



River District

Agenda

River District Board of Management

November 26, 2025, 5:30 p.m.

City Hall - 808 2nd Avenue East - Council Chambers

The public can attend meetings in person. Meetings will be livestreamed on the City's Council and Committees webpage. If there are technical issues with the livestream that cannot be fixed within 15 minutes, the meeting will continue, and a recording will be available later on the webpage or by contacting the City Clerk. People who cannot attend the meeting in person for Public Forum should send their comments to the Recording Secretary one business day before the meeting. These comments will be shared with members and included in the updated agenda.

	Pages
1. CALL TO ORDER	
2. CALL FOR ADDITIONAL BUSINESS	
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES	
4.a Minutes of the River District Board of Management meeting held on September 10, 2025	3
5. PUBLIC MEETINGS	
5.a 2026 Budget	9
1. Chair declares the Public Meeting open	
2. Public Meeting:	
a. Comments and notice from the Deputy Clerk	
b. Presentation from the Director of Corporate Services	
c. Comments from the Public	
3. Chair declares the Public Meeting closed	
6. DEPUTATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS	
6.a Deputation from Maryann Thomas Re: River District Concerns	
6.b Deputation from Robyn Strangway-Calder, Senior Manager of MNP Re: 2024 Year-End Audit	25

7. PUBLIC FORUM

8. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FOR WHICH DIRECTION IS REQUIRED

There are no correspondence items being presented for consideration.

9. REPORTS OF CITY STAFF

- | | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 9.a | Verbal Report from the Owen Sound Police Service Re: Police Update | 50 |
| 9.b | Report CS-25-095 from the Director of Community Services Re: Approach and Methodology to Update the River District Action Plan | 51 |
| 9.c | Report CS-25-120 from the River District Coordinator Re: 2025 River District Block Captain Reorganization | 60 |
| 9.d | Verbal Report from the Board Treasurer Re: Board Finances | |

10. MATTERS POSTPONED

There are no matters postponed.

11. MOTIONS FOR WHICH NOTICE WAS PREVIOUSLY GIVEN

There are no motions for which notice was previously given.

12. CORRESPONDENCE PROVIDED FOR INFORMATION

- | | | |
|------|--|-----|
| 12.a | Report CM-25-032 from the City Manager Re: Fostering a Vibrant River District - Report II | 66 |
| 12.b | Report CM-25-033 from the City Manager Re: River District Public Washroom Infrastructure and Operational Assessment | 132 |
| 12.c | Correspondence from Lynda Belanger, Poppy Chair 2025, Royal Canadian Legion Branch 6 Owen Sound Re: Poppy Fund | 245 |
| 12.d | Final approvals issued for the following Business Licences: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lachile Liquidation and Afro Caribbean Groceries, a retail liquidation and Afro Caribbean grocery store located at 1006 2nd Avenue East• Precision Tailoring & Alterations, a tailoring and alterations business located at 1071 2nd Avenue East• River Tech Source, a cell phone and computer accessories and repair shop located at 149 8th Street East• Crowns and Fades by Jamie Wilder, a hair salon has relocated to 1045 2nd Avenue East | |

13. DISCUSSION OF ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

14. NOTICES OF MOTION

15. ADJOURNMENT



Minutes

River District Board of Management

September 10, 2025, 5:30 p.m.

City Hall - 808 2nd Avenue East - Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Member Tim Dwyer
Member Kathy Hannen
Vice Chair Richard Thomas
Member Winnifred Walcott
Adrienne Robinson
Member Jen Smith (via video)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Chair Dave Parsons
Councillor Travis Dodd
Member Olivia Legate

STAFF PRESENT: Kate Allan, Director of Corporate Services
Pam Coulter, Director of Community Services
Steve Beaney, Owen Sound Police Service Constable
Viveca Gravel, River District Coordinator
Briana Bloomfield, City Clerk

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Thomas called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. All Board members and staff listed above were present except for Member Walcott.

Vice Chair Thomas shared a land acknowledgement.

2. CALL FOR ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

2.a Member Smith Re: Block Captain Feedback

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

- 4.a Minutes of the River District Board of Management meeting held on July 9, 2025

RD-250910-001

Moved by Member Dwyer

"THAT the minutes of the River District Board of Management meeting held on July 9, 2025 be approved as printed."

Carried.

- 4.b Minutes of the Closed Session of the River District Board of Management meeting held on July 9, 2025

RD-250910-002

Moved by Member Hannen

"THAT the minutes of the Closed Session of the River District Board of Management meeting held on July 9, 2025 be approved as printed."

Carried.

5. DEPUTATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

There were no deputations or presentations.

6. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no questions or comments from the public.

7. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FOR WHICH DIRECTION IS REQUIRED

There were no correspondence items presented for consideration.

8. REPORTS OF CITY STAFF

Member Walcott joined the meeting at this time.

- 8.a Verbal Report from the Owen Sound Police Service Re: Police Update

Constable Steve Beaney advised that summer is the busiest season for Police Services, with high call volumes and reduced staffing levels due to vacation schedules. In the River District, officers conducted 111 hours of foot patrol in July and 99 hours in August, along with a total of 40 hours of bike patrolling during the same period. In addition to responding to calls for service, Police Services also participated in community events, including the Reach Centre Fundraising Barbeque and the Hottest Street Sale.

Constable Beaney left the meeting at this time.

8.b Report CR-25-122 from the Director of Corporate Services Re: River District - 2025 Mid-Year Financial Update

The Director of Corporate Services provided an overview of the report. In response to a question from the Board, the Director of Corporate Services confirmed that the transfer to reserves would occur at the end of the year.

RD-250910-003

Moved by Member Walcott

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-25-122 respecting River District – 2025 Mid-Year Financial Update, the River District Board of Management directs staff to:

- 1. Issue a payment of \$2,000 to Citizens on Patrol in line with the budgeted amount; and**
- 2. Issue a payment to the Board equal to the current year operating surplus at year end to be transferred to reserves."**

Carried.

8.c Report CS-25-092 from the Director of Community Services and the Director of Corporate Services Re: Draft 2026 Budget for Board Review and Input

The Director of Corporate Services provided an overview of the report, and the Director of Community Services provided an overview of the special initiatives outlined in the report.

RD-250910-004

Moved by Member Hannen

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-25-092 respecting the draft 2026 River District budget considerations, the River District Board of Management directs staff to provide notice of a public meeting to be held on November 12, 2025."

Carried.

RD-250910-005

Moved by Member Hannen

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-25-092 respecting the draft 2026 River District budget considerations, the River District Board of Management directs staff to include \$10,000 in the 2026 draft budget for special initiatives."

Carried.

- 8.d Report CS-25-093 from the River District Coordinator Re: 2025 River District Block Captains Reorganization

The River District Coordinator provided an overview of the report. The Board noted that the vacant block captain position in the report was previously filled by Member Olivia Legate. The Board requested that the River District Block Captain map be reviewed at a future meeting to evaluate the block assignments for each captain.

RD-250910-006

Moved by Member Walcott

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-25-093 respecting 2025 River District Block Captain Reorganization, the River District Board of Management directs staff to update the River District Block Captain map as discussed in the meeting."

Carried.

- 8.e Verbal Report from the Board Treasurer Re: Board Finances

The Board Treasurer advised that the total balance of all accounts is \$170,000 and that \$546 in interest has been earned since the July meeting. The Board Treasurer suggested that at a future River District Board meeting, a discussion be held on how best to utilize the \$6,900 that remains in the gift certificate account. Staff recommended that an opinion be sought from the auditor regarding the gift certificate account to help inform that discussion.

RD-250910-007

Moved by Member Hannen

"THAT in consideration of the Verbal Report provided September 10, 2025, from the Board Treasurer respecting Board Finances, the River District Board of Management receives the Verbal Report for information purposes."

Carried.

9. MATTERS POSTPONED

There were no matters postponed.

10. MOTIONS FOR WHICH NOTICE WAS PREVIOUSLY GIVEN

There were no motions for which notice was previously given.

11. CORRESPONDENCE PROVIDED FOR INFORMATION

- 11.a Correspondence from the River District Coordinator Re: August and September 2025 River District Newsletter

11.b Correspondence from Francesca Dobbyn, Executive Director of United Way of Bruce Grey Re: Report - Mapping Discharge Pathways from Correctional Institutions in Bruce Grey and The S.O.S. Story of Community Impact

11.c Final approvals issued for the following Business Licences:

- Alnasser Syrian Food, a restaurant located at 132 9th St E
- Indulgence VIP, a members only social club located at 966 2nd Ave E
- PWR Power Fade Golf, change of ownership at 290 9th St E, Unit B

RD-250910-008

Moved by Member Dwyer

"THAT in consideration of correspondence provided for information purposes listed on the September 10, 2025 River District Board of Management (RDBM) agenda, the RDBM receives items 11.a to 11.c for information purposes."

Carried.

12. DISCUSSION OF ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

12.a Block Captain Feedback

Member Smith provided the following Block Captain feedback:

- Congratulations were extended to Randy's Records on their 40th Anniversary.
- Some businesses indicated they were not notified about the recent stakeholder meeting.
- The stakeholder meeting was viewed positively, with a recommendation to hold similar meetings in the future.
- A review of alternative waste disposal methods was requested.
- Concerns were raised about theft and a decline in business at one location.
- A request was made for a copy of the River District Constitution, along with additional information regarding the River District boundary and membership.
- A question was posed about how the River District Board is responding to businesses being approached by the mall or other locations outside of the River District.
- A request was made for more green space to help address dog waste issues.
- Updates were requested on the garbage collection machine, snow removal, alley lighting installation, and the kiosk.

The Director of Community Services advised that staff are working with a contractor to have the lights installed in the two alleys. Various kiosk options

have been reviewed and priced, with a final decision to be made shortly. The Glutton, a garbage collection machine, is no longer operational due to the unavailability of replacement parts. The Manager of Parks and Open Space could attend a future River District meeting to provide a maintenance update. A staff report will be presented to Council in follow up to the July stakeholder meeting.

13. NOTICES OF MOTION

There were no notices of motion.

14. ADJOURNMENT

The business contained on the agenda having been completed, Vice Chair Thomas adjourned the meeting at 6:04 p.m.

Public Notice

Notice of Public Meeting for Owen Sound River District 2026 Budget

Owen Sound, Ontario
Monday, November 10, 2025

Please be advised that the River District Board of Management (RDBM) intends to hold a Public Meeting respecting the 2026 River District budget.

Public Meeting:

The public meeting will take place during the regular RDBM meeting as follows:

Date:	Wednesday, November 26, 2025
Time:	5:30 p.m.
Location:	City Hall, Council Chambers 808 2 nd Avenue East Owen Sound, ON N4K 2H4

The meeting can be viewed live on the City's [Council and Committees webpage](#).

Public Comments:

Oral and written comments will be considered at the Public Meeting. Written comments will be accepted until 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 26, 2025, and may be submitted to Staci Landry, Deputy Clerk as follows:

Electronic Mail:	slandry@owensound.ca
Regular Mail:	808 2 nd Avenue East, Owen Sound, ON N4K 2H4

Written comments received by November 20, 2025 will appear on the RDBM Meeting agenda which will be available for review on November 21, 2025 on the [Council and Committees webpage](#).



If you wish to participate in the Public Meeting electronically, you must contact the Deputy Clerk by Tuesday, November 25, 2025, at 4:30 p.m. at slandry@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 ext. 1235 to be registered to participate in the Public Meeting.

Personal information is collected under the authority of the *Municipal Act, 2001* and will be used to complete the budget process. Questions about this collection should be addressed to Staci Landry, Deputy Clerk.

Budget Document Links:

At its meeting on September 10, 2025, the RDBM considered the following staff report and approved a 3.25% budgetary increase for the draft 2026 operating budget to be presented to the River District Business Improvement Area membership.

[Staff Report CS-25-092 - Draft 2026 Budget for Board Review and Input Draft Operating Budget](#)

For more information about the budget, please contact Kate Allan, Director of Corporate Services at kallan@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 ext. 1238.



Staff Report

Report To: River District Board of Management

Report From: Kate Allan, Director of Corporate Services
Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services

Meeting Date: September 10, 2025

Report Code: CS-25-092

Subject: Draft 2026 Budget for Board Review and Input

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-25-092 respecting the draft 2026 River District budget considerations, the River District Board of Management:

1. Directs staff to provide notice of a public meeting to be held on November 12, 2025; and
2. Provides direction on the allocation of one-time funds to special initiatives.

Highlights:

- The *Municipal Act* establishes the requirement for Business Improvement Areas to prepare a budget and hold a meeting where the budget can be discussed.
- The attached draft 2026 budget includes a 3.25% levy increase to members.
- Following review and input by the Board, a notice of the meeting of the Board where the budget is to be discussed with the membership will be given.
- The draft budget, as presented, continues to move forward with the implementation of the River District Action Plan, makes a contribution to the capital reserve, maintains complimentary business-sponsored parking, provides for a partnership with the City on beautification and maintenance as well as promotion and experience development in the

River District, and provides a sustainable long-term opportunity around the River District Coordinator role. The budget is sustainable and does not rely on the reserve for operating needs.

