

CR_7185 Public Washroom
Pilot Project Evaluation

Edmonton

Final Report

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Executive Summary

In an effort to improve safety, accessibility and cleanliness of public washrooms, Administration initiated a pilot program to provide attendants at the Whyte Avenue public washroom, located on 82 ave and Gateway Blvd NW. An additional pilot, using the same model, was deployed at The Nook cafe.

Both pilots were disrupted by the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic, however results indicate that overall the pilots were effective at improving cleanliness and safety. Qualitative analysis indicates the pilot was also successful at connecting vulnerable people to supports and resources.

Administration offers a series of recommendations for the future expansion of any public washroom pilots, including improvements to communication and consistency of expectations. While the cost to the City for the pilot is more than a baseline custodial contract, there are larger system wide savings realized through a decrease to calls for service from the Edmonton Police Service.

Outcome: Increased usage of the public washroom facilities by the general population.

Findings: Data analyzed through the evaluation shows an increase in overall users over the course of the pilot, though it is unclear whether this increase is from general public use, versus those seeking shelter, due to limitations in how visitors reported their rationale for visiting. Additionally, as weather conditions improved, fewer people were seeking the washroom for shelter (originally used as an identifier for vulnerable populations), which made it increasingly difficult to identify vulnerable population use.

Outcome: Increased satisfaction regarding safety and cleanliness of washrooms

Findings: The evaluation found the pilot was effective in achieving this outcome. Incident data provided by Edmonton Police Service (EPS) showed a significant decline in occurrences when compared to 2019, illustrating the potential impact attendant's presence had on the area. Additionally, both online and in-person survey results showed there was an overwhelming percentage of respondents who felt the washrooms were safer due to the presence of the attendant. In terms of cleanliness, attendants were able to maintain the washroom with both regular and ad hoc cleanings, which they felt helped increase visitors' sense of pride in the location and decrease the number of purposeful messes in the washroom. These safety and cleanliness observations are echoed by a large percentage of survey respondents who said that they would use the washroom again in the future.

Outcome: Improved value for money regarding the management of public washrooms

Findings: A cost analysis showed that despite a significant increase in direct staffing costs for the washroom, these costs can be partially offset through the overall increase in safety and cleanliness, as evidenced by fewer work orders and calls for EPS service in the area.

Outcome: Vulnerable population is better supported

Outcome: Increased employment for people with lived experience through social enterprise opportunities

Findings: Interviews with attendants indicated that vulnerable populations in the area were supported through regular engagement with the attendants. This included connecting them to various supports and resources, providing a consistent and friendly face for them to talk to if needed, and in two cases, providing regular employment through the washroom attendant reprogram.

Outcome: Decreased number of incidents involving illicit activities

Findings: Incident data provided by EPS showed a significant decline in occurrences when compared to 2019, illustrating the potential impact the attendant's presence had on the area.

Outcome: Increased collaboration with social enterprises and other organizations

Findings: Feedback indicated that the partnership was a positive one. Despite some early challenges with implementing the pilot at The Nook Cafe around communication, schedules and expectations around cleaning, parties indicated that things have improved and that they look forward to continuing to work together.

Outcome: City of Edmonton has an enhanced response to the the washroom needs of citizens and vulnerable populations

Findings: Response from citizens emphasized the importance of not only having public washrooms, but ensuring they are safe and clean for all. This evaluation demonstrates that the pilot has been effective in having an enhanced response to the washroom needs of citizens and vulnerable populations.

Outcome: Increased knowledge and awareness of washroom pilots and presence of attendants

Findings: The evaluation found that there were a number of challenges related to communication and clarity. The pilot was implemented on a very short timeline and encountered several issues ranging from lack of role clarity and consistency, which impacted the attendants themselves, to communication with stakeholders and participants, which caused relationships with local vulnerable populations and police to develop slower than anticipated. The evaluation has determined that the continuation or expansion of this model would benefit by having a more thorough implementation plan with lead time to develop the necessary components needed to help ensure success moving forward.

Introduction

Background

At the April 24, 2019, meeting of the Community and Public Services Committee, Administration presented CR_5859 - Citywide Public Washroom Strategy on the progress and next steps for this strategy. The strategy consisted of an overarching goal to improve access to public washrooms, as well as principles and objectives for future planning and management of washrooms.

In support of this strategy, a number of short term program elements were proposed as pilots for 2020, including the implementation of a social enterprise partnership to provide an attendant/monitor for the Whyte Avenue public washroom. A social enterprise partnership program with a local business, supporting private businesses and improving access washrooms facilities, was also proposed. Both of these pilot programs were implemented between December 2019 and July 2020.

Pilot Description

Whyte Avenue Washroom

The City approached Boyle Street Ventures (BSV) in late 2019 with a request to provide staff to work as attendants for the Whyte Avenue public washroom. The contract ran from December 16, 2019 to June 14, 2020, at a total cost of \$111,353 which covered staffing and supplies. Whyte Avenue shifts ran from 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 a.m. Sunday through Thursday and 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 a.m. Friday and Saturday. Both day and night shifts had two staff working at all times. Duties included regular cleaning and engagement with patrons, including the area's vulnerable populations.

The Nook Cafe Pilot

The other dimension of the pilot involved partnering with The Nook Cafe, a private business, due to their previous involvement in the washroom strategy as well as their efforts to provide access to washrooms to all citizens. Similar to the Whyte Avenue location, BSV attendants were contracted to attend to The Nook's washroom facilities. This contract ran from January 13, 2020 to July 11, 2020 with a cost of \$29,100. At this location, only one attendant was on site at a time and shifts ran from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

Pilot Changes

The impact of COVID-19 was felt by citizens, businesses, and governments alike, and the washroom pilot was no exception. Rising concerns regarding COVID-19 forced all public washrooms to close for a period of approximately two weeks. Due to these circumstances, data collected for this evaluation was reviewed under two different phases.

Phase One took place between January and March and acts as a more traditional point of comparison to assess the effectiveness of the pilot as it more or less took place under normal circumstances. Phase Two ran from April to June and was operating during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic with many bars, restaurants, and other businesses either

closed or operating under different hours. As such, it was more appropriate to examine this data separately.

An additional adjustment coming from COVID-19 was the addition of other public washrooms adopting the pilot's model. With the increased focus on cleanliness and adhering to new requirements, the City of Edmonton placed BSV staff at additional City-operated washrooms, though the washrooms' original vendors still maintained responsibility for cleaning and operations. As such, attendants were there only to engage with visitors, ensure physical distancing was being maintained and provide supports if needed.

