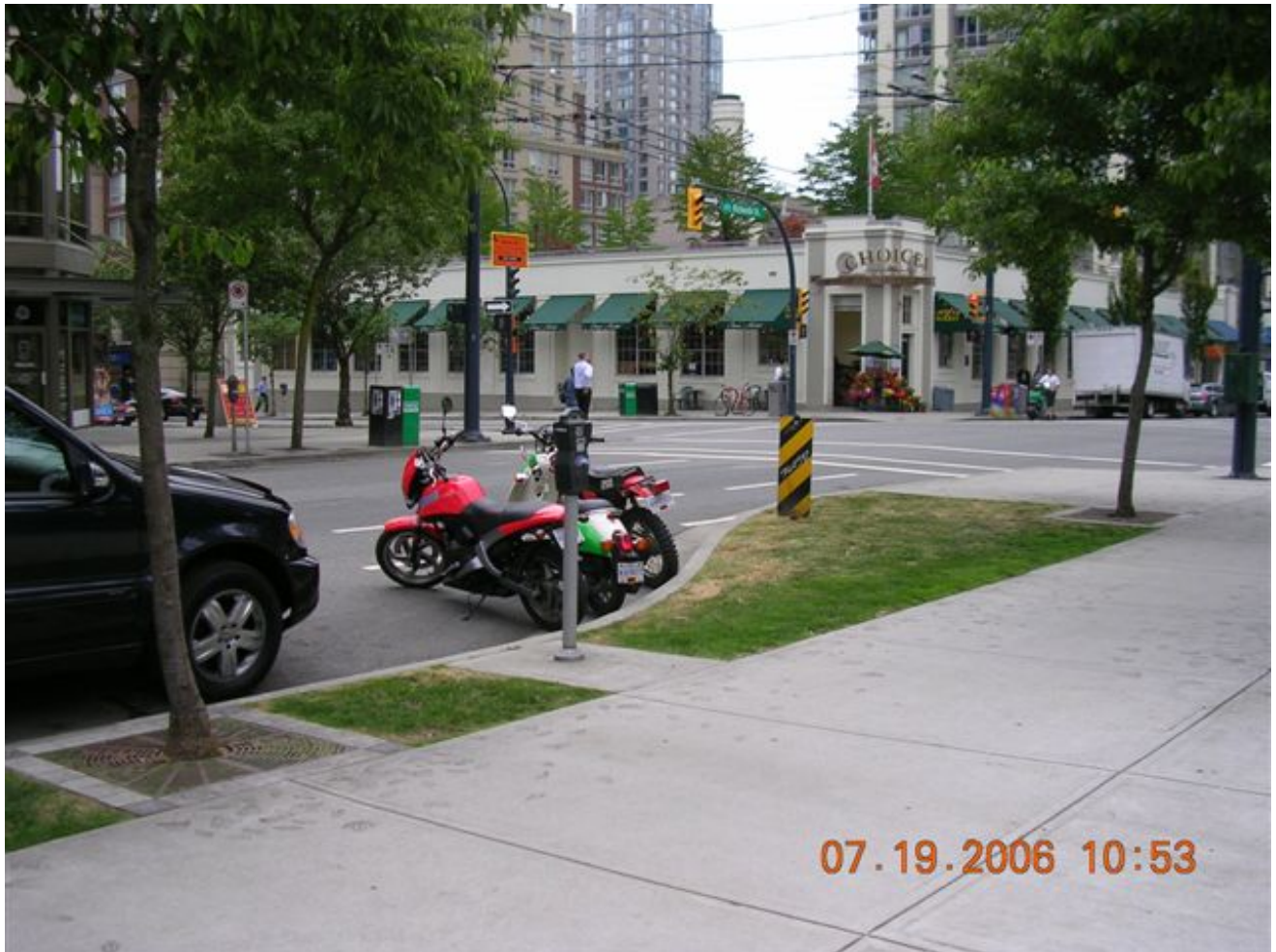
To provide additional facilities for the Downtown Eastside, a small toilet is proposed to be located on Powell Street, outside the fire hall at Powell and Main. The toilet will be positioned between the bus shelter and Main Street. This location will provide additional facilities in the Downtown Eastside, and is generally situated midway between Pigeon Park, and existing toilet facilities at Oppenheimer Park. The location is supported by VANDU.

Thornton Park - East side of Main, North of Terminal



Although not strictly within the Downtown Eastside, this location is on the eastern side of the Downtown area, and would provide an additional facility within the general area. There are heavy pedestrian volumes around this location, generated by the bus stop on Main Street (over 2000 people per day loading), Thornton Park, and the Main/Scienceworld Skytrain station. There is an unusually wide street Right of Way adjacent the south end of Thornton Park, which will handily accommodate installation of the second large unit. It should be noted that there are some toilets available to the public in this general area, within the Pacific Central rail station. These station toilets are open between the hours of 5am and 1am.

Emery Barnes Park - West side of Richards, North of Davie



Emery Barnes is a newly constructed park, which draws people for a variety of activities, and is also within the vicinity of the entertainment area. A small toilet will be placed adjacent the park within the recently built roadway bulge on the west side of Richards, just north of Davie Street. Sometimes people sleep in this park overnight, and it is hoped the toilet will reduce the incidence of urination etc in the park, as well as help with the problems generally around the entertainment area.

BC Tel Parkade - North side of Robson, 55 ft West of Richards



A small toilet will be placed between the bus shelter and Richards Street. This location will help the entertainment area, and also shoppers and tourists in general. The location is supported by the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association (DVBIA).

Post Office - West side of Homer, South of Dunsmuir



A small toilet will be placed on the west side of Homer, just south of Dunsmuir. This location will be of use to transit patrons on their way to/from Stadium station, people in Cathedral park, visitors to the Cathedral on Dunsmuir, and to waiting north shore transit passengers at the bus stop on the east side of Homer, outside the main Post Office. The location is supported by the DVBA.

Davie Village - North Side Davie, 150 ft West of Thurlow



A small toilet will be placed near the west end of the bus shelter. This location will help provide a facility for the large number of pedestrians in this area. Pedestrian volumes are generally very high, and particularly so during events such as the fireworks and pride parade etc. This location is supported by the Davie Village BIA.

Royal Bank

- North side of Nelson, 15 ft West of Lane West of Granville



A small toilet will be provided on Nelson St, in front of the parking area at the rear of the Royal Bank at the corner of Nelson and Howe. This toilet is well placed to help with the problems in the entertainment area, and is supported by the DVBIA.

APPENDIX 2