River District Action Plan Alignment:

The 2026 budget supports the River District Action Plan in the areas of Branding, River District Management, River District Experience Development as well as River District Promotion.

Previous Report/Authority:

None.

Background:

In 2019, the Owen Sound Downtown Improvement Area Board of Management (OSDIA) and the City of Owen Sound entered a new partnership that supports complimentary parking in the River District area sponsored jointly by the City and DIA. This agreement was last updated in February 2024 with a term ending in February 2029.

City staff provides support to the Board, expertise, and staff resources in the areas of: Branding, Marketing and Promotion, Events, Beautification, and Maintenance, as well as financial oversight and administrative support for the Board, including the production of agendas, minutes, etc. including live streaming of meetings with overall leadership, direction, and oversight coming from the Board.

2020 was the first full year of operations under this partnership agreement.

During the year, the Director of Corporate Services provides updates to the Board respecting the budget. New in 2023, the Director of Corporate Services shared detailed monthly financial transactions with the Board's Treasurer. The agreement provides that the City will be responsible to pay invoices, procure goods and services, collect fees and the levy. City staff are to provide quarterly updates to the Board.

The Agreement also provides that the Board, with the assistance of City staff will establish a draft annual budget.

With respect to Business Improvement Areas, the *Municipal Act* requires:

Budget

205 (1) *A board of management shall prepare a proposed budget for each fiscal year by the date and in the form required by the municipality and shall hold one or more meetings of the members of the improvement area for discussion of the proposed budget. 2002, c. 17, Sched. A, s. 40 (1).*

Council to Approve

(2) *A board of management shall submit the budget to council by the date and in the form required by the municipality and the municipality may approve it in whole or in part but may not add expenditures to it. 2001, c. 25, s. 205 (2); 2002, c. 17, Sched. A, s. 40 (2).*

Analysis:

The draft 2026 Operating Budget is presented (attached). In preparing for this meeting, staff met with the Board Chair and Treasurer.

Key items in the 2026 draft budget include:

- A 3.25% increase in the levy amounting to \$8,632.
- A continuation of the reduced cost of business-sponsored parking.
- Status quo in terms of revenue expected from the sharing of parking pass revenue with the City.
- Fully funding the River District Coordinator position.
- An allocation to events and promotions of \$31,300. The detailed allocation of this to various events and promotions is based on the direction from the Board that will be part of the February 2026 report; however, this funding envelope is allocated to this use.
- Contribution to flowers, sidewalk maintenance, and street washing is increased by \$2,500 to reflect the increase in costs.
- Includes a \$10,000 contribution to reserves. This would be added to the Board's existing reserve for use in a future special capital project or initiative.
- Expenses relating to the Board celebration event, education, and networking remain, along with a planned \$2,000 donation to the Citizens on Patrol.
- 2026 is an election year. If there is the need for an election, the costs of the election would be taken from the reserve. A future report by the Clerk will be provided with the details and costs relating to running an election.

The budget as presented includes levy to the membership of \$273,907.

Based on an estimated 253 properties in the area, the average levy increase is \$31.15.

Like 2025, the draft 2026 budget does not include a transfer from reserves and is a sustainable budget, continuing to also set a modest amount of funds aside in the reserve.

Staff recommends that any annual costs associated with website maintenance or content creation that require external resources be considered by the River District Board of Management in the context of their annual Marketing and Promotion Plan.

Commitments for one-time funding

1. Update the River District Action Plan

In 2020, the City and River District shared the cost to develop the River District Action Plan. This Marketing and Branding Action Plan was developed as a 3-year plan, and many of the initiatives under the plan have been implemented.

The Board has approved an approach that would see staff work to undertake this update with the Board with a budget from the reserve of up to \$10,000. This reduces the original planned amount of \$30,000 by \$20,000.

RD-250514-007

"THAT in consideration of the Verbal Report provided May 14, 2025, from the Director of Community Services respecting the River District Action Plan, the River District Board of Management receives the Verbal Report for information purposes."

2. Display board

The Board had previously allocated up to \$15,000 from the reserve for a new display board for the River District.

RD-250514-006

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-25-048 respecting Poster Kiosk Evaluation and Replacement, the River District Board of Management:

1. Directs staff to replace the poster kiosk as outlined in the report; and
2. Approves an upset limit of \$15,000, funded from reserves, for the purchase and installation of the poster kiosk."

3. Other ideas – Partnership with City or Others on Initiatives relating to the Unhoused

In late July, the City of Owen Sound hosted a meeting with River District stakeholders together with service providers at the request of Owen Sound Police Services.

While actions from this meeting have not been finalized, it may be helpful to the Board, as part of the 2026 budget, to set aside up to \$10,000 from the reserve to support initiatives or actions relating to homelessness in the River District.

It is anticipated that this may be a partnership with another organization. The Board is asked to identify this as an item for the budget for the purpose of planning, with the details to follow. This does not presuppose spending the funds but allows the Board this opportunity should a project arise.

Financial Implications:

The overall levy would increase by 3.25% with the average impact per member estimated at \$31.15. Staff are recommending the draft budget, including a 3.25% increase, go forward to the public meeting.

There are 253 properties in the River District within the City of Owen Sound. The River District tax rate for 2025 is 0.00476191.

In addition to the River District Board mandate regarding maintenance, beautification, and promotion, the City also supports the River District area in many ways:

- In 2025, in excess of \$200,000 in costs were incurred by the City to support activities in the River District, including maintenance, horticulture, arboriculture, watering, sweeping, waste pick up, and street sweeping.

Item	RD 2026 Draft Budget	City 2025 actuals Note * forecasted year end costs
Plant materials	\$10,000	\$20,500
Maintenance Watering Special events support Horticulture Banners General maintenance Garbage (not contract) Street sweeping	\$5,000	\$220,000
Pressure Washing	\$3,000	\$3,000
Winter Maintenance (lots, sidewalks and snowbanks)		\$100,000 *

- The City continues to replace and upgrade the on-street poles in the River District as part of the City's capital program. Several new replacement trees have been and will be planted by the City at no cost to the River District.
- The River District receives weekly waste and recycling pickup, whereas other areas of the City receive bi-weekly pickup.
- Other services provided at an enhanced level in the River District include daily pick up (summer) and three times a week, the rest of the year, from the on-street receptacles, weekly street sweeping, and snow removal, including clearing of banks and removal of snow piles from lots.
- The River District benefits from a number of events and activations delivered by the City paid for by the Municipal levy. In 2025, these included Midweek Music and Outdoor Movie Nights.

- Construction is complete on the major capital investment in the 900 block of 1st Avenue East, Downtown River Precinct II which opened in early June 2025.
- The River District is given priority for programs under the City's Community Improvement Program, including the Façade and Structural Improvement Program, Accessibility Grant Improvement Program, and Landscape Grant Program.

Communication Strategy:

As required by the *Municipal Act*, notice will be provided for a meeting of the membership for the purpose of discussing the draft budget. Following approval by the Board, the budget will be presented to City Council for approval.

Consultation:

Viveca Gravel, River District Coordinator

Eckhard Pastrik, Manager of Parks & Open Space

Attachments:

2026 Draft River District Budget

Recommended by:

Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services

Kate Allan, Director of Corporate Services

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services, at pcoulter@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 Ext. 1252.

Owen Sound River District Board of Management 2026 DRAFT Budget				
	Budget 2026	Budget 2025	Variance	
Revenues				
Levy				
Levy to Members	273,907.21	\$ 265,275	\$ 8,632	
Levy Adjustments	- 2,750.00	-\$ 2,000	-\$ 750	
Total Levy	\$ 271,157	\$ 263,275	\$ 7,882	
Other Income				
Interest			\$ -	
Total Revenues	\$ 271,157	\$ 263,275	\$ 7,882	
Expenses				
Marketing				
Marketing Action Plan Implementation			\$ -	
<i>Community Development Coordinator</i>			\$ -	
Wages	74,515	70,205	\$ 4,310	
Payroll Benefits and Overhead	23,845	23,870	-\$ 25	
Phone Allowance	360		\$ 360	
Print Media			\$ -	
Total Marketing	\$ 98,720	\$ 94,075	\$ 4,645	
Events				
Hottest Street Sale (net)		\$ 6,000	-\$ 6,000	
Christmas Promotions		\$ 8,000	-\$ 8,000	
Events	\$ 31,300	\$ 17,300	\$ 14,000	
Total Events	\$ 31,300	\$ 31,300	\$ -	
Beautification & Maintenance				
Flora	\$ 10,000	\$ 7,500	\$ 2,500	
Sidewalk Cleaning & Maintenance	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ -	
Sidewalk Washing	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ -	
Streetscape Improvement Design			\$ -	
Contribution to Future Reserve	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ -	
Total Beautificatioin & Maintenance	\$ 28,000	\$ 25,500	\$ 2,500	

Expenses Continued...				
	Administration			
	Membership Fees	\$ 600	\$ 600	\$ -
	Insurance	\$ 2,837	\$ 2,100	\$ 737
	Website	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Newsletter	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Office Expenses	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Audit	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ -
	Election Contract	\$ -		\$ -
	Total Administration	\$ 7,437	\$ 6,700	\$ 737
	Complimentary Parking			
	Contribution to City	\$ 120,000	\$ 120,000	\$ -
	DIA 50 % Share of Passes	-\$ 24,000	-\$ 24,000	\$ -
	Total Complimentary Parking	\$ 96,000	\$ 96,000	\$ -
	Security			
	Citizen on Patrol Donation	2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ -
	Board Expenses			
	Annual General Meeting	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Board Meetings	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Celebration	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ -
	Service Recognition	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ -
	Education - Board	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ -
	Networking - Board	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ -
	Community Service Fund			
	Total Board Expenses	\$ 7,700	\$ 7,700	\$ -
	Total Expenses	\$ 271,157	\$ 263,275	\$ 7,882
	To Reserves (Draw from Reserves)	-\$ 0	-\$ 0	-\$ 0
	Estimated Opening Reserves	\$ 146,082	\$ 161,082	
	River District Action Plan		-\$ 10,000	
	River District Lighting		-\$ 15,000	
	Less Election	- 5,000		
	Less Downtown Initiatives	- 10,000		
	plus contribution for future	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	
	Estimated Closing Reserves	\$ 141,082	\$ 146,082	

Draft 2026 Budget

November 26, 2025



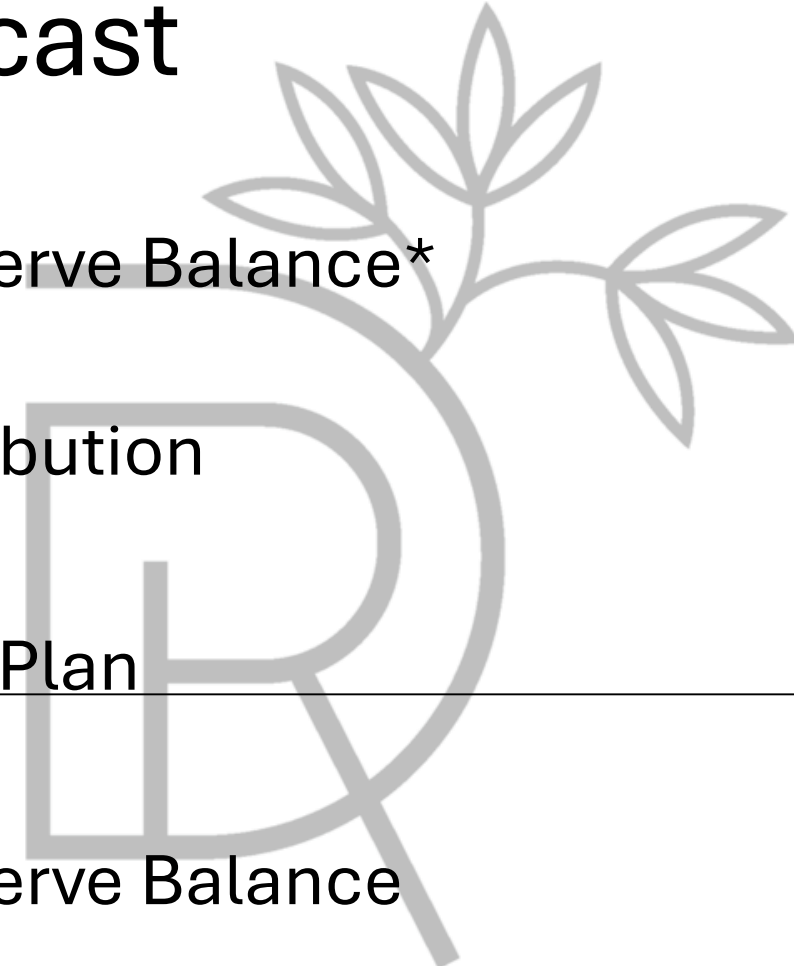


Proposed
Total Levy
Increase is
3.25%

<i>River District Operating Costs</i>	2026	2025	
Marketing Coordinator	98,720	94,075	
Marketing and Events	31,300	31,300	
Beautification and Maintenance	18,000	15,500	
Administration	7,437	6,700	
Parking	96,000	96,000	
Security	2,000	2,000	
Board Expenses	7,700	7,700	
Contribution to Capital	10,000	10,000	
Total Operating Program	271,157	263,275	7,882
Plus Levy Adjustments for Rebates	2,750	2,000	
Actual Levy Requirement	273,907	265,275	
Net levy Revenue	271,157	263,275	7,882
Budget (surplus) Deficit to added to reserves	-	-	