The Nook encountered a number of challenges with the pilot and did not resume in April when the Whyte Avenue pilot continued. The pilot at The Nook eventually resumed in July, however there was insufficient data from this location to make meaningful observations on the model's effectiveness. There were observations and lessons learned regarding the pilot's implementation, which will be detailed in later sections of the report.

Evaluation Methods

Various methods were used to gather data, feedback, and experiences from users, staff, and those managing the project. This included quantitative methods, review of financials and washroom usage data, as well as qualitative data gathered through surveys and interviews.

Survey Data

There are several indicators that can help measure the experience of washroom users, including perceptions of safety and cleanliness, two separate surveys were developed that would gather feedback from visitors of both The Nook and Whyte Avenue public washrooms.

The first method of survey delivery was through an app accessed by BSV staff who were attending to the washroom locations. The attendant would get visitor agreement to participate and then use the app to ask the visitor a series of questions. As well, an online survey, aligned with the survey attendants were using, was posted to edmonton.ca and open to the public for several months.

Qualitative Interviews

Several of the pilot's outcomes were more difficult to measure quantitatively and required qualitative data to inform those outcomes, including stories, feedback, and experiences from BSV staff working as attendants, program managers and local businesses in the area. A number of one-on-one interviews were held to collect these experiences. Additionally, a number of interview questions were sent to the Old Strathcona Business Association for them to provide feedback on the pilot and its introduction of attendants at the Whyte Avenue washroom.

Additional Document Reviews and Data

This evaluation also relied on data and documentation from a variety of sources to help inform whether the pilot's outcomes were achieved. This included:

- Program files and documentation, including contracts and past washroom documents
- Ticketing and incident data from EPS
- Financial data from BSV and vendors
- Internal work order data for the Whyte Avenue washroom

Section 2: Evaluation Results

Implementation

The City approached Boyle Street Ventures in late 2019 to work on implementing a pilot to create equitable access to washrooms before the end of the year. There is agreement by all parties that timelines were probably too compressed, which led to a number of challenges early on. On BSV's end, they started by identifying staff who could work as attendants as well as potential training needed. Initially, many staff declined to participate as there was some doubt over the pilot's potential. Despite this early resistance, staff eventually requested to be a part of the pilot as it progressed and the pilot is now viewed as one of BSV's favourite projects.

There were challenges in this early implementation. Attendants indicated that communication was an issue, at least partially due to the pilot being implemented so quickly. This resulted in attendants regularly needing to explain why they were there and not having enough detail on what the pilot was or their role in it, particularly in the first month. They agreed that it has taken time for the pilot to evolve.

Hours of Operation

Some attendants believed that hours at the Whyte Avenue location should be longer to accommodate the area and its nightlife patrons better. Attendants also noted that having staff on site earlier may also be helpful as they were sometimes greeted in the morning by large messes. Overall, attendants agreed that hours should depend on the location. There was belief among attendants that the day shift was easier than the night shift, especially on weekends, as the mixture of bar/restaurant visitors with vulnerable populations could lead to increased confrontations and challenges to attendant authority.

Shifts typically had two attendants to maximize safety. There was agreement among pilot participants that this should be a requirement if the model continues or expands to other public washrooms. This is especially true for evening/night shifts due to increased safety concerns.

Roles and Responsibilities

In terms of their role as an attendant, staff eased their way in at first, concentrating mostly on just enforcing rules and having patrons become accustomed to their presence. Attendants felt this was an effective approach as trust and comfort needed to be built first before any social outcomes could be achieved.

As mentioned previously, communication was an early challenge for the pilot and part of this problem was confusion over what their role ultimately was in relation to the public and

vulnerable populations, particularly if an issue arose. In terms of communication, attendants noted that it was difficult to explain to passers-by what exactly their role was and what they did during their shifts. Attendants felt there was not enough to do, but did not have sufficient guidance on what additional work they could do during that time. Attendants would typically do a thorough cleaning about twice a day, though sometimes more if necessary, doing minor cleaning outside and interacting with patrons and people walking by, including those in vulnerable populations, which facilitated relationship building.

These activities still left attendants with a large amount of free time. In the case of the Churchill Square location, added during COVID, cleaning duties were still being handled by the originally contracted organization, which meant that attendants were left with even less to do. They indicated that they want to feel useful and although cleaning and outreach are equally important, it can be discouraging when visitors do not feel attendants are working. Should this model continue or be expanded, a focus will be exploring additional activities and responsibilities for attendants as this would not only improve public perception of the attendants' presence, but raise morale as well.

Training

Given that cleaning was a primary activity of attendants, proper training for janitorial tasks was essential. Attendants stated that although they did not necessarily receive this kind of training prior to the pilot, they did undergo a one day janitorial course to better perform these functions. Although attendants mostly regarded this training as common sense, they did see the value and thought it would be important training for other attendants.

In addition to the cleaning, outreach and interaction with vulnerable populations was a key aspect of the attendant's role and as such it was important for staff to also be adequately prepared for this role as well. Experience in working with vulnerable populations was varied amongst the attendants, though those without that experience acknowledged that simply being warm and outgoing towards patrons was helpful in building rapport with visitors, particularly those from vulnerable populations. It may be likely that attendants who are shy might have a more difficult experience with the outreach aspect of the job and one attendant did confirm that it took time to grow more comfortable with handling certain situations and patrons. Another attendant mentioned having previously received deescalation training as a BSV employee, which they thought was valuable in dealing with a variety of different situations.

The general lack of consistent training for attendants coupled with limited guidance or clarity regarding their role made it difficult to train newcomers on the job. This lack of clarity made some attendants feel unprepared for some incidents such as overdoses, drunkenness or other complicated situations, which created stress for some attendants.

When asked about valuable skills or training attendants should have, respondents indicated that in addition to cleaning skills, any training that allows the attendant to have a social worker lens in their work would be extremely beneficial. Familiarity with a wide variety of potential situations and how to deescalate as needed would be a clear asset in this line of work. Boyle Street Ventures does provide some of this training and are currently working on

putting together some cultural training for staff as well as first aid training, which they believe will be helpful moving forward.

