

Date: March 22, 2022

To: Chair and Members of General Committee

From: Jodi Robillos, Commissioner of Community Services

Originator's files:

Meeting date:  
April 13, 2022

## **Subject**

**Provision of Free Menstrual Products in City of Mississauga Facilities**

## **Recommendation**

1. That the Corporate Report dated March 22, 2022 entitled "Provisions of Free Menstrual Products in City of Mississauga Facilities" from the Commissioner of Community Services be approved.
2. That staff be authorized to purchase and install menstrual product dispensers and provide free menstrual products in identified city-operated public-facing facilities through existing purchasing contracts and funded through operating cost centres within various departments and/or through grants, sponsorship or other partnership opportunities.

## **Executive Summary**

- Several municipalities including Brampton, Toronto, London, St. Catharines, Guelph and Kitchener are providing free menstrual hygiene products in public washrooms. Council has requested that staff provide a plan for how this operational standard could be implemented in the City of Mississauga.
- The initial operational guideline is to have free menstrual hygiene products available in at least one universal and/or female washroom in approximately 100 city-operated, public-facing facilities including community centres, arenas, golf courses, libraries, culture facilities, parks washrooms and MiWay terminals.
- The term "free" in this case means there is no cost to recipients of products. There is a cost to the City for products and the purchase and installation of product dispensers, for which procurement will be in accordance with the Procurement By-law # 0013-2022.
- Products will be purchased and dispensers purchased and installed in a phased approach starting at the earliest available interval based on the parameters of existing contracts with an aim to meet the operational guideline by Fall 2022.

- The provision of free menstrual products will be funded through operating cost centres within applicable City departments including Recreation, Parks, Forestry & Environment, Culture, Library, Facilities & Property Management and MiWay. The estimated cost to launch and implement this initiative in 2022 is approximately \$165,000. Ongoing annual operating costs are estimated at \$100,000 annually.
- Opportunities for grants sponsorship and other supporting partnerships will be explored to support future implementation and sustainability of this initiative.

## Background

Cities across Canada and around the world are providing free menstrual hygiene products in public washrooms in an effort to provide welcoming and inclusive public spaces. In Ontario, municipalities including Brampton, Toronto, London, St. Catharines, Guelph and Kitchener have initiated the provision of free menstrual hygiene products in city-operated facilities. Rationale for these types of initiatives includes convenience, equity, and poverty reduction.

The Government of Ontario recently announced that free menstrual hygiene products will also be available in schools across the province as a result of a partnership with Shoppers Drug Mart. While this initiative will help to improve access for students in Mississauga and Peel Region, there is still a noticeable gap in access to menstrual hygiene products. Menstrual products are not currently available in City of Mississauga facilities and personal hygiene products including menstrual products are consistently identified as a “most needed item” by the Mississauga Food Bank.

A deputation was received at General Committee on March 9, 2022 from the Red Mvmnt which provided additional rationale and called for Mississauga to join this growing global movement. Council has requested that staff provide a plan for how this operational standard could be implemented in the City of Mississauga.

## Comments

The initial approach for the provision of free menstrual hygiene products in City of Mississauga facilities is based on the following operational guidelines:

- Products will be available in at least one universal and/or female washroom per city-operated, public-facing facility.
- City-operated, public-facing facilities included in the initial approach include:
  - Recreation facilities including all community centres, golf courses and arenas
  - All library stand alone locations
  - Park washrooms in year-round locations identified by parks operations
  - Culture facilities including Meadowvale Theatre, Small Arms Inspection Building, Bradley Museum and Benares Historic House

- Paramount Fine Foods Centre
- Civic precinct facilities including the Civic Centre, Living Arts Centre, Central Library, and Mississauga Celebration Square
- MiWay Transit Terminals in locations identified by MiWay staff
- Courthouse (950 Burnhamthorpe)

With the exception of the Recreation Division, Civic Precinct and the Courthouse, public facing washroom facilities are maintained through third party contractors who provide products and cleaning services as part of their contracts. As these contracts were competitively bid, a separate competitive bid process would not be required at this time as authority is currently available to accommodate additional costs for purchase and related services of these products in 2022. This will significantly reduce the lead time required to get this initiative off the ground. Requirements for the ongoing provision of products will be addressed as appropriate through future procurement processes.

Products will be purchased and installed in a phased approach starting at the earliest available interval based on the parameters of existing contracts with an aim to meet the minimum operational guideline to have products available by Fall 2022 in approximately 100 city-operated public-facing facilities. As there will be multiple third party contractors involved, the type of products available and service levels for restocking and maintenance may vary by facility.

Staff have expressed some concerns about the potential for vandalism especially in facilities where there is no staff supervision such as the parks washrooms and MiWay terminals. A phased approach to implementation will be used to provide an opportunity to identify, monitor and mitigate risks. In addition, steps will be put in place to monitor implementation across various departments involved to share learnings and to scale this service over time.

A strategic communication plan will be developed to ensure awareness of this service among residents and external stakeholders. Facility signage will also be available to direct facility users to where products are available.

Opportunities for engagement and collaboration will be explored with community stakeholders including the Region of Peel, school boards, food banks and others to ensure alignment with related initiatives underway.

## Financial Impact

The provision of free menstrual products will be funded through operating cost centres within applicable City departments including Recreation, Parks, Forestry & Environment, Culture, Library, Facilities & Property Management and MiWay. The estimated cost to launch and implement this initiative in 2022 is \$165,000. This includes the purchase of dispensers, disposal units (where required) products and related services for approximately 100 city-operated public-facing washroom facilities as well as staffing costs for installation of dispensers, repairs and

communications. Ongoing annual costs for product purchase and related services are estimated at \$100,000 annually.

Service areas have indicated they are able to support within existing operating budgets. In addition, opportunities for grants, sponsorship and other supporting partnerships will be explored to support future implementation and sustainability of this initiative.

## Conclusion

Providing free access to menstrual hygiene products in city-operated facilities will provide equitable access to menstrual products for residents in City facilities and allow Mississauga to make a positive contribution to a growing global movement.



Jodi Robillos, Commissioner of Community Services

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