Reserves Forecast



• 2025 Estimated Reserve Balance*	\$146,818
• 2026 Reserve Contribution	\$10,000
• Election (if required)	(\$5,000)
• <u>River District Action Plan</u>	<u>(\$30,000)</u>
• 2026 Estimated Reserve Balance	\$121,818

**pending finalization of 2025 year-end*

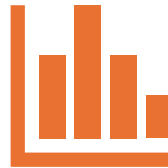
Other Considerations

- Not included in the River District levy/budget
 - Staff costs for administration and support
 - Recording Secretary and Clerk Services
 - Financial Reporting
 - IT support
 - Actual costs for street maintenance, and beautification funded by the City tax levy.
 - Forecast for actual costs in 2025 is \$220,500
 - Waste Pickup and Snow Removal (including banks)

In Summary



3.25% Levy Increase



Sustainable Reserve Balance



**Adhere to Operating Agreement
through funding from general
tax levy**



Owen Sound River District

2024 | Audit Findings

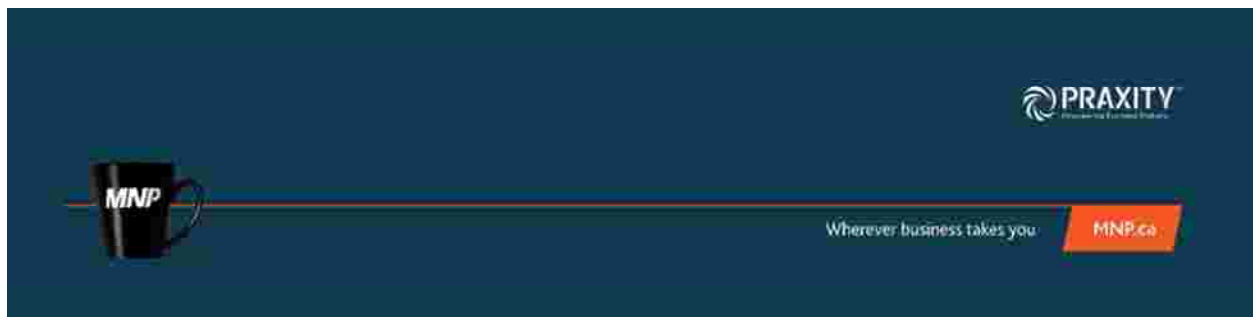
Report to the Board of Management

December 31, 2024

Traci Smith, CPA, CGA, LPA

Phone: (519)-376-6110

Email: traci.smith@mnp.ca



Overview

We are pleased to submit to you this Audit Findings Report (the "Report") for discussion of our audit of the financial statements of Owen Sound River District (the "River District") as at December 31, 2024, and for the year then ended. In this report we cover those significant matters which, in our opinion, you should be aware of as members of the Board of Management.

As auditors, we report to the board on the results of our examination of the financial statements of the River District as at and for the year ended December 31, 2024. The purpose of this Report is to assist you, as members of the Board of Management, in your review of the results of our audit.

This Report is intended solely for the information and use of Owen Sound River District and management and should not be distributed to or used by any other parties than these specified parties.

We appreciate having the opportunity to meet with you and to respond to any questions you may have about our audit, and to discuss any other matters that may be of interest to you.

Engagement Status

We have substantially completed our audit of the consolidated financial statements of the River District which has been carried out in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards and are prepared to sign our Independent Auditor's Report subsequent to completion of the following procedures:

- Approval of the financial statements by the Board
- Receipt of the signed management representation letter dated as of the final report date
- Subsequent events review through to financial statement approval date

No significant limitations were placed on the scope or timing of our audit.

Independent Auditor's Report

Unless unforeseen complications arise, our Independent Auditor's Report will provide an unmodified opinion. A draft copy of our proposed Independent Auditor's Report has been included with this report.

Audit Reporting Matters

Our audit was carried out in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards and included a review of all significant accounting and management reporting systems, with each material year end balance, key transaction and other events considered significant to the financial statements considered separately.

Significant Audit, Accounting and Reporting Matters

Area	Comments
Final Materiality	Final materiality used for our audit was \$8,400 for December 31, 2024.
Identified or Suspected Fraud	While our audit cannot be relied upon to detect all instances of fraud, no incidents of fraud, or suspected fraud, came to our attention in the course of our audit.
Identified or Suspected Non-Compliance with Laws and Regulations	Nothing has come to our attention that would suggest any non-compliance with laws and regulations that would have a material effect on the financial statements.
Financial Statement Disclosures	The disclosures made in the notes to the financial statements appear clear, neutral and consistent with our understanding of the entity and the amounts presented in the financial statements.
Significant Deficiencies in Internal Control	While our review of controls was not sufficient to express an opinion as to their effectiveness or efficiency, no significant deficiencies in internal control have come to our attention.
Matters Arising from Discussions with Management	There were no significant matters discussed, or subject to correspondence, with management that in our judgment need be brought to your attention.
Accumulated Surplus	A breakdown of the River District's accumulated surplus is included in Note 1. The general surplus for 2024 was transferred to reserve as noted in Note 2.

Significant Risk Areas and Responses

Significant Risk Area	Response and Conclusion
Revenue Recognition	To address this risk, we reviewed the revenue recognition policy for consistency with the professional standards. No significant issues were noted during the current period.
Management Override of Control	To address this risk, we developed criteria for unusual journal entries, determined the population of unusual journal entries and obtained corroborating evidence of these journal entries from management as to why the journal entries were made. No inappropriate journal entries were noted. No management override of controls noted in the current period.

Other Areas

Area	Comments
Auditor Independence	We confirm to the Committee that we are independent of the River District of Owen Sound. Our letter to the Committee discussing our independence is included as part of the additional materials attached to this report.
Management Representations	We have requested certain written representations from management, which represent a confirmation of certain oral representations given to us during the course of our audit. This letter, provided by management, has been included as additional material to this report.
Summary of Significant Differences	We identified unadjusted differences in relation to the December 31, 2024 year end that was not material. The unadjusted difference is attached to the representation letter.

We appreciate having the opportunity to meet with you and respond to any questions you may have about our audit, and to discuss any other matters that may be of interest to you.

Sincerely,

MNP LLP

Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants

encls.

Appendix A – Independence Letter

November 26, 2025

Members of the Board of Management
Owen Sound River District
808 - 2nd Avenue East
Owen Sound, ON N4K 2H4

Dear Sirs/Mesdames:

We have been engaged to audit the financial statements of Owen Sound River District (the "River District") as at December 31, 2024 and for the year then ended.

The purpose of this letter is to communicate with you regarding all relationships between the River District and MNP LLP and/or its affiliates (collectively, "MNP") that, in our professional judgement, may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence. In determining which relationships to report, we consider the relevant rules and related interpretations prescribed by the appropriate professional accounting body and applicable legislation, covering such matters as:

- (a) Holding a financial interest, either directly or indirectly, in a client;
- (b) Holding a position, either directly or indirectly, that gives the right or responsibility to exert significant influence over the financial or accounting policies of a client or a related entity;
- (c) Personal or business relationships of immediate family, close relatives, partners or retired partners, either directly or indirectly, with a client or a related entity;
- (d) Economic dependence on a client; and
- (e) Provision of non-assurance services in addition to the audit engagement.

We are not aware of any relationship between the River District and MNP that, in our professional judgment, may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence, which have occurred from January 1, 2024 to November 26, 2025.

We hereby confirm that MNP is independent with respect to the River District within the meaning of the Code of Professional Conduct of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Ontario as of November 26, 2025.

This report is intended solely for the use of Members of the Board of Management, management and others within the River District and should not be used for any other purposes.

Sincerely,



Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants

MNP LLP

1717 2nd Avenue East P.O. Box 397, Owen Sound ON, N4K 5P7

T: 519-376-6110 F: 519-376-4741

Appendix B – Management Representation Letter

City of Owen Sound River District
808 - 2nd Avenue East
Owen Sound, ON N4K 2H4

November 26, 2025

MNP LLP
1717 2nd Avenue East P.O. Box 397
Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 5P7

To Whom It May Concern:

In connection with your audit of the financial statements of the City of Owen Sound River District, as at December 31, 2024 and for the year then ended, we hereby confirm to the best of our knowledge and belief, the following representations made to you during the course of your audit.

We understand that your audit was made in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Accordingly, the audit included an examination of the accounting system, controls and related data, and tests of the accounting records and such other auditing procedures as you considered necessary in the circumstances, for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the financial statements. We also understand that such an audit is not designed to identify, nor can it necessarily be expected to disclose, misstatements, non-compliance with laws and regulations, fraud or other irregularities, should there be any.

Certain representations in this letter are described as being limited to matters that are material. An item is considered material, regardless of its monetary value, if it is probable that its omission from or misstatement in the financial statements would influence the decision of a reasonable person relying on the financial statements.

Financial Statements

1. We have fulfilled our responsibilities, as set out in the terms of the audit engagement letter dated March 3, 2025, for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

We believe these financial statements are complete and present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position as at December 31, 2024, and the results of its operations and its cash flows, in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

2. All transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements, and are reported in the appropriate period.
3. We acknowledge that we are responsible for the accounting policies followed in the preparation of the financial statements. Significant accounting policies, and any related changes to significant accounting policies, are disclosed in the financial statements. The selection of accounting policies is appropriate in accordance with the requirements of Canadian public sector accounting standards, and are applied consistently throughout the financial statements.

4. The methods, significant assumptions, and data used in making accounting estimates and their related disclosures are appropriate to achieve recognition, measurement and/or disclosure that are reasonable in accordance with Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards.
5. We are aware of and concur with the contents and results of the attached journal entries prepared by you, and accept responsibility for the financial statement effects of the entries.
6. We believe the effects of those uncorrected financial statement differences aggregated by you during the audit are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole.
7. Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the requirements of Canadian public sector accounting standards.
8. All events or transactions that have occurred subsequent to the statement of financial position and for which Canadian public sector accounting standards require adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted or disclosed appropriately in the financial statements.
9. All plans or intentions that may affect the carrying value or classification of assets and liabilities are appropriately reflected in the financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.
10. All liabilities, both known and contingent, requiring recognition or disclosure in the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of Canadian public sector accounting standards have been adjusted or disclosed as appropriate.
11. All outstanding and possible claims, whether or not they have been discussed with legal counsel, have been disclosed to you and are appropriately reflected in the financial statements.
12. All assets, wherever located, to which satisfactory title was had at the year-end, have been fairly stated and recorded in the financial statements. The assets are free from hypothecation, liens and encumbrances, except as noted in the financial statements. We have disclosed the nature and carrying amounts of any assets pledged as collateral. All assets of uncertain value, and restrictions imposed on assets, are appropriately reported in the financial statements.
13. All aspects of laws, regulations or contractual agreements, including non-compliance, are appropriately reflected in the financial statements.

Information Provided

1. We have responded fully to all inquiries made to us and have made available to you:
 - A complete record of all financial records that are relevant to the preparation and presentation of the financial statements;
 - Additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of your audit;
 - Unrestricted access to persons within the entity from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.

2. We acknowledge management's responsibility for the design, implementation and operation of controls that have been designed to prevent and detect fraud.
3. Where the impact of any frauds or suspected frauds, and non-compliance or possible non-compliance with laws and regulations, has a material effect on the financial statements, we have disclosed to you all known significant facts relating thereto, including circumstances involving management, employees having significant roles over controls, and others. We have made known to you any allegations of fraud or suspected fraud communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators and others. The effects of such events, if any, are properly presented in the financial statements.
4. We have disclosed to you all deficiencies in the design or operation of internal controls over financial reporting of which we are aware.
5. We have disclosed to you all aspects of laws, regulations or contractual agreements that may affect the financial statements, including non-compliance.
6. We have disclosed to you the identities of all related parties and all related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware.
7. We have no knowledge of side agreements (contractual or otherwise) with any parties that have not been disclosed to you.

Professional Services

1. We acknowledge the engagement letter dated March 3, 2025, which states the terms of reference regarding your professional services.
2. We are not aware of any reason why MNP LLP would not be considered independent of the City of Owen Sound River District for purposes of the audit.