COVID-19 Complexities

The complications of the COVID pandemic impacted the washroom pilot as well as data collection. COVID was also a challenge for attendants as well as it brought in many new complications once the pilot had resumed for Phase Two. New requirements that were regularly being updated meant it was difficult to provide a consistent approach to managing the washroom. While early stages of the pilot had issues around clarity due to its speedy implementation, attendants were faced with a similar situation as a consistent response and approach to COVID was not readily available to attendants, which caused some anxiety for those working. Furthermore, there was also some resistance from patrons as a result of new guidelines and requirements. These challenges made Phase Two of the pilot difficult for attendants, but in interviews they confirmed they were able to adapt and meet those challenges successfully.

The Nook

The Nook Cafe was originally approached for this pilot due to their existing efforts to provide accessible washrooms to all as well as their previous collaboration on the washroom strategy. The Nook, being proponents of businesses being more socially active, felt the pilot would be an opportunity to see how the proposed model could work with private businesses.

The pilot running at The Nook encountered different challenges that caused several stops and starts, impacting the pilot's potential effectiveness. One issue identified was misaligned expectations. Although there was agreement on the role of the attendant, it became evident that each party had different expectations for the work of the attendant. Going into the pilot, The Nook had certain expectations around the attendant's responsibilities, but found their work did not meet these expectations in some areas. Management felt that their washrooms were not cleaned to their standards and The Nook eventually created their own checklist for tasks that needed to be completed when cleaning the washroom. Additionally, they felt that some attendants were not as comfortable handling vulnerable populations and potential escalating issues as their own staff were.

These differing expectations and lack of consistency lead to a pause in the pilot, which was originally supposed to be one week but turned into three weeks. This pause eventually led to a training day for cleaning that included three BSV staff (two main and one casual). Despite this additional training, only one attendant continued to show up for work while other attendants who came in did not receive that same training. A meeting was held during this period with both parties to discuss issues and set expectations. The Nook set their own cleaning guidelines due to delays on BSV's end.

Another challenge with the pilot identified by both Nook management and the attendants was staffing consistency. Previously, The Nook had been working with a different model where their own staff would clean the washrooms and interact with vulnerable populations. With BSV staff coming in to attend to the washrooms, the Nook's management felt that it would be unnecessary to have as many internal staff, so their staff complement was reduced each shift so that the attendants would be the ones cleaning washrooms and

interacting with vulnerable populations. However, problems arose due to the inconsistent availability of BSV staff. If an attendant did not show up for their shift, management would need to call in additional internal staff and in some cases pay them overtime. Attendants confirmed that there was some inconsistency around their schedules and that this was caused by some restrictions around their hours as well as coverage issues, which impacted their availability. This inconsistency not only had an impact on how Nook staff viewed the attendants, but also had a negative impact on The Nook's own team dynamic as well, according to management.

Nook management also had concerns regarding the financial aspect of the pilot. For this pilot, there was only one contract between the City of Edmonton and BSV, while The Nook worked on a separate contract with BSV. This process meant that all money from the City was going to BSV with The Nook being reimbursed for their costs from BSV afterwards. However, contract negotiations were lengthy and there were long delays in being reimbursed by BSV for their invoices, despite BSV being paid upfront by the City.

Despite these issues, Nook management felt progress was being made near the end of Phase 1 when COVID-19 forced things to take an extended pause. Nook management believes that if consistency improved and expectations were more effectively communicated before implementation, that the pilot's model could be effective. From the attendant's perspective, The Nook was seen as the most challenging location. As mentioned, the conflict regarding expectations had strained the relationship between attendants and the Nook. Since operations have resumed at the Nook, attendants believe the increased consistency and focus on addressing each party's expectations have helped improve things. There was agreement among attendants that the pilot's model can indeed be used at businesses and not just city-run public washrooms, but that businesses with existing processes for allowing access to vulnerable populations may complicate things. Additionally, they recommended that any model would likely need to be implemented more effectively and work within the business's unique circumstances to improve communication and better manage expectations.

An alternative to the model implemented at Whyte Avenue that was proposed by Nook management was for private businesses to adopt their own. They understand there are costs associated, but feel money would be better spent on their previous model and have the City offset some of those costs. A business case for this previous model was being explored at one point, but was put on hold and included operating costs only, but with capital costs involved in replacing or fixing certain things as well.

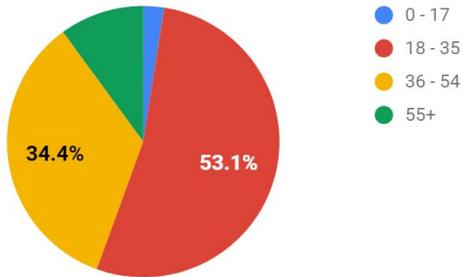
Washroom Usage

One of the outcomes of this pilot was to increase usage of the Whyte Avenue facilities by the general population. Due to COVID-19 complications, only Phase One data appropriately touches on increased use by the general public, though comparisons between Phase One and Phase Two 2 are provided as well.

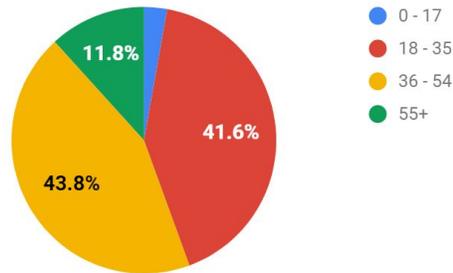
Over the course of the pilot, the Whyte Ave washroom had over 6700 patrons, with a roughly even number of patrons visiting during each phase. However, due to the COVID-19 related closure of the washroom for a short period during March, data was not collected for

approximately two weeks. Accounting for this gap, it is likely that the number of Phase One patrons would more significantly outnumber those of Phase Two. Another factor impacting the number of patrons was the COVID pandemic, which understandably caused a decrease near the end of Phase One and likely impacted the potential number during Phase Two.