Sincerely,

City of Owen Sound River District

Signature

[Title]

City of Owen Sound - River District
Summary of Unadjusted Misstatements
12/31/2024

Description of Misstatement	Identified Misstatements	Projections of Identified Misstatements	Estimates	Proposed Adjustments			
				Assets Dr(Cr)	Liabilities Dr(Cr)	Opening R/E Dr(Cr)	Income Dr(Cr)
Parking pass revenue understated	1,836			1,836			(1,836)
HST receivable not claimed within three years	748			(748)			748
Likely Aggregate Misstatements Before Effect of Previous Year's Errors and Estimates	2,584	-	-	1,088	-	-	(1,088)
Effect of Previous Year's Errors				-	-	-	-
Likely Aggregate Misstatements				1,088	-	-	(1,088)

Details of why no adjustment has been made to the financial statements for the above items:
Individually and in aggregate, not material.

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And proud of it!

At MNP we're proud to be the national accounting, consulting and tax firm that is 100% Made in Canada.

Our history defines who we are and our approach to business. Being a Canadian firm has helped shape our values, our collaborative approach, and the way we work with our clients, engaging them every step of the way.

We have a unique perspective. Our decisions are made here – decisions that drive Canadian business and help us all achieve success — and we know the impact that our choices have on the cities and towns we call home.

Throughout our six decades of work, we've seen our communities are more than just a place we do business in. They're a place where our families live, play, and thrive, and we work to make them the best places they can be.

Being 100% Canadian is something we wear proudly. This country provides us with great opportunities, and we're here to help our clients seize the opportunities so we can create a brighter future for the generations to come.



Wherever business takes you

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**Owen Sound River District
Financial Statements
For the year ended December 31, 2024**

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Owen Sound River District
Financial Statements
For the year ended December 31, 2024

Contents

Financial Statements

Owen Sound River District

Independent Auditor's Report	2 - 3
Statement of Financial Position	4
Statement of Operations and Accumulated Surplus	5
Statement of Changes in Net Financial Assets	6
Statement of Cash Flows	7
Summary of Significant Accounting Policies	8
Notes to Financial Statements	9 - 10

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Board of Management of the
Owen Sound River District

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the Owen Sound River District, which comprise the statement of financial position as at December 31, 2024, and the statements of operations and accumulated surplus, changes in net financial assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Owen Sound River District as at December 31, 2024 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the organization in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Other Matter

The financial information for the year ended December 31, 2023 were audited by another auditor who expressed an unmodified opinion on those statements on December 23, 2024.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the organization's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the organization or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the organization's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibility for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the organization's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the organization's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the organization to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Chartered Professional Accountants, Licensed Public Accountants

Owen Sound, Ontario
TBD

**Owen Sound River District
Statement of Financial Position**

December 31	2024	2023
Financial assets		
Cash	\$ 162,022	\$ 155,759
Accounts receivable	748	748
Due from City of Owen Sound	21,035	6,191
	<u>183,805</u>	<u>162,698</u>
Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	8,163	4,151
Gift certificates payable	7,562	7,562
	<u>15,725</u>	<u>11,713</u>
Net financial assets and accumulated surplus (Note 1)	\$ 168,080	\$ 150,985

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Owen Sound River District Statement of Operations and Accumulated Surplus

For the year ended December 31	2024 Budget (Note 4)	2024 Actual	2023 Actual
Revenue			
City of Owen Sound - Special Area Levy	\$ 255,606	\$ 255,988	\$ 251,694
Donations	-	500	500
Parking	22,000	23,421	27,284
Other income	-	10,001	5,936
	<u>277,606</u>	<u>289,910</u>	<u>285,414</u>
Expenses			
Marketing	86,638	91,182	35,597
Events	34,300	35,029	28,374
Beautification and maintenance	15,000	15,500	14,500
Administration	2,700	2,637	3,152
Professional services	4,000	4,013	4,328
Board expenses	7,700	2,454	4,142
Security	2,000	2,000	2,000
Parking initiative	120,000	120,000	183,000
	<u>272,338</u>	<u>272,815</u>	<u>275,093</u>
Annual surplus (Note 3)	5,268	17,095	10,321
Accumulated surplus, beginning of the year	150,985	150,985	140,664
Accumulated surplus, end of the year	<u>\$ 156,253</u>	<u>\$ 168,080</u>	<u>\$ 150,985</u>

The accompanying summary of significant accounting policies and notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

Owen Sound River District
Statement of Changes in Net Financial Assets

<u>For the year ended December 31</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
	Budget (Note 4)	Actual	Actual
Annual surplus (Page 5)	\$ 5,268	\$ 17,095	\$ 10,321
Increase in net financial assets	5,268	17,095	10,321
Net financial assets, beginning of the year	150,985	150,985	140,664
Net financial assets, end of the year	\$ 156,253	\$ 168,080	\$ 150,985

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Owen Sound River District
Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended December 31	2024	2023
Cash provided by (used in)		
Operating activities		
Annual surplus	\$ 17,095	\$ 10,321
Changes in non-cash working capital balances		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	4,012	-
Due to the City of Owen Sound	(14,844)	(6,694)
Net change in cash	6,263	3,627
Cash, beginning of the year	155,759	152,132
Cash, end of the year	\$ 162,022	\$ 155,759

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Owen Sound River District Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

December 31, 2024

Management Responsibility	The Board of Management of the Owen Sound River District has prepared and is responsible for the integrity, objectivity and accuracy of the financial information presented in these financial statements. The Board of Management reviews and approves the financial statements.
Basis of Accounting	The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards established by the Public Sector Accounting Board of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada as prescribed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Revenues and expenses are reported on the accrual basis of accounting. The accrual basis of accounting recognizes revenues as they become available and measurable; expenses are recognized as they are incurred and measurable as a result of receipt of goods or services and the creation of a legal obligation to pay.
Basis of Consolidation	The Owen Sound River District has been consolidated with the financial statements of the City of Owen Sound.
Use of Estimates	The preparation of financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards requires management to make estimates that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. These estimates include accrued liabilities and gift certificates payable. Actual results could differ from management's best estimates as additional information becomes available in the future.
Revenue Recognition	User fees and other revenues are recognized when related goods or services are provided and collectibility is reasonably assured. Revenue related to fees received in advance of the fee being earned or when the service is performed is deferred and recognized when the fee is earned on the service performed. Special levies and grants are recognized as revenue when the transfer is authorized and all eligibility criteria have been met.
Financial Instruments	Cash is recorded at fair market value. All other financial instruments, accounts receivable, due from the City and accounts payable are measured at cost or amortized cost. The carrying amount of each of these financial instruments is presented on the statement of financial position. For financial instruments measured using amortized cost, the effective interest rate method is used to determine interest revenue or expense. All financial assets are tested annually for impairment. When financial assets are impaired, impairment losses are recorded in the statement of operations. Transaction costs are added to the carrying value for financial instruments measured using cost or amortized cost.

Owen Sound River District
Notes to Financial Statements

December 31, 2024

1. Accumulated Surplus

The organization segregates its accumulated surplus in the following categories:

	2024	2023
Reserve	\$ 168,080	\$ 150,985

2. Budget

Under Canadian Public sector accounting standards, budget amounts are to be reported on the consolidated statement of operations and accumulated surplus and charges in net financial assets for comparative purposes. The 2024 budget amounts approved by the Board have been reclassified to conform to the presentation of the statements of operations and accumulated surplus and changes in net financial assets. The following is a reconciliation of the budget approved by the Board of Management.

	2024 Budget	2024 Actual	2023 Actual
Annual surplus (Page 5)	\$ 5,268	\$ 17,095	\$ 10,321
Budget transfers to reserves	(10,000)	(10,000)	(10,000)
Surplus/Deficit transfer (to)/from reserves	4,732	(7,095)	(321)
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

3. Comparative Amounts

Comparative amounts have been reclassified to conform to the current year financial statement presentation.

Owen Sound River District

Notes to Financial Statements

December 31, 2024

4. Financial Instruments

Credit Risk

Credit risk is the risk that one party to a financial instrument will cause a financial loss for the other party by failing to discharge an obligation. The River District is exposed to credit risk through its cash, accounts receivables and due from the City of Owen Sound. The cash is held in a Canadian Chartered bank and the Canadian Deposit Insurance Corporation insures deposits up to a maximum of \$100,000 per depositor. There is a possibility of non-collection of accounts receivable and due from the City of Owen Sound. This is mitigated by being receivable from a government entity. The River District measures impairment based on how long the receivables have been outstanding. The amounts outstanding at year end, which is the River District's maximum exposure to credit risk were as follows:

	2024	2023
Current	\$ 21,035	\$ 6,191
Over 90 days	748	748
	21,783	6,939

Liquidity Risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that the River District encounters difficulty in meeting its obligations as they fall due. The River District has a planning and budgeting process in place to help determine the funds required to support the River District's normal operating requirements on an ongoing basis. The River District ensures that there are sufficient funds to meet its short-term requirements. The following table sets out the contractual maturities (representing undiscounted contractual cash-flows) of financial liabilities:

	2024	2023
Current	\$ 8,163	\$ 4,151

Craig S. Ambrose
CHIEF OF POLICE



Executive Fax: (519) 376-2456
Operations Fax: (519) 376-6131

November 18th, 2025

River District Board of Management

Owen Sound River District (City Hall)
808 2nd Avenue East
Owen Sound ON N4K 2H4

Attention: Chair Dave Parsons

Dear Chair Parsons;

Please accept this correspondence as notification that effective November 18th, 2025, the Citizens on Patrol (COP) volunteer unit of the Owen Sound Police has been retired and is no longer operational.

With recent changes to the legislative requirements for police services under the new Community Safety and Policing Act, as well as consideration given for various training requirements, and potential liability risk exposure under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board and our insurance carriers, the Service has had to reevaluate the program with an eye to whether continuation of the program can remain viable.

A number of similar programs which had been operating in other jurisdictions such as Saugeen Shores have been recently shut down, and only a couple remain in larger Services where budget allocations allow for expenditures for training, uniforms and a Service supplied vehicle to alleviate some of the risk exposure.

In a meeting with the local COP Unit organizer held on October 31st, the various challenges to continued operation of the Unit were outlined. At a meeting of the volunteer membership held on November 17th, 2025, the members unanimously elected to retire the Unit.

Formal recognition for the members, many of whom have been volunteering in excess of 10 years, will be at a final meeting scheduled for December 8th, 2025.

The Service wishes to thank the River District membership through the Board of Management for your financial support of the Unit over many years which has allowed the Unit to remain operational to this point.

Craig S. Ambrose, Chief of Police

Address All Correspondence to the Chief Of Police
922 2nd Avenue West, Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 4M7 Tel. (519) 376-1234



Staff Report

Report To: River District Board of Management

Report From: Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services

Meeting Date: November 26, 2025

Report Code: CS-25-095

Subject: Approach and Methodology to Update the River District Action Plan

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-25-095 respecting the Approach and Methodology to Update the River District Action Plan, the River District Board of Management supports moving forward with the approach and methodology as outlined in the report.

Highlights:

- The City and River District jointly funded the 2020 *River District Action Plan*, developed by BC Hughes as a three-year Marketing and Branding Plan. The plan established a clear downtown identity and marketing strategy through extensive public and stakeholder engagement.
- The original plan was organized around four pillars — Branding, River District Management, Experience Development, and Promotion — each with defined strategic objectives and actions designed to strengthen the River District's role as Owen Sound's economic and cultural centre.
- Many initiatives from the original plan have been implemented, and the plan's four pillars and strategic objectives remain relevant. The upcoming update will focus on reviewing and refreshing the actions within these existing pillars.

- The process includes reviewing current actions, reconfirming strategic priorities, and conducting inclusive engagement with businesses, property owners, social agencies, residents, and visitors to identify new or updated actions for the plan.

River District Action Plan Alignment:

The River District Action Plan was approved in 2021. This plan was designed as a 3-year strategy. The timing is appropriate to undertake an update to the Plan.

Climate and Environmental Implications:

There are no anticipated climate or environmental impacts.

Previous Report/Authority:

[River District Action Plan](#)

Background:

In 2020, the City and River District shared the cost to develop the River District Action Plan. This Marketing and Branding Action Plan was developed as a 3-year plan, and many of the initiatives under the plan have been implemented.

At its meeting in May of 2025, the Board approved an approach that would see staff work to undertake this update with the Board, with a budget from the reserve of up to \$10,000. This reduces the original planned amount of \$30,000 by \$20,000.

RD-250514-007

"THAT in consideration of the Verbal Report provided May 14, 2025, from the Director of Community Services respecting the River District Action Plan, the River District Board of Management receives the Verbal Report for information purposes."

River District Action Plan (2020)

The goal of the initial plan was to:

1. Create a refined downtown identity (brand) that captures the story and rallies people together; and

2. Develop a marketing plan with clear actions and objectives to tell that story.

The initial plan was completed with Public and Stakeholder engagement, which was completed in a variety of ways, including a community and resident survey, OSDIA membership survey, and one-on-one interviews. Overall, the input illustrated challenges offset by many positive factors. Site visits were completed by BC Hughes from February to September 2020.