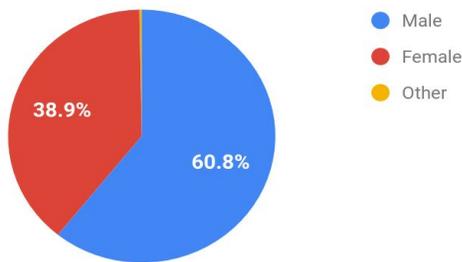
Whyte Ave Visitors by Age (Phase 1)



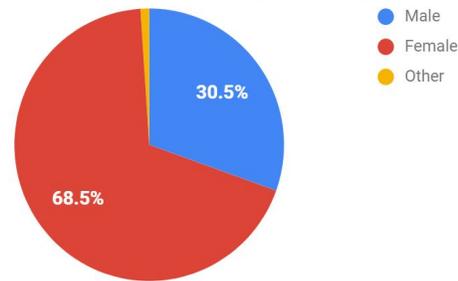
Whyte Ave Visitors by Age (Phase 2)



Visitors by Gender (Phase 1)

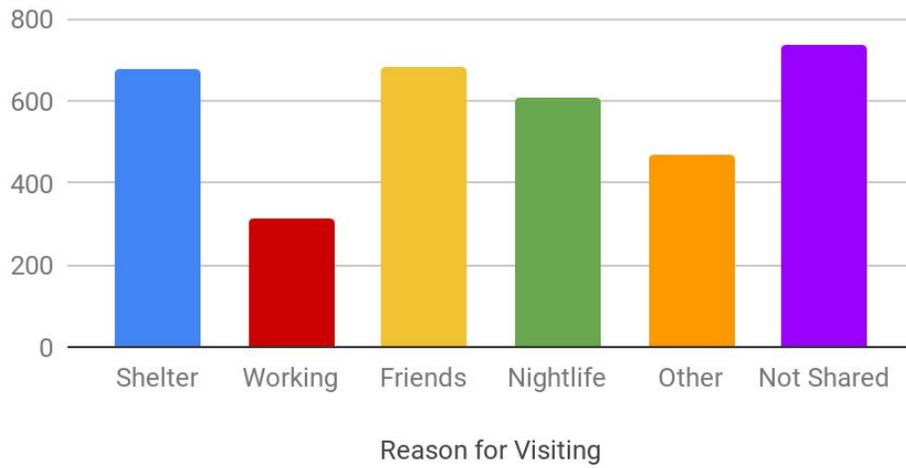


Visitors by Gender (Phase 2)

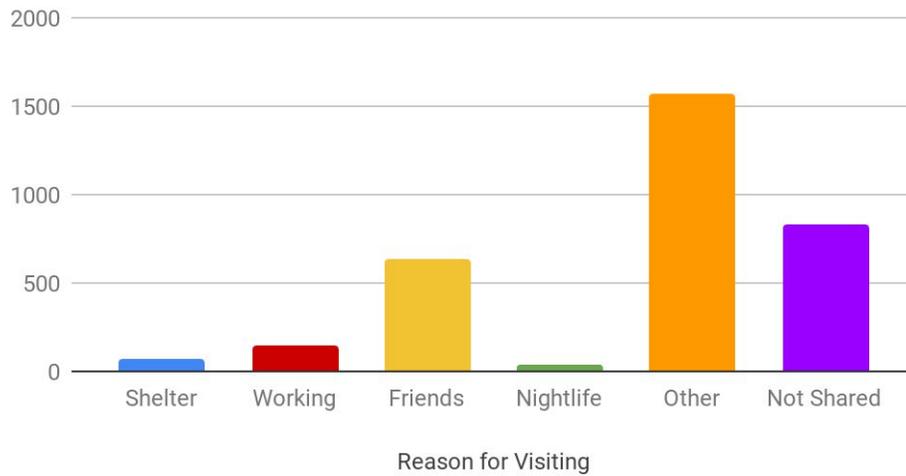


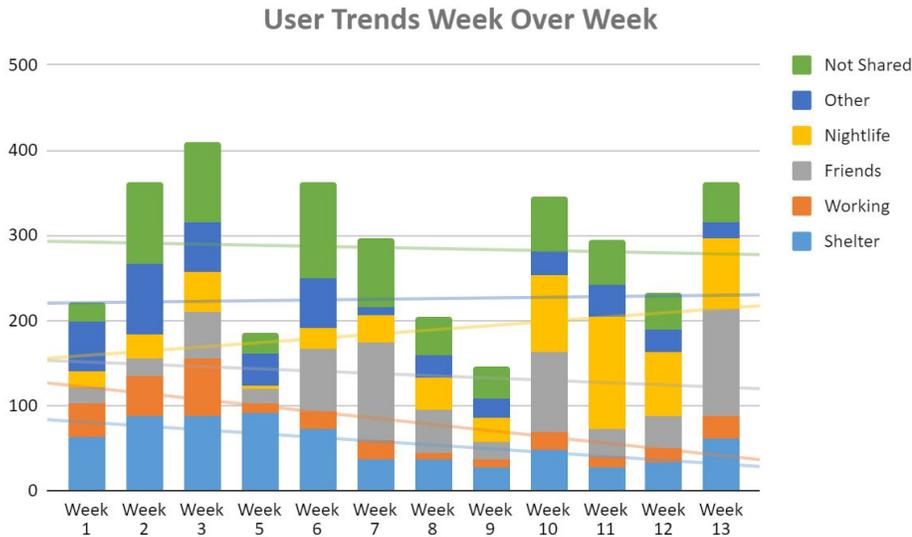
BSV attendants surveyed patrons on their rationale for being in the area, which helped identify the types of people who were using the washroom facilities. While options for “Working in the area” or “Nightlife/bars/restaurants” were used as typical reasons for being on Whyte Avenue, an option was needed to help identify those who might be vulnerable populations. The option, “Seeking shelter from weather” was used for this purpose. Phase One saw a fairly even distribution of patrons, other than those working in the area, which made up a smaller total number. These numbers significantly changed during Phase Two. While those visiting friends or family remained mostly unchanged, the number of those in the area for bars, restaurants, or nightlife as well as those who worked in the area saw steep drops due to COVID restrictions. Another change was the large drop in those seeking shelter, which was also to be expected due to the increase in outdoor temperatures. Phase Two saw an increase in those either not sharing why they were in the area or simply answered, “other”. These changes would imply that a larger portion of patrons in Phase Two were vulnerable populations.

Reason for Visiting (Phase 1)



Reason for Visiting (Phase 2)





Overall, the existing data shows that although there appears to be a general increase in users, it is unclear whether this increase consists of the general public. A high number of responses answering, “other” or not sharing their answer means there is a large number of visitors that are simply not being accounted for who could be considered the general public. For future data collection, additional rationale options could be provided to better capture the different rationales people might have for being in the area.

From attendant perspectives, they believed there was in fact an increase in usage. Their comments indicated that they had experienced a gradual increase in patrons, particularly by those not in vulnerable populations, up until the COVID-19 disruption. One attendant noted that once the pilot began word had spread amongst visitors, which spurred many others to use the washroom, including those who were working or shopping in the area. Attendants had observed that over time people who would walk by without stopping before would eventually visit the washroom or talk to the attendants, indicating they now felt more comfortable to do so. In terms of the number of visitors the washroom would have per day, attendants noted it would often depend on the day of the week, weather and other factors. Attendants did note that it could be busier earlier in the morning as you would often encounter regular visitors, particular those among the vulnerable populations who often adhere to a routine and would stop by the washroom as a part of that routine. Evenings could also be busy as well, as there was typically a larger and more diverse number of people in the area.

Attendants noted that the improved atmosphere around the washroom was a likely reason for the increased traffic. Attendants have received verbal feedback from people who frequented the area that the space had felt safer and more approachable. This in turn had led to more interactions between the public and vulnerable populations such as bringing food and water to those who might need it.

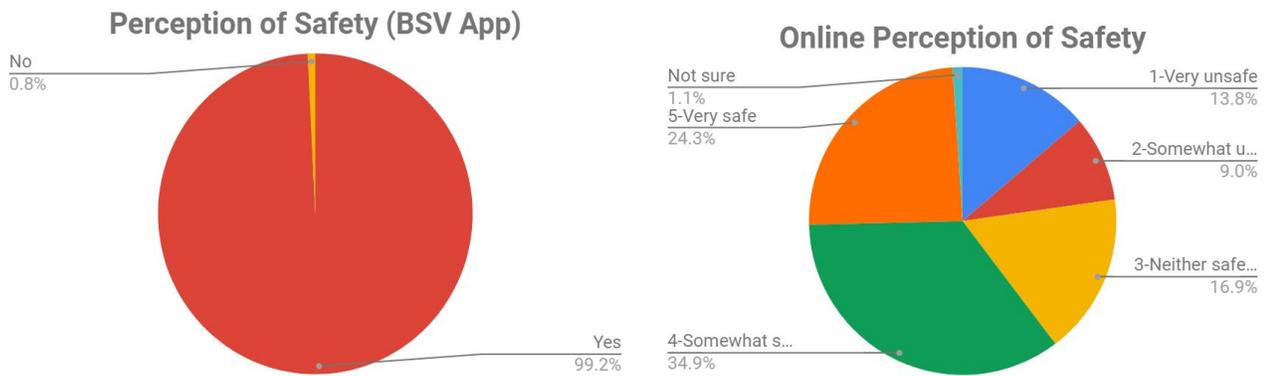
Washroom Safety

A key outcome of this pilot was to increase safety for the washroom and surrounding area. This evaluation utilized two main pieces of data to inform whether this outcome was achieved; incident data from EPS and feedback from users and citizens.

In terms of incident data, numbers from the same period in 2019 were used as a baseline comparison point to help determine if 2020 numbers showed any impact. In collecting baseline data for the comparison year of 2019, it was noted that the January to April period had the highest number of total occurrences and tickets. This may be likely attributed to the fact that these months are colder in temperature and more people may be frequenting the public washrooms for shelter. There was also an increase in file types during November 2019 and as the attendant was present in the washrooms starting in December 2019, that could account for the sudden drop in events. The below summarizes the total number of incidents per month, which can include tickets and a variety of occurrences.

Incidents Year Over Year		
Month	2019 (Baseline)	2020 (Pilot)
January	32	2
February	24	3
March	22	1
PHASE 1 TOTAL	78	6
April	26	2
May	19	1
June	9	3
PHASE 2 TOTAL	54	6

For perceived safety, visitors at the Whyte Avenue washroom were surveyed by the attendants while perceptions from the general public were collected via an online survey hosted by the City of Edmonton.



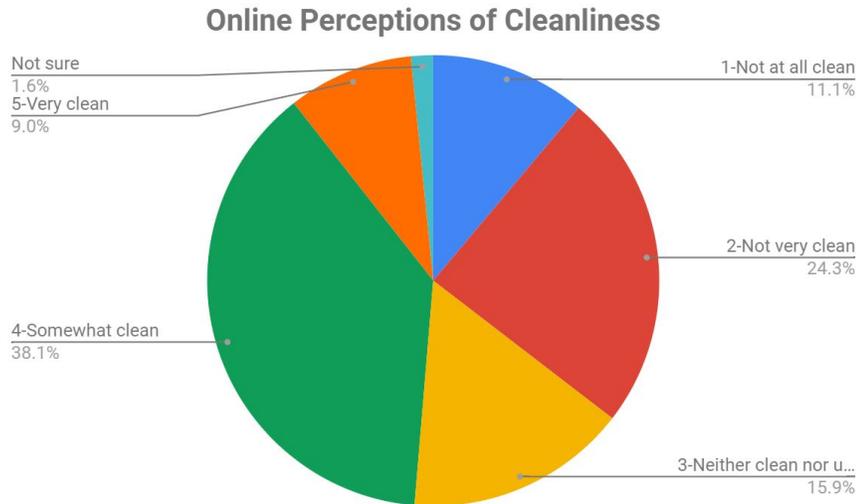
Based on these results, the majority of respondents agreed that the presence of the attendant made the washroom feel safer. This was particularly true for those surveyed by attendants, with an overwhelming 99% of respondents indicating that they felt safe. This significantly high percentage may indicate that social desirability bias was at play, meaning that people responded more favourably due to being questioned in person by the attendant working. Although a smaller percentage of online respondents reported that the attendants helped with perceived safety (59%), it should be noted that the online survey had a significantly smaller sample size, with 189 online respondents indicating that they had visited the Whyte Avenue location during the pilot period. Additionally, only 20% of those respondents had indicated seeing an attendant on site, which makes some responses questionable as the attendants were made to be very visible while working, wearing brightly colored vests. It may be possible that although the survey requested data from those who had visited during the pilot, some respondents may have based their answers on visits occurring before the pilot began. Despite these caveats, this data shows that perceived safety of the washroom is quite strong. Furthermore, qualitative data from surveys also showed a positive outlook on the washroom's safety.