On November 25, 2020, BC Hughes presented the [River District Action Plan](#). The Plan has four key areas:

- River District Branding
- River District Management
- River District Experience Development, and
- River District Promotion

In each of these areas, there are strategic objectives and actions. Attachment 1 to this report summarizes the strategic objectives and actions.

Analysis:

As described to the Board in May of 2025, the Plan, its four key pillars, and Strategic Objectives remain very relevant.

The focus for the update will be the actions within the pillars.

The following table outlines the methodology that will be used to update the Plan. The table identifies the staff lead and resources allocated to each task for the completion of an update to the Plan. Through the course of public and stakeholder engagement, as well as Board input, any issues that require additional expertise will be identified at that time, and the need for expert consulting support will be determined accordingly.

Task	Timeline	Staff Lead and Resources
Review current plan and status of actions. Identify status of actions. Note resource gaps in actions not completed if relevant.	Q1 2026	Lead: Director of Community Services Support: River District Coordinator

Reconfirm Pillars and Strategic Objectives.		Communications Advisor
Research and review existing conditions and use. Ensure emerging issues can be integrated into these areas. Will build on previous reports coming from the July 2025 meeting to identify issues. CM-25-022 – Project 1a3 – Update on Engineering and Public Works Department Structure Review CS-25-116 – Project 3a2 – Draft River District Service Level CM-25-027 – Update Following the July 28 Community Stakeholder Discussion to Foster a Vibrant River District CM-25-032 – Fostering A Vibrant River District – Report 2 CM-25-033 – River District Public Washroom Infrastructure and Operational Assessment		Lead: Director of Community Services Support: River District Coordinator Communications Advisor Parks & Open Space Public Works and Engineering
Develop a communications plan for the project.		Lead: Communications Advisor Support: Director of Community Services and River District Coordinator

Public Engagement (Principle: Inclusive and Respectful) i. Businesses and Property Owners in the River District Develop a communication and public engagement plan for the project which may include: • Online survey • Focus group Gather insights on operational issues, safety, and marketing priorities.		Lead: Director of Community Services Support: River District Coordinator Communications Advisor
Public Engagement ii. Social Agencies and Community Partners (i.e., Owen Sound Police Service, Canadian Mental Health Association, United Way, Safe 'N Sound, OSHaRE, etc.) Method: Round table Identify Services Identify strategies to balance economic and social well-being downtown. Communication		Lead: Director of Community Services Support: River District Coordinator Communications Advisor
Public Engagement iii. Residents, Visitors		Lead: Director of Community Services

Method: Online survey tool Understand perceptions of safety, pride, and comfort downtown. Identify new actions to support strategic objectives.		Support: River District Coordinator Communications Advisor
Summarize Engagement Present report to River District Board with Engagement Summary. Seek additional support for issues that may need some professional expertise in a particular subject matter.		Lead: Director of Community Services Support: River District Coordinator Communications Advisor
Update River District Action Plan actions. Present Draft Updated Plan to River District Board.		Lead: Director of Community Services Support: River District Coordinator Communications Advisor

Financial Implications:

The River District Board has established a \$10,000 budget to support this update.

Communication Strategy:

A communications plan or strategy is a key action in the update and will support the public engagement with the groups identified.

The use of a project page on the OurCity framework will be a key part of communication for the project.

The detailed communications strategy will be developed prior to the launch of the project.

Consultation:

River District Coordinator, Communications Advisor

Attachments:

Summary of Strategic Objectives and Actions

Recommended by:

Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services at pcoulter@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 ext. 1252.

Attachment 1 – Strategic Objectives and Actions – River District Action Plan 2020

River District Branding

In an effort to demonstrate change, signify a new chapter and rally support with a positive connection for the area, a new brand for Owen Sound's downtown was recommended. The branding created an impactful and bold identity.

River District Management

Strategic Objective: Create a safe and clean space.

The River District is a cultural hotspot and a vibrant place to visit that benefits from the city's current beautification efforts. However, these positive values are outweighed by the current perceptions held by residents and stakeholders that the area is "sketchy, unsafe and dirty".

Strategic Objective: Create a visually appealing River District.

River District beautification efforts are recognized by stakeholders and community members. Additional tactics can be used to level up and ensure the River District is an inviting and beautiful place that businesses and local residents can be proud of.

Strategic Objective: Entice transient tourist traffic to stop in the River District.

Setting the stage to tempt visitors to stop and spend time in the River District can take some preliminary work in order to attract their interest and to guide them to the area.

River District Experience Development

Strategic Objective: Create an engaging space.

Making public spaces consistently engaging and entertaining takes more than having a one-off event. The public needs to have a reason to frequently and repeatedly visit the downtown. A well-programmed public area or activated space can be a primary motivator to attract (and retain) visitors in the downtown core.

Strategic Objective: Learn from and lean on others to build success.

The River District can benefit from utilizing information about best practices, downtown development, strategic planning and downtown economic successes from other communities of all shapes and sizes, in an effort to build on successes and learn from challenges.

River District Promotion

Strategic Objective: Attract people to the River District.

Word of mouth promotion is a powerful tool (especially in a smaller community), and tackling many of the above recommendations will create spin-off marketing and promotion, discussion, referrals, and motivations to experience the River District. However, word of mouth advertising can't be controlled, measured, or planned. Ensuring there is a strategic, noteworthy promotions and marketing plan to support Owen Sound's River District is essential.

To create momentum and strategic development, the key steps below are positioned as the most important tactics for the DIA to tackle first.

1. Register the River District domain.
2. Undertake a brand touchpoint audit
3. Consider an expansion the OSIDA boundaries to include the west side of the river and harbour to ensure inclusion of key properties that align with River District brand.
4. Change the organization's name
5. Place an increased focus on waste management.
6. Encourage the development and activation of a substance use and River District housing initiative.
7. Create a business rewards program
8. Continue to offer complimentary parking for River District patrons.
9. Encourage River District business owners (and landlords) to beautify their property.
10. Beautify the River District's public spaces.
11. Ensure the accessibility of places of business and public areas.
12. Undertake a River District Wayfinding Plan.
13. Create an annual promotional tactical schedule and social media content calendar.



Staff Report

Report To: River District Board of Management
Report From: Viveca Gravel, River District Coordinator
Meeting Date: November 26, 2025
Report Code: CS-25-120
Subject: 2025 River District Block Captain Reorganization

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-25-120 respecting 2025 River District Block Captain Reorganization, the River District Board of Management directs staff to:

1. Update the River District Block Captain map as discussed in the meeting; and
2. Post the updated River District Block Captain map on the River District website.

Highlights:

- Block Captains act as a first point of contact between businesses and the River District Board of Management (RDBM).
- There is currently one vacant Block Captain position.
- Leveraging the River District Board of Management and community members for the River District Block Captain role helps to facilitate a community of support for businesses and strong communication.

River District Action Plan Alignment:

- Strategic Objective: Learn from and lean on others to build success.
 - Recommendation: Create the environment to attract Businesses.

- Tactic
 6. Cluster and develop assets that will attract the target market.
 - b. Mentor potential new River District entrepreneurs. Develop and implement an entrepreneurial support program (or collaborate with an existing program such as Catapult Grey Bruce) to support potential new businesses which will be located in the city's downtown. The program could include mentoring, a familiarization tour by a current business owner or city representative, and/or an online resource for business planning.

Climate and Environmental Implications:

There are no anticipated climate or environmental impacts.

Previous Report/Authority:

[River District Constitution](#)

[Report CS-23-029 Owen Sound River District Block Captains](#)

River District Board of Management Resolution No. RD-230308-004

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-23-029 respecting Owen Sound River District Block Captains, the River District Board of Management:

- 1. Approves the responsibilities of River District Block Captains as outlined in the report;**
- 2. Authorizes staff to update the River District Block Captains map with new board members; and**
- 3. Directs staff to change the River District Block Captains map on the owensoundriverdistrict.ca website with each Block Captain's contact information and a list of the responsibilities of the Block Captains."**

Background:

The River District Block Captain map was last reviewed in its entirety in March 2023. At that time, the roles and responsibilities of River District Block Captains were approved by River District Board of Management Resolution

No. RD-230308-004. The same resolution granted staff the authority to solicit volunteers to fill Block Captain position vacancies that arise from time to time.

Two new RDBM Directors began their terms on February 1, 2025, and one on September 10, 2025. There is currently one vacant Block Captain position. Feedback from members of the Board suggests a reorganization of the boundaries of the Block Captain defined blocks is warranted at this time.

Analysis:

The purpose of this report is to recommend that the Board review the current Block Captain map, make changes to the boundary of blocks, ensure that all Block Captain positions are filled, and make changes to current Block Captain assignments.

Role of Block Captains

The roles and responsibilities of River District Block Captains are to:

- Welcome new businesses or operators of businesses.
- Act as a River District ambassador promoting positive experiences in person and online.
- Help encourage new businesses to participate in upcoming events, initiatives, or important RDBM agenda items.
- Support staff in the distribution of physical materials and promote the River District Review Newsletter as the main point for information.
- Obtain feedback on initiatives where feedback from the membership is warranted and share with the River District Coordinator and Board as appropriate.
- Provide feedback to the RDBM members who represent the membership.
- Ensure businesses know who the point of contact is with the City for various communications, resources, or concerns.
- Act as a liaison between City staff, the RDBM, and River District membership.
- Facilitate cooperation among businesses.

Staff are not recommending any changes to the roles or responsibilities of the Block Captains at this time.

Review of Block Captain Map

The Block Captain map including current Block Captains is attached to the report. One Block Captain position is currently vacant. Staff are seeking the Board's direction to fill the vacant position and requesting that the Board consider at this time any desired changes to the blocks assigned to each of the respective Block Captains and the boundaries of the blocks to better align with the RDBM's goals.

Financial Implications:

None.

Communication Strategy:

River District Block Captain information will be shared through the River District Newsletter, as well as any welcome emails shared with new businesses or new business operators. The updated Block Captain map and Block Captain contact information will be available on the River District website.

Consultation:

Staci Landry, Deputy Clerk
Pam Coulter, Director of Community Services

Attachments:

1. Block Captains – As of September 3, 2025
2. Blank Block Captain Map

Recommended by:

Viveca Gravel, River District Coordinator
Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services

Submission approved by:

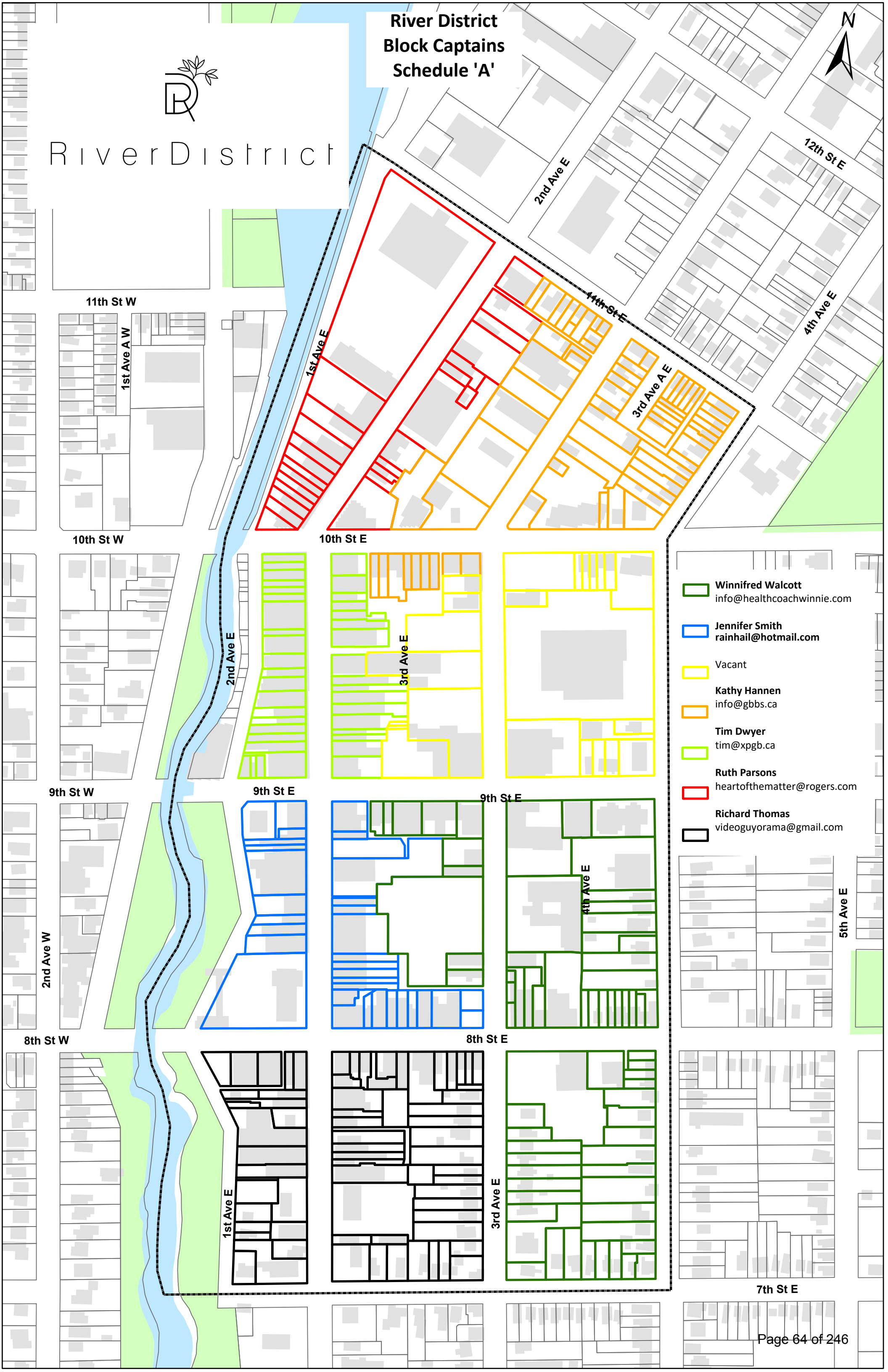
Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Viveca Gravel, River District Coordinator at vgravel@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 ext. 1209.