Washroom Cleanliness

Considering the increased costs of having an attendant present at the washroom, there was an expectation for the washroom to maintain a certain level of cleanliness in comparison to having it cleaned at its regularly scheduled times with the previous vendor. Cleanliness has consistently been an issue regarding the public perception of the Whyte Avenue washroom. One theme found in several negative online survey comments revolved around the perception of cleanliness at public washrooms. Although there were very few people who had attended the Whyte Avenue location specifically that complained about cleanliness, many online respondents indicated that they were not interested in using public washroom facilities due to the preconceived notions they have about their cleanliness.

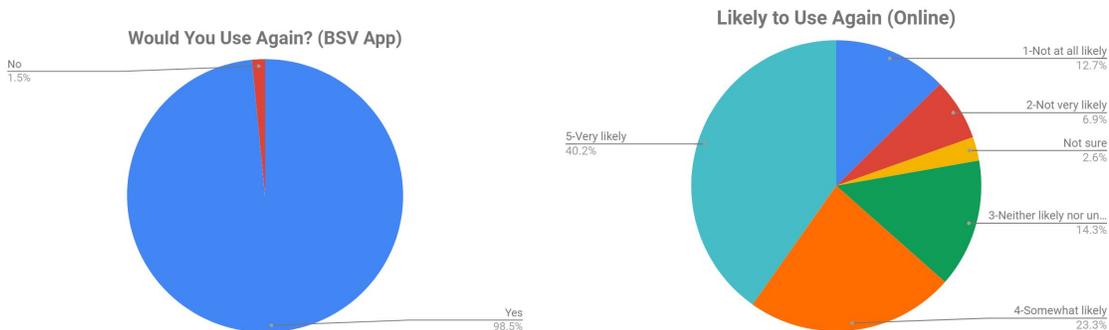
According to the contract with the existing vendor, the Whyte Avenue washroom was cleaned six times a day, seven days a week. In comparison, BSV washroom attendants would do thorough cleanings twice per shift, but would also do regular spot cleanings as needed, which attendants felt helped keep the washroom more thoroughly clean as new messes were handled quickly. During downtime, attendants would sometimes do additional cleaning in order to simply pass the time if it was not busy.

Although the amount of baseline data for cleanliness is lacking, the evaluation looked at survey data to assess the washroom’s current cleanliness. When asked about the washroom’s cleanliness, online survey respondents were generally favourable towards their experience. It should be noted, however, that the same caveats mentioned in the safety section still apply, including sample size and the small number indicating that they had seen the attendant. Additionally, cleanliness scores did not differ significantly from other City-operated indoor washrooms that were commented on in the online survey.



When asked about maintaining a clean washroom, attendants noticed a decrease in vandalism and that the washrooms would increasingly be left in a cleaner state, requiring fewer cleanings as the pilot went on. The increased supervision, along with being more accepted in the area by the vulnerable populations were noted as likely reasons for the decreased vandalism and intentional messes. This would indicate that in addition to the attendants being able to maintain the washroom’s cleanliness, but that their presence may lead to an overall decrease in garbage, vandalism, and other messes at the washroom as well.

In addition to asking about safety and cleanliness, both the attendant app and the online survey asked respondents to indicate whether they would visit the washroom again.



These results show that overall, the experiences of patrons to the washroom are positive enough for them to state that they would visit again.

Supports to Vulnerable Populations

An additional component of this pilot's model was to provide equitable access to washrooms, as well as have attendants present in order to engage with the area's vulnerable populations and provide support as needed. Due to a lack of quantitative data to inform this topic, the evaluation focused on collecting feedback and stories from the washroom attendants who had first-hand interactions with these patrons.

When asked about their experience in interacting with vulnerable populations, attendants indicated that their presence in the area was not welcomed at first and that it took time to build relationships with those individuals. One attendant noted that they were first viewed as police or spies and that building trust was difficult because of this. As a result, some members of this population would continuously test them, become belligerent, or push boundaries to make the attendants' jobs more difficult, including purposely making messes in the washroom for the attendants to clean. As the vulnerable populations became more accustomed to their presence and even became familiar with certain staff, however, they began to appreciate the increased cleanliness and safety associated with having the attendants in the area as it made the area much more accessible to many of them.

Additionally, these patrons from vulnerable populations appreciated the consistency of having regular attendants around and having someone they could simply talk to and build relationships with. As those relationships began to grow stronger, attendants said they would also sometimes receive help from other vulnerable populations members in trying to de-escalate situations that arose as they too would not want there to be any problems or issues in the area. As such, these members would promote the rules and help ensure the washroom remained a safe spot for other people. Attendants also commented that they felt more respected as the pilot went on, which made their job easier as well.

When asked about potential benefits to vulnerable populations, attendants agreed that overall they felt they were able to positively help those patrons in a number of ways. Besides being a friendly face and source of consistency for vulnerable populations, the attendants often tried to guide them to various resources or services that may help them with their various needs. Often, people from this community can be difficult to track and monitor so attendants would sometimes rely on word of mouth from other patrons regarding the well being of some previous visitors, but have been updated on the whereabouts of some previous visitors and they feel confident that many have successfully connected to services or are in better situations now than they were previously.

In addition to providing various levels of support, the pilot was also able to directly improve the lives of some vulnerable people as well. Over the course of the pilot, BSV recruited two people from the community who then became washroom attendants themselves through mentorship and now have regular income and a place to live as a result. This type of successful recruitment was evidence that many in the community genuinely want to improve their situation and that the pilot was an opportunity to do so, according to one washroom attendant.

Public Perception

In addition to the various outcomes this pilot set out to achieve, the evaluation looked at various aspects of public perception regarding both the pilot and public washrooms in general.

Communication

Communication was a key component for this pilot project and touches a variety of topics, including implementation, role clarity and awareness. In terms of awareness of the project, there was media coverage at the pilot launch. However, there were still many citizens who were unaware of the pilot or the attendants working at the washroom.

When discussing the increase in patrons at the site, attendants credited it to their consistent visibility while at the washroom and their continued communication with those passing by. They believed that word of mouth definitely helped play a part in the pilot's continued success as time went on. Several survey respondents noted that additional signage or other tools would have been helpful as many indicated that they became aware of the pilot simply by walking by and being greeted by whoever was working at the time. Other online survey respondents noted that they had first become aware not only of the pilot, but the washroom itself via the survey.

Citizen Response to Public Washrooms

The majority of qualitative feedback from online respondents was positive, particularly regarding the overall need for public washrooms in various Edmonton locations to accommodate the needs of citizens. A number of responses pointed out that they would much prefer using public facilities versus ones at private businesses as they can feel pressured to make a purchase first. Others commented that they felt it was unfair to restaurants and businesses to have to act as a public washroom for non-customers. Additionally, many agreed that it was important to provide washroom access to all people and saw it as an issue of equality.