River District

River District
Block Captains
Schedule 'A'

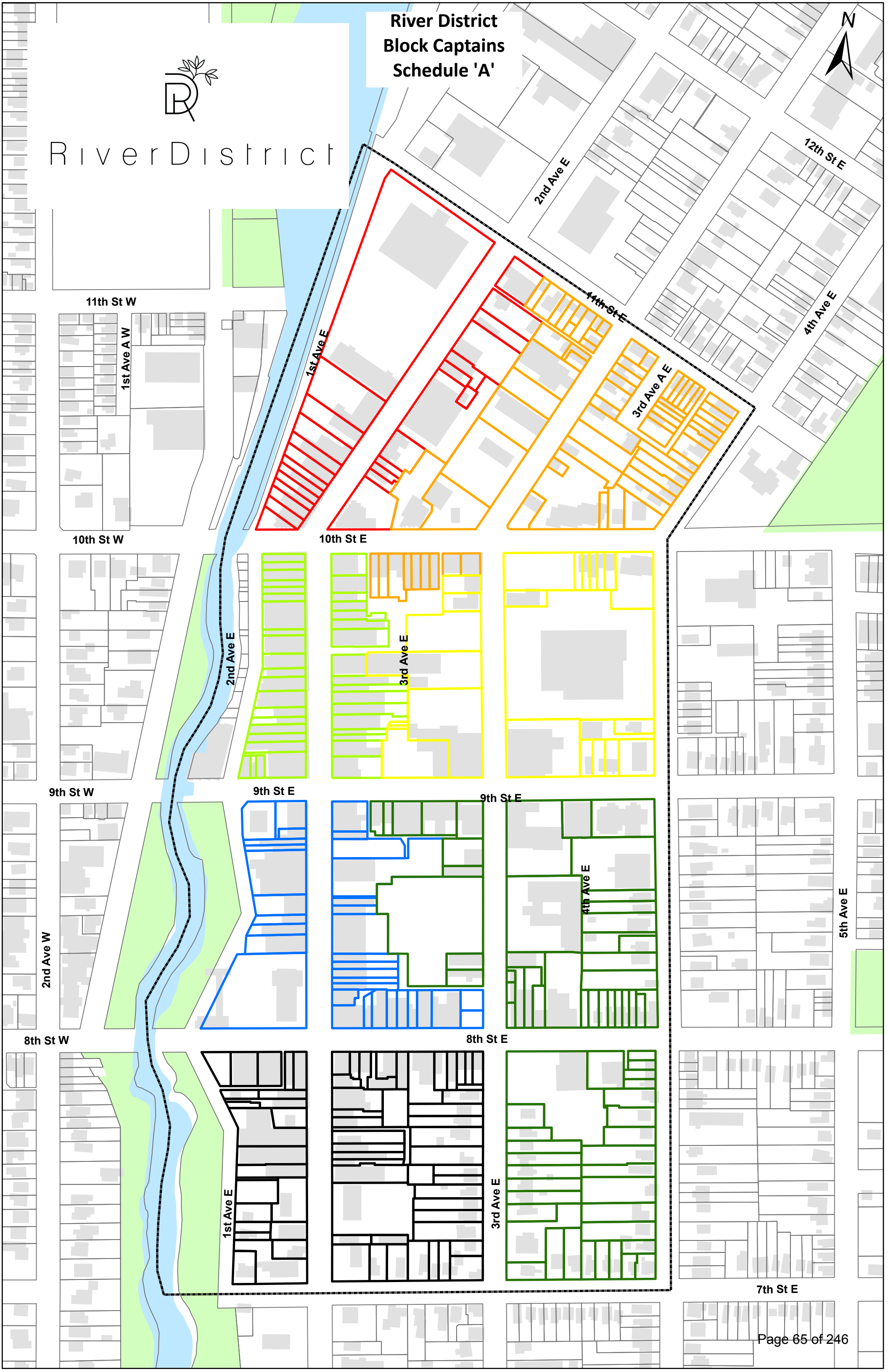


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RiverDistrict

River District
Block Captains
Schedule 'A'



Staff Report

Report To: City Council
Report From: Tim Simmonds, City Manager
Meeting Date: October 6, 2025
Report Code: CM-25-032
Subject: Fostering a Vibrant River District – Report II

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CM-25-032 respecting Fostering a Vibrant River District – Report II, City Council directs staff to include \$50,000 in the December update to the 2026 Capital Plan to support the preparation of a River District Revitalization Plan, outlining short, medium, and long-term actions to revitalize the streetscape elements and at grade infrastructure of the River District.

Highlights:

- The City of Owen Sound is committed to revitalizing the River District through coordinated leadership, planning, and stakeholder engagement.
- A dedicated River District Project Lead will oversee projects, partnerships, and initiatives to strengthen the area's economic, cultural, and social vitality.
- A comprehensive River District Revitalization Plan will identify short, medium, and long-term strategies to enhance public spaces, infrastructure, and programming.
- Service Level Standards and by-law updates will ensure consistent maintenance, safety, and public amenities..

Strategic Plan Alignment:

[Strategic Plan](#) Priority: Prosperous City.

This report and the actions support the City's strategic priority of a "Prosperous City" by fostering economic growth, cultural activity, and tourism within the River District. By coordinating revitalization efforts, enhancing public spaces, and improving infrastructure and amenities, the City is strengthening the district's role as a vibrant hub for business, community, and visitor activity.

Climate and Environmental Implications:

This supports the objectives of the City's Corporate Climate Change Adaptation Plan by strengthening the resiliency of City infrastructure or services.

Previous Report/Authority:

[CM-25-027](#) - Update Following the July 28 Community Stakeholder Discussion to Foster a Vibrant River District

R-250922-003

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CM-25-027 respecting Update Following the July 28 Community Stakeholder Discussion to Foster a Vibrant River District, City Council receives the report for information purposes."

Background:

The City's Official Plan identifies the River District as the primary economic, commercial, financial, cultural, tourism, and employment focus for Owen Sound and the surrounding region.

The area faces challenges related to aging streetscape elements, as well as the impacts of homelessness on the cleanliness and perceptions of safety in the area. Much of the streetscape in the area was upgraded between 2000 and 2006, with the 800 and 900 blocks of 1st Avenue East being completed in 2018 and 2025, respectively. Many of the assets are tired and in need of replacement. The 8th and 9th Street areas have not been updated since prior to 2000.

On July 28, 2025, the City convened a facilitated community stakeholder discussion to foster a vibrant River District. The session brought together approximately 100 participants, including residents, businesses, social

service agencies, elected officials, and staff. The meeting generated constructive dialogue and surfaced a shared commitment to collective action

Common themes included:

- Desire for improved communication and coordination between stakeholders;
- Need for concrete, visible actions such as public washrooms, beautification, and safety enhancements;
- Recognition that long-term, sustained commitment and leadership from the City are required; and
- Strong expectation that the City will convene, coordinate, and enable the revitalization process.

Analysis:

Council received an initial report ([CM-25-027](#)) on September 22, 2025. The report noted that a follow-up report on certain key issues would be presented at the Council meeting on October 6, 2025.

1. Dedicated River District Project Lead

A single point of contact is essential to lead and integrate downtown-related initiatives.

The existing role of the River District Coordinator has been revised and expanded to provide additional focus to:

- Provide strategic oversight and coordination of the efforts of the River District Project team;
- Coordinate projects, programming, and maintenance activities in the River District;
- Create an annual workplan and budget for the River District that aggregates the various workplans and budgets across the organization into a single point of reference;
- Act as liaison between City departments, the River District Board of Management, businesses, and community stakeholders;
- Track and report on progress of actions identified through stakeholder engagement;
- Conduct research projects with respect to business and community development, to support and enhance the Municipality's strategic objectives in the River District; and

- Seek external funding and partnerships to support revitalization initiatives.

The River District is supported by operational and capital efforts of staff across the organization. This includes everything from community development, the administration of the community improvement plan incentives, marketing and promotion, events, maintenance, beautification and snow removal. A dedicated River District Project Lead will ensure cohesive oversight, strengthen collaboration across departments and stakeholders, and drive long-term strategies that enhance the River District's vitality, sustainability, and prosperity.

2. Project Charter

A draft Project Charter (Attachment 4) has been created to support clarity of purpose for this role. Although the Project Lead will be key, the support and buy-in of staff in Parks and Open Space, Public Works and Engineering, Planning, By-law Enforcement, and Finance will play key roles. Support from other agencies, such as Grey County and Owen Sound Police Service, will also be key.

3. River District Revitalization Plan

The Project Lead has submitted a [Rural Ontario Development Program Grant](#) application to support the city in engaging a qualified consultant to prepare a comprehensive plan for upgrading streetscape features and at grade infrastructure in the River District. This work will build upon the 2000 Downtown and Harbourfront Master Plan and the more recent Downtown River Precinct planning initiatives.

This Plan will build on the asset inventory and condition assessments that have been completed and will recommend actions and create estimates and tenders for the work.

The scope of the project will include:

- Assess existing downtown infrastructure and validate our listed deficiencies in lighting, benches, banner poles, landscaping, and sidewalks as outlined in the City's GIS.
- Provide recommendations that align with the City's long-term vision for the River District as a hub for commerce, culture, and community life.
- The current list of deficiencies includes items such as; heaved sidewalks, broken tree grates, deteriorated pavers, broken curbs,

trees, aged benches. Attachment 4 is a location map of the deficiencies for context.

4. Service Level Standards

Service levels for the River District are critical; defining the expected level of service and ensuring that resources are allocated to support achieving the defined level of service. Service levels should reflect the role of the River District as the City's economic and cultural heart. Standards would include:

- Waste collection and litter control
- Street and sidewalk cleaning
- Beautification
- General maintenance

The Manager of Parks & Open Space, along with the Director of Community Services, has a project underway to establish Service Levels for the River District that are consistent with the City's agreement with the River District Board of Management. This document will clearly define roles and responsibilities for the various tasks.

This work is scheduled to come through the Service Review Implementation Committee in February of 2026.

5. Update to the River District Action Plan

In 2020, the City and River District shared the cost to develop the River District Action Plan. This Marketing and Branding Action Plan was developed as a 3-year plan, and many of the initiatives under the plan have been implemented.

At its meeting in May of 2025, the Board has approved an approach that would see staff work to undertake this update with the Board.

This 2020 Plan included objectives and actions in 4 key areas:

- River District Branding
- River District Management
- River District Experience Development
- River District Promotion

The Plan and its four key pillars remain highly relevant. Work is underway by the River District Board to update the actions within these pillars. A report is planned for the November Board meeting to present the approach and methodology that will be used in the update.

6. Update By-law Enforcement and Updated Regulatory Framework

Enhanced coordination with By-law Enforcement will help address issues such as cleanliness, property maintenance, and public safety, ensuring consistent standards that support the River District's role as the City's economic and cultural centre.

Council approved the September 10 Service Review Implementation Ad Hoc Committee [minutes](#), which recommends the addition of By-law staff to be included for consideration in the 2026 Mayor's budget. Once staffing is in place there will be proactive enforcement in the River District including foot patrols and waste management audits.

7. Role of Police Service

Police Services play an important role in fostering a safe and welcoming River District by maintaining a visible presence, responding to incidents, and supporting crime prevention initiatives. Their collaboration with the City, businesses, and social service agencies helps address community concerns, build trust, and enhance perceptions of safety. By working proactively on both enforcement and community engagement, Police Services contribute to creating an environment where residents, visitors, and businesses can thrive.

8. Role of other social services

Social services, including Grey County and its partners, play a key role in supporting the vitality of the River District by addressing social and community needs that impact perceptions of safety, inclusivity, and well-being. Their involvement will ensure coordinated responses to issues such as homelessness, mental health, and housing stability, while also providing resources and supports that foster dignity and connection for vulnerable populations. Collaboration between the City, Grey County, and local agencies strengthens the overall revitalization efforts by balancing economic growth with social responsibility and community care.