A small number of online survey respondents had a generally negative view of the public washroom spaces simply due to the presence of vulnerable populations and the perceived safety issue from being around them. These comments ranged from concerns about drug use to general distrust or dislike of vulnerable populations, illustrating the extreme negative views some residents can have of vulnerable people and why it is important to provide support to help alleviate some of these negative preconceptions.

Overall, response to the pilot was positive. Several comments applauded the intentions of the pilot and felt that having an attendant was a much needed addition to the washroom that helped improve their overall perception of the facility.

Relationship with Edmonton Police Service (EPS)

In addition to their relationships with vulnerable populations, the relationships the washroom attendants developed with members of the Edmonton Police Service were also instrumental

in the ongoing success they have experienced. Attendants noted that communications with police were strained at first as not all officers were aware of their presence and purpose at the washroom, leading to misunderstandings and mixed messages. There was also a feeling early on that police would sometimes get in the way of their outreach work, negatively impacting what they were trying to achieve with vulnerable populations.

Attendants agreed, however, that their relationship with the police has improved over time. There have been a number of meetings with EPS to talk about the pilot and there are fewer incidents involving police showing up and randomly removing people as a result, allowing attendants to build stronger relationships with vulnerable populations. Additionally, where attendants were hesitant to call the police early on during the pilot, they indicated that they now have no issue calling the police when they feel the situation warrants.

There was agreement that increased clarity and structure around everyone's roles and responsibilities when the pilot started would have been helpful and that additional communication with police would be recommended for future pilots.

General Washroom Recommendations for Improvement

Although outside the scope of the evaluation, the qualitative feedback on public washrooms gathered by both BSV staff and the online survey provided many insights on how public washroom facilities could be improved. Many comments were regarding accessibility, indicating that these facilities may not be as accessible to people with disabilities as they could be. These items included things such as toilet and sink height, the availability of bars in stalls, and ensuring that any electronic door opening buttons remain in good working order. One online survey respondent highlighted another issue related to equality and questioned if public washroom facilities were doing enough to accommodate Edmonton's LGBTQ community.

In terms of aesthetics, many comments suggested the washroom required new paint and the removal of any existing graffiti. Another suggestion was to implement a visible checklist like those at other businesses that shows when the washroom was last cleaned and by who, which can help improve accountability and build trust with patrons that public washrooms meet their expectations.

Impact on Local Businesses

For the impact on local businesses and their response to the pilot, the evaluation reached out to the Old Strathcona Business Association for comments. Overall, they felt that the presence of the attendants had a positive impact on the area. In terms of cleanliness and safety they feel things have improved, though there have been concerns since the temporary shelter set up at the Expo Centre has closed, causing an influx in vulnerable populations in the area which may have caused the washroom to appear less accessible than normal.

In terms of implementation of the pilot, they felt that communications could improve as they did not meet directly with BSV staff and feel information sharing could be improved moving forward. Generally, they felt that the pilot was needed and would recommend the model for

all public washrooms, particularly for engaging with vulnerable populations and providing support to them to ensure the washrooms are accessible for all individuals.

Cost Analysis

Another aspect the evaluation explored was the costs of this model in comparison to the traditional model where a vendor was contracted to clean washrooms at specific times. The existing vendor's expenses consisted of supplies and staffing to do the actual cleaning, which averaged less than \$5,000 per month in costs. In comparison, the pilot's monthly costs far exceed this amount and have actually increased since the pilot began due to a renegotiation in order to increase the hourly payment to BSV. Based on monthly averages provided by Boyle Street Ventures, costs of the pilot compared to baseline are as follows:

Cost Item	Existing Vendor (Baseline)
Expenses/Supplies	\$1,210.00
Staffing/manpower	\$3,446.00
TOTAL	\$4,656.00

Cost Item	BSV Attendant
Expenses/Supplies/Staffing (insurance, management, oversight, etc)	\$25/Hour
TOTAL	\$111,353.00
Monthly Average	\$18,558.00

Washroom Work Orders (Whyte Avenue)		
Time Period	2019 (Baseline)	2020 (Pilot)
January - March (Phase 1)	16	8
April - June (Phase 2)	25	9
TOTAL	41	17

Overall, the Whyte Avenue location saw a 58% decrease in number of work orders, which was quite significant. These work orders resulted in a cost of \$7,277 compared to \$21,976 in 2019. Based on these numbers, the pilot created a cost savings of almost \$15,000, which helps counter the increased cost in staffing.

As mentioned earlier, there was a significant decrease in number of incidents reported by EPS during the pilot's six month period. Although no definitive financial proxy has been attached to these incidents, it is assumed there are additional cost savings for EPS due to this decrease in activity. It can reasonably be concluded that the benefits of the pilot's model may outweigh the increased costs due to staffing, though there is still a significant amount of additional cost to the City of Edmonton.

Section 3: Recommendations

Recommendation #1: The evaluation recommends that additional communications tactics be developed for public washrooms as well as any future pilots. This would include communications with relevant stakeholders such as businesses or police in the area, signage to advertise the role of attendants before and during the pilot, and new efforts to increase awareness of public washrooms in general.

Recommendation #2: Based on the feedback from washroom attendants, the evaluation recommends that the roles and responsibilities of the attendants be expanded and more effectively communicated. Introducing additional activities or responsibilities for attendants would help decrease the amount of downtime they experience as well as potentially help raise overall morale and pride in the job. The increased clarity and communication of their roles would help increase consistency in their service and support their efforts in being able to communicate their role to patrons and other citizens.

The evaluation explored the various skill sets utilized by various attendants and the training required for those skills. It was evident that in addition to any janitorial related training, a social worker lens was beneficial to those engaging with vulnerable populations, including deescalation and cultural sensitivity training.

Recommendation #3: The evaluation recommends working with Boyle Street Ventures or other partner organizations, on developing a suite of training for attendants. Additionally, steps should be taken to ensure that training is required and completed by all attendants to ensure consistent and high quality service.

Recommendation #4: The evaluation recommends that a standard approach to implementing this particular model not be used for private businesses. Instead, the City of Edmonton should work with targeted businesses on identifying what model would be best suited for each specific location. Furthermore, it is recommended that there be a clear agreement between parties that outlines various processes, expectations, and accountabilities before any such model is implemented.