The City Manager was notified on September 29, that with funding from Health Canada, Grey County and Safe n' Sound are launching a Social Navigator program starting mid October. This program will see two staff members, 7 days a week for nearly 10 hours per day, connecting with people in the River District, facilitating support to those in need, including but not limited to needle collection. More about this program will be released as it

rolls out beginning with a County Staff report to Grey County Council, scheduled for October 9.

9. Public washrooms

Under the River District Management pillar of the current Action Plan, with the objective of creating a clean and safe space, actions include ensuring adequate (safe and clean) public washrooms are available. The plan calls for an assessment of the need for additional public washrooms, together with wayfinding signage, and ensuring the washrooms are safe, clean and open year-round.

This action has been supported by a recent motion of Council:

R-250922-004

"THAT in consideration of Staff Report CM-25-027 respecting Update Following the July 28 Community Stakeholder Discussion to Foster a Vibrant River District, City Council directs staff to bring forward a report to the October 27, 2025 Council meeting with options for public washrooms in the River District, including associated capital and operating costs."

A report will come forward to the October 27, 2025, meeting to address this recommendation.

The River District is central to the economic, cultural, and social vitality of Owen Sound. Building on recent stakeholder engagement, the establishment of a River District Project Lead, the preparation of a Revitalization Plan, and the setting of Service Standards will ensure the City fulfills its leadership role in maintaining and enhancing the River District's long-term viability.

Financial Implications:

The Capital Budget update in December will include funds to support the development of the River District Revitalization Plan. The updated job description for the River District Project Lead has resulted in a change in job classification that has a minor impact to budget. The change in compensation (approximately \$10,000) will be incorporated into the City's budget.

Communication Strategy:

Once approved by Council, this process will be shared with the River District Board of Management as well as communicated to the River District membership through newsletters and to the greater community via Media Advisory when appropriate.

Consultation:

Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services

Viveca Gravel, River District Project Lead

Attachments:

1. Attachment 1 - River District Action Plan
2. Attachment 2 - City of Owen Sound and River District Board of Management agreement 2024-057
3. Attachment 3 – River District Deficiencies GIS Map
4. Attachment 4 - Draft Project Charter

Recommended by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Tim Simmonds, City Manager at tsimmonds@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 Ext. 1210.

Owen Sound Downtown Improvement Area

River District Action Plan

December 2020



A Note on COVID-19

The *Marketing & Branding Action Plan* was completed during 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic was affecting the world. The impacts are expected to have long-term implications that include:

- The funding and program priorities of municipal, economic and tourism organizations will be under pressure, with reduced resources.
- There will be long-term changes to businesses and industry- especially in the area of experience development and tourism, as well as the ability of operators to service and host visitors.
- There will also be many changes to government and public institutions and their support of existing and future programs as their proprieties are pulled in competing directions.
- Rebuilding traffic and visits from local, regional and domestic markets will take time.

Both the City of Owen Sound and the Owen Sound Downtown Improvement Area must closely monitor these realities and adjust plans on a short term or long-term basis as needed.



Project Background

Owen Sound's downtown is a vital economic component of the city, both for its residents and for the surrounding community as a regional hub for goods and services. To create a strong core, the City of Owen Sound and the Owen Sound Downtown Improvement Area (OSDIA) have partnered to focus on revitalization initiatives which will strengthen and expand partnership opportunities. Both parties are motivated to work together, towards the common goals of increasing visibility, economic opportunities and shifting the perception of Owen Sound's downtown.

This project, a joint request for a 3-year Branding and Marketing Action Plan from the Owen Sound Downtown Improvement Area and the City of Owen Sound, is an excellent step towards growth and revitalization.

In order to effectively understand the current state of Owen Sound's downtown and to ensure recommendations strategically enhance the value of the downtown for stakeholders (and target market), a multi-step process was utilized for this project. Research worked to set the stage and determine the foundation for marketing and branding in the downtown. Extensive consultation was undertaken, surveying OSDIA board members, key downtown stakeholders, city staff as well as Owen Sound residents to determine their current thoughts in relation to the city's downtown and suggestions on how to make the area more enticing and attract additional visitors. Finally, site visits were undertaken by the consulting team, assessing the area during different seasons, days of the week and times of day. The findings were summarized and used as input into the recommendations included in this report.

The marketing and branding actions that follow, provide practical, achievable, measurable tasks for Owen Sound's downtown. The recommended brand will ensure that Owen Sound's downtown captures its potential and will position the city for future growth and vitality. It will help to ensure that change and growth come from within and expand outwards to increase the overall economic stability and health of the entire community.

Project Goals

The goals of the project are two-fold.

1. Create a refined downtown identity (brand) that captures the story and rallies people together, and
2. Develop a marketing plan with clear actions and objectives to tell that story.



The Current Situation

Local economies (and downtowns) are a community's backbone and need support, partnerships and creative ways to ensure their viability. Understanding the current state of Owen Sound's downtown, its' unique challenges and the value propositions it has, is integral to determining how it can stand out and get noticed.

Reviewing and understanding the current context through research, stakeholder input and site visits ensured a strong understanding of what Owen Sound's downtown has been, where it is today and what it will be tomorrow.

Situational Analysis

24 key documents related to Owen Sound's downtown were reviewed to provide context and insight to the project. The documents reviewed included (but were not limited to):

- Owen Sound Harbour & Downtown Urban Design Master Plan Strategy 2001
- City of Owen Sound Recreation, Parks and Facilities Master Plan 2018-2028
- Community Improvement Plan 2010 (Extended 2015) & 2020
- 10th Street bridge reconstruction OSDIA promotion & communication plan 2019
- 2019 OSDIA event summary report
- City of Owen Sound Strategic Plan (2015-2020) Making our Vision Clear
- Owen Sound Downtown Revitalization Project 2017 & 2018 update
- 2019 OSDIA & City of Owen Sound Agreement
- Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2013-2015
- Owen Sound Waterfront Development Opportunities June 2012
- BR&E - Final Business Retention and Expansion Survey Results- Oct 2010-Aug 2011
- Owen Sound Community Profile- April 2017
- Market Area Data Report- City of Owen Sound January 2017
- Cultural Master Plan (November 2007) Revised Jan 2012
- The River Precinct. Owen Sound's Downtown – 2013
- Community Safety & Well Being Plan 2020



“[Downtown Owen Sound] has potential, I see a lot of people motivated to improve it (likely out of sheer survival), it is beautiful and has amazing history and character.”

- Community Survey Submission

A sample of key findings from the document review phase include the following:

River & Harbour	• The infrastructure, capital improvements, policy changes, and strategic positioning made to support the harbour/ river precinct are coming to fruition. • There is potential to further leverage the connection between the river and neighbouring businesses. • The proximity between the downtown core and natural recreational assets (trails, escarpment, river, harbour, waterfalls etc.) is unique in comparison to other communities.
Events	• There is potential for a connection between the harbour and the downtown through space activation, events and theming.
Infrastructure	• Infrastructure can be utilized to create additional trail system connections to the downtown. • Consistency in themed streetscaping elements throughout the downtown is important. • Continued development and enhancement of public parking, waterfront assets, walking trails, and public washrooms in the downtown would enhance the experience for multiple segments including tourists, residents and the business community.
Marketing & Branding	• The downtown should be experienced as a distinct area or place in the community. Gateway buildings or streetscape elements should mark the main entry points. • There is a need to foster more positivity downtown by having organizations work together with the goal to shift the current perception of the city's downtown. • Owen Sound has a long history of arts and culture, and as a thriving port city.
Organization & Stakeholders	• Partnerships between the city, OSDIA and other key downtown stakeholders would be valuable for longer term planning and growth. • Continuously pursuing funding/ granting opportunities specifically for streetscaping and capital improvements for downtown could be beneficial.
Planning	• Plan and develop a shopping and restaurant district. • The downtown should be utilized, programmed, and accessible year-round while serving a variety of uses. • Connect planning practices to the CIP goals – especially in relation to promotion and ongoing viability & revitalization of the downtown and harbour areas by focusing on pedestrian-oriented retail, commercial, office, civic, cultural, entertainment and government uses. • Trends include an aging population, sustainability, shift in waterfront dynamics, increase in local tourism (stay-cations), local food and use of outdoor recreational facilities.



Current Views on the Downtown

Stakeholder engagement was completed in June and July of 2020, through a variety of sources including a community and resident survey, OSDIA membership survey, key stakeholder one-on-one interviews and workshops with the OSDIA board and key City of Owen Sound staff.

Residents' current views of Owen Sound's downtown indicated that they had positive associations when asked to describe the area's atmosphere and personality. They used language such as "friendly, artistic, eclectic, beautiful, quaint, charming, historic" and that the area is full of potential. There was a notable shift to a combination of responses (both positive and negative) when residents were asked to describe the current state of the area. Frequent adjectives such as "vacant, scary, unclean, in need" where contrasted alongside "potential, beautiful, charming, small town".

"I would highlight the diversity of our business community as an asset (e.g., Europa, Milk Maid, Randy's Records, Heartwood Hall, Curry House, Phoenix Bookstore, Artists Co-op), as well as some of our cultural events (Pride Parade and Festival of Northern Lights). For a small town, we have a vibrant arts and culture scene, which is worth recognizing."
- Community Survey Submission

"I feel unsafe and needs more small-town charm. It does not look appealing."
- Community Survey Submission

When asked how respondents would positively describe Owen Sound's current downtown to out of town relatives, adjectives and terms included highlights such as "quaint, good connection with the river, artsy vibe, interesting, and positive ambiance at restaurants".

"Owen Sound offers the best of both worlds. It is a small city with enough shopping options for my everyday needs, while offering the quaint atmosphere of a small town. Also, worth mentioning, the spectacular sunsets."
- Community Survey Submission

Perspectives on the current state of Owen Sound's downtown vary with age, so it is important to ask, "Who should the OSDIA attempt to attract and encourage to spend more time and money in the city's downtown?"

The business community and key stakeholders were engaged in a series of questions during surveys, workshops and interviews. To better understand the area's unique selling proposition, it was asked what makes Owen Sound's downtown different and better than other downtowns in the region? The top thoughts included the harbour, waterfront and music paired with these two assets. It was noted the connection to water is a major advantage which is currently underutilized.



When stakeholders were asked (in their opinion), the best tools Owen Sound's downtown could use to attract more people to the area, answers included events (specifically to show people the city's downtown is safe and has changed), connecting downtown to the water, encouraging and increasing pedestrian activities and incentivizing businesses to locate in the area.

Overall, the stakeholder input demonstrated that yes, there are challenges in Owen Sound's downtown (there always will be), but there are also many positive factors. This project will leverage the positives to allow the city's downtown to move forward, create solutions to the challenges, embrace opportunities and ensure everyone is proud of Owen Sound's downtown, ultimately allowing it to become the defining community hub that it was always meant to be.

Site Visits

Six site visits were completed throughout Owen Sound's downtown across multiple days, times of the day and in different seasons from February to September of 2020. It should be noted that this timeframe directly correlates with the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the replacement of the 10th Street bridge, and as such, the amount of traffic in the downtown at the time of the visits may have been impacted by either of these factors. Site assessment notes were completed during each visit.

Findings consistent throughout all six site visits included the following:

- The majority of the OSDIA areas portray an inviting and positive image.
- Parking is easy to find. Access and time limits for parking are adequate.
- There is inconsistency with retail hours of operation, especially if visiting the downtown after 5pm or on weekends.
- Owen Sound's downtown is utilized by multiple groups (families, couples, tourists and individuals) with the most frequently noted segments being couples.
- Animation which draws people in was evident during five of the six visits but could be expanded upon.
- The beautification elements (especially flowers) were highly contrasted by infrastructure issues (heaved sidewalks).
- Public washroom signage in the downtown is nonexistent or very difficult to find.
- Downtown merchants were consistently helpful, welcoming and attentive across a variety of stores and services.
- The retail mix in all sections of the OSDIA may not be adequate to meet the needs of consumers. Retail is limited. A variety of dining opportunities exist. The mix of business offerings in each area is eclectic.
- Wayfinding and perpendicular signage could greatly aid in discovering more elements linked to the downtown core including specific businesses or destinations.
- The downtown has notable vacant storefronts throughout the area, creating 'gap teeth' for visitors and impacting their experience.



- There is a lack of consistency between elements (streetscaping, marketing, events, signage) which impacts continuity and connections to different areas of the downtown beyond 2nd Avenue East.
- After experiencing the downtown, the site assessment team generally felt happier than when they arrived.

"I think Owen Sound has a great sense of community. The flowers look great and the city workers are doing a good job trying to keep the sidewalks etc. cleaned up."
- Submission from Community Survey

External Factors

A PESTLE analysis is a tool used to scan the environment and understand the external factors that impact an organization or situation connected to political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal elements. Factors for consideration in each of the six areas follow.

POLITICAL
• Past dynamics, perceptions and history of partnership between OSDIA and city may impede or strengthen relations. • City council is supportive and progressive in ensuring the downtown is successful. • Vacancy tax rebates for landlords may be impacting the development of the downtown, business attraction and retention. • Bylaw rules and enforcement (parking, garbage, snow removal, infrastructure etc.) will have an impact on downtown perceptions and the experience of visitors. • The OSDIA board is made up supportive individuals with the downtown's best interest in mind, and care should be taken to ensure the board continues to be able to commit the time and energy needed to the revitalization and marketing of downtown. • There is a need for continued transparency during the city and OSDIA budgeting process, specifically to communicate policy and property tax implications in relation to downtown properties. • The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may require a shift in resources and support through new programs, policies and support programs. • The City and the OSDIA are committed to the well-being of the downtown, as evidenced through current initiatives.
ECONOMIC
• The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic will have an impact on the city's businesses. • Consumer purchasing behavior is changing with increased focus on both local products and online shopping and delivery. • The disposable income of consumers is being stretched. • The household and disposable income of the local population varies greatly.



- Economic uncertainty may shift purchasing behaviour in the near term.
- There is an opportunity to leverage a renewed focus on supporting local businesses.

SOCIAL

- Residents and business owners have concerns regarding the safety and security of the city's downtown.
- There is opportunity to support community partners such as the Owen Sound Police Service, Grey County and social service organizations as they facilitate community dialogue related to substance use and housing issues which impact the downtown.
- assistance where needed.
- There is potential for increased community dialogue to discuss issues and measures being taken which will help to create positivity and create empathy.
- Due the current COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a shift to working and learning from home, removing many people from the downtown area on a daily basis. This shift may become permanent.
- Shopping and working environment shifts highlight the need to invest in programming and infrastructure that will attract people to the downtown area.

TECHNOLOGICAL

- The way people do business is rapidly changing due to technological advancements and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- Businesses are being forced to adapt to offer online ordering, curbside pickup and home delivery.
- Connectivity is important to consumers and businesses.
- High speed internet is in demand.
- Consumers are trending to cashless payments and currency.
- Increasingly, apps are used for banking and services are decentralized.
- Online booking and reserve a seat technology are gaining popularity.
- Virtual meetings are changing the way businesses operate.
- Augmented and virtual reality are gaining in popularity.

ENVIRONMENTAL

- Vacant storefronts can have an impact on visitor's perception and willingness to shop.
- The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic will have a long-term impact on downtowns, their programming options, the way visitors experience them and their businesses.
- Gathering limits will have effects on the capacity of public spaces.
- There is increased interest in community outdoor space such as public parks and natural areas. Connections from downtowns to natural areas are becoming increasingly important.
- There is currently an increased interest in relocation from large urban centres to more rural areas or small cities.



- Sustainability, shop local and local food are all of increasing importance with today's consumers.
- COVID-19 has required a reassessment of safety in retail and services for both consumers and businesses.

LEGAL

- OSDIA boundaries exclude some key downtown assets and businesses.

The way people do business and experience the world is rapidly evolving. These changes will have enormous and long ranging impacts for downtowns. The OSDIA and the City of Owen Sound must continue to monitor these changes and adjust tactics accordingly as needed.

Key Factors to Consider

Product and experience development are paramount for the success of a downtown- with the promotion of these assets secondary. In today's sharing economy, visitors will do a lot of the marketing lift if their experience is positive. With the continued creation of a vibrant, safe and welcoming space, traffic will increase and economic returns will be realized.

When creating a vibrant and engaging space that attracts visitors, the OSDIA and the city can't go at it alone. Leveraging the resources and assistance of supportive partners will augment the gains and ensure the success of downtown initiatives and create a greater local economic impact.

Key factors which influenced the framing of recommendations included:

- Owen Sound's downtown should be utilized, programmed, and accessible year-round while serving a variety of multi-use.
- Target market(s) should be focused on to ensure resources are strategically employed and tactics are effective to attract the desired visitor segments.
- The area is a working downtown and provides services and amenities that support the regional economy first, tourism second.
- The city's core is currently positioned as a regional hub, due to its larger quantity of retail and service providers (compared to other neighbouring rural communities).
- Opportunities (through branding or experience/product development) should better utilize assets such as public parking, the waterfront, walking trails and public washrooms.
- The infrastructure, capital improvements, policy changes, and strategic positioning of the river precinct have been a welcomed and beautiful update for the downtown.
- The current vibe or ambiance of Owen Sound's downtown is fairly negative, but, at the same time optimistic and acknowledges that there is positive momentum building.
- Survey results indicate that both residents and business owners have concerns about safety.



- Weaknesses of the city's downtown can cause a perceived snowball effect on local perception, positive change and momentum.
- The business community needs to come together.
- The timing is perfect for an identity change.
- The OSDIA and the City of Owen Sound have the ability to change perceptions and re-write their story.

Target Market

When marketing to a prospective visitor, whether they are a local or a tourist, it is helpful to know who that visitor is, what they look like, enjoy and do. Describing in detail the type of person that Owen Sound's downtown will strive to attract will help target marketing efforts, branding, experience development and will guide business attraction and retention efforts.

Primary Target Market

The primary market of focus for the OSDIA is local Owen Sound residents and those that live in nearby surrounding communities. This market can be targeted immediately.

- Owen Sound or regional resident – lives in Owen Sound's downtown area, suburbs or surrounding communities
- Age: 32 – 42 (older Millennials and youngest portion of Gen X)
- Married
- Children at home – ages 2 – 12
- Income: Comfortable – not a large income, but not a small one either
- Enjoys entertainment and social settings
- Likes to spend money on quality items
- Values experiences, high quality food and drink and date night
- Values culture and the unique
- Believes in supporting small business owners
- Enjoys window shopping
- Casual dresser, but well put together
- Believes in sustainability
- Sees potential even when others don't
- Confident and comfortable in their own skin
- Independent thinker
- Seeks to chart their own way – doesn't follow the pack



Secondary Target Market

The OSDIA's secondary market is made up of people travelling to the region, and those driving through on their way to a vacation destination. This market can be targeted once the recommendations that follow have been implemented.

The OSDIA's secondary target:

- Visitor to the region – lives in southern Ontario (Toronto, Mississauga, Oakville, Milton, Caledon, Newmarket, Richmond Hill, Burlington, Hamilton, Guelph)
- Travelling through Owen Sound on their way to the Bruce Peninsula, Sauble Beach or their cottage
- Trying to escape urban living for a short time
- Travelling with family or friends
- Age: 35 – 45 (older Millennials and youngest portion of Gen X)
- Wants to experience the outdoors
- Curious about small towns and cities
- Likes to explore and wander
- Casual and comfortable
- Looking for food and drink, a short rest stop to stretch their legs or an outing on a cloudy day

While the target consumers outlined above will be the primary and secondary focus of marketing and branding tactics, it is important to note that these markets are not the only ones who will benefit from and be attracted to the downtown based on the tactics undertaken.



Looking forward – Strategies & Actions for Success

While it is important to review the situational analysis of Owen Sound's downtown to provide historical context, insight and considerations about directions for future planning, ultimately staking a goal marker and strategically developing the milestone which will get the downtown where it needs to be, will create the roadmap for success. The recommendations that follow outline four main pillars with strategic objectives and sub actions to focus on.

1. River District Branding
2. River District Management
3. River District Experience Development
4. River District Promotion

The following recommendations are summarized below. For more information, please see the recommendation summary chart on pages 34-41 which includes additional details about each recommendation such as task lead, resources required and recommended timeframes for implementation.

Branding

Strategic Objective: Create an impactful and bold identity.

Owen Sound's downtown brand perceptions are evolving. When large changes need to be made to make an impact, bold moves need to be taken in order to make this happen.

Recommendation: Rebrand Owen Sound's downtown.

In an effort to demonstrate change, signify a new chapter and rally support with a positive connection for the area, a new brand for Owen Sound's downtown is recommended.

*"The town has utterly failed to connect its downtown with the waterfront and lacks charm, personality and any useful reason to stop."
- Community Survey Submission*



Actions:

1. Leverage downtown's connection to the river through branding.

It was clear in the stakeholder input, that the river is a large part of the region. It has been overlooked for years. In fact, much of the city's-built form has turned its back on the river.

The river can create tangible visitor experiences while simultaneously romanticizing the region. A name that includes the word "river" will therefore have positive connotations associated with it and offer the area a new start.

The term 'district' is an established term used in big cities to divide the city into consumable and marketable areas. For example, Entertainment District, Fashion District etc.

Rebranding the city's downtown as the "River District" will:

- Re-establish a connection to the river/harbour,
- Define what the region looks like,
- Associate positive connotations with the area, and
- Signify a place people want to be part of, and that visitors can connect with.

It is important to note that a new name will take time to take hold and will require everyone to be on board and on the same page. However, the new name can be a rallying point for people and businesses to get behind. Eventually the River District will:

- Create a sense of pride of place, and
- Become the envy of other communities.

The River District is a place where people gather. It is a destination for people looking for a city experience, in a rural setting. It is a place where people feel safe and meander. It is a place for celebration and community.

2. Undertake a brand touch point audit.

To ensure that River District branding can effectively be integrated to create maximum impact, a brand touch point audit should be completed. This audit will highlight where opportunities are available to integrate River District branding throughout Owen Sound's downtown and ensure the brand lives up to its brand promise on the ground through consistency and cohesion. The audit will note brand integration opportunities at specific locations, streets, intersections, civic places, individual businesses etc.



3. Follow a predetermined timeline for rebranding.

In order for the rebranding of the city's downtown to be successful, there are a number of management and experience development tactics that must be completed in advance of the renaming. (See recommendations summary chart with timelines below). Ensuring certain changes are made in advance of the rebranding will set the stage for the River District renaming to be successful.

4. Follow the brand toolkit in all applications of the brand.

The brand toolkit has been established to document the proper uses of the River District logo and the supporting elements such as colours/ fonts associated with it. Following the recommendations of the brand toolkit in all River District marketing, communications and design elements will ensure the consistency and integrity of the application of the brand.

5. Throw a brand launch party.

Once the area is ready for the name change to be enacted, celebrating the rebrand will be instrumental in establishing it as the new moniker for the region. The launch could include a media release and/or a coordinated PR approach alongside a River District launch event or party to create excitement or buzz.

6. Change the organization's name.

To align the Owen Sound Downtown Improvement Area (OSDIA) with the River District rebrand, a name change to the RDBA (River District Business Area) is recommended. The new name will integrate the new brand into the OSDIA's communications to members and implementation of initiatives (such as themed events) throughout the entire downtown core. This name change will additionally help to signal the transition to the new brand (and identity) for the downtown and to encourage membership and local business owners to rally in support.



River District Management

Strategic Objective: Create a safe and clean space.

The River District is a cultural hotspot and a vibrant place to visit that benefits from the city's current beautification efforts. However, these positive values are outweighed by the current perceptions held by residents and stakeholders that the area is "sketchy, unsafe and dirty".

Recommendation: Increase the safety and comfort of patrons and business owners.

Patrons who feel safe, secure and comfortable are more likely to return and related their experience to their friends in a positive manner. Business owners value their personal safety, that of their employees and the longevity of their business assets. If they feel safe and secure, they are more likely to keep their business in the area and recommend new businesses to locate there.

Actions:

1. Encourage the development and activation of a substance use and River District housing initiative.

Work with Grey County social services and housing as well of other partners including OSPA, and CMHA to address substance use and housing challenges. Leverage information from the Grey County Social Services community safety and well-being plan (in conjunction with other partners), to determine the magnitude of the substance use and housing issues in Owen Sound's downtown, the contributing factors, key areas of concern, and outline a plan to combat the issue in a positive and mutually beneficial manner.

2. Facilitate the implementation of an accessibility program.

Ensuring that the River District is an accessible place for all to enjoy will increase its appeal to all markets and ensure that it complies with current standards. Issues such as sidewalk heaving can cause access impediments for users. Consider leveraging the CIP program grants for accessibility (where applicable) to encourage accessibility improvements to be made.

- a. Undertake a River District public space accessibility or [walkability audit](#) to determine any accessibility issues and implement upgrades where required.
- b. Deal with any sudden and/or unforeseen accessibility issues in a timely manner.
- c. Ensure businesses and landlords are aware of the accessibility requirements. Communicate requirements using a variety of communication tools as outlined below.



- d. Enforce the requirement for snow clearing on sidewalks in front of downtown buildings.
- e. Establish an accessibility program under the CIP

Recommendation: Ensure the cleanliness of the River District.

A clean space will have curb appeal, enticing visitors to spend longer in the River District and return to again and again.

Actions:

3. Create a business reward program.

Establish a River District business reward program designed to recognize businesses that invest in the cleanliness and beautification of their space in order to help make the downtown an inviting place to visit.

THE GOLDEN BROOM AWARD

The Brantford OSDIA has created the Golden Broom Award, designed to encourage businesses to increase the cleanliness and beauty of the downtown. From July to October, one business a month receives the honor, which seeks to award business appearance related to cleanliness, signage, window display and trash and litter management among other items related to making the downtown an inviting place to visit.

4. Undertake a waste and cleanliness audit.

Completing