Recommendation #5: Despite the significant costs associated with having attendants on site at the Whyte Avenue washroom, the numerous benefits to the area may outweigh those added costs and are convincing arguments for the pilot's continuation. It is therefore recommended that the City of Edmonton explore the possibility of either continuing or expanding on this model for City public washrooms.

Recommendation #6: In order to bring overall costs more in line with the pilot's numerous benefits, it is recommended that the City of Edmonton explore options to decrease staffing

costs, including wages or number of hours, or to identify additional ways to recover costs through the attendants' work, which would need to be identified and explored through the Washroom Strategy work in the future.

Appendix

Evaluation Logic Model: Public Washrooms Pilots 2020

Evaluation Logic Model: Public Washroom Pilots 2020
Final as of January 13, 2020

This side of the table focuses on outcomes; measures and data sources are aligned to the outcome sought

Inputs	Activity	Outputs	Outcomes Sought	Outcome Measures	Data Source
<p>Money</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$140,453 (for Whyte and Nook) pilots from the COE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on \$25/hr which includes \$18/hr in wages the rest is supplies and admin <p>Resources/partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boyle Street Ventures (BSV) providing the attendants, supplies and gather data The Nook, a privately owned cafe that will open up their washroom to the public COE providing infrastructure, project management, evaluation, marketing, and funding support <p>Operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendants at two pilot programs but six months in duration winter / spring 	<p>Whyte Ave pilot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 26 weeks from Dec 16, 2019 - June 14, 2020 Project paused March 18, 2020 due to the pandemic Hours of operation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sun - Thur: 10 am - 1:30 am Fri - Sun + stats: 10 am - 3:30 am Attendant on site all hours (with a second attendant in the evening 6pm - close) cleaning, ensuring the facilities are used for the purposes as intended, interacting with users as appropriate <p>The Nook pilot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 26 weeks from Jan 13 - July 11, 2020 Hours of operation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mon - Fri: 7 am - 3 pm Sat: 9 am - 3 pm Pilot paused by The Nook Feb 3 - 29, 2020; ran again March 2 - 28, then paused March 30 when Nook closed due to pandemic Attendant on site all hours the cafe is open (with the exception of 3 to 5 pm Mon to Fri) cleaning, ensuring the facilities are used for the purposes as intended, 	<p>Bathroom usage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # users at each pilot site <p>Hours open</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total hours open Total hours with attendants present <p>User feedback gathered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online surveys Attendant gathered Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # surveys completed Gender Age Reason for being in area If facility feels safe If user would revisit Any other input <p>Qualitative interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With attendants Jodi Phejan and/or Bob Frolich from BSV Marnie Sutor and Lynsae Moon, owners of The Nook With users, if possible (both repeat visitors and one-timers) Downtown and Old Strathcona BIA's Samson Awopeju, COE project manager Others at COE? 	<p>Increased usage of the public washroom facilities by the general population</p> <p>Increased satisfaction regarding safety and cleanliness of washrooms</p> <p>Improved value for money regarding the management of public washrooms</p> <p>Increased employment for people with lived experience via social enterprise opportunities</p>	<p>Bathroom usage by visitor type</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # users at each pilot site Bathroom usage by time of day Costs of supplies and routine maintenance Comparison to control sites <p>User satisfaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of respondents reporting attendant made facility feel safer % of respondents reporting satisfaction with facility cleanliness <p>Cost/benefit analysis of pilots, use of attendants, and partnership with social enterprise organization</p> <p>Comparison to control sites</p> <p># of employees with lived experience</p>	<p>Tracking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Via attendant Online survey Counter (TBD) <p>Internal cost tracking</p> <p>Visitor Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online survey Attendant Questionnaire Insight survey <p>Qualitative data (interviews/focus group)</p> <p>Financial costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current maintenance costs Cost of FTE's Cost of emergency calls and other maintenance outside of regular cleaning <p>Qualitative feedback on benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendants Visitor responses Survey responses <p>Internal employee data (BSV)</p> <p>City and Nook data</p>

<p>interacting with users as appropriate</p> <p>Service Agreement (SA) with BSV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim report deadline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Whyte Ave: March 31, 2020 ○ Nook: April 27, 2020 • Final report deadline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Whyte Ave: lessons and eval data by July 10, 2020 ○ Final report for both pilots by August 7, 2020 <p>Annual update to Community and Public Services Committee due in June 2020</p> <p>Outreach and marketing activities involving pilots</p>	<p>Insight survey w/ general public</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of having public washroom • Perception of value (with attendant, w/o) • If appropriate w/in private business • Other - link to previous (?) <p>BSV report findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim data • Final reports • Funds unspent (or costs not recovered) <p>Pre/pilot comparison</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeline(s) for comparisons • # users (if known) • Direct cost to run (attendants, supplies, mtce, vandalism, etc.) • # work orders (and cost) for repairs • Amt spent on maintenance • # incidents reported (and estimated costs, if possible) with EPS, 911, 311, 211, peace officers • # incidents due to injured staff and/or users (ie. workplace incidents) <p>Marketing activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of media releases • # of posters or ads created • # presentations and information sessions 	<p>Decreased number of incidents involving illicit activities</p> <p>Vulnerable population better supported</p> <p>Increased collaboration with social enterprises and other organizations</p> <p>City of Edmonton has an enhanced response to the needs of citizens and vulnerable populations</p> <p>Increased knowledge and awareness of washroom pilots and presence of attendants</p>	<p># of reports of illicit activity (YOY)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall • By location • Time of day • Comparison to control sites <p># of vulnerable population visitors assisted by attendant</p> <p># of new collaborations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of new pilots identified • # of new projects or partnerships developed • # of new stakeholders/partners involved with initiative <p>Value of collaborations with social enterprise</p> <p># of new recommendations and actions resulting from pilots</p> <p># of needed additional resources or supports identified</p> <p>% of citizens aware of public washroom attendant presence</p> <p># of media stories</p>	<p>Attendant reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracking of visitors • Qualitative feedback from attendant <p>Internal tracking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder meetings • New projects, initiatives, etc. identified • Partner/Stakeholder contributions <p>Cost/Benefit data (see above)</p> <p>Internal tracking of recommended actions</p> <p>Insight survey</p> <p>Media releases</p>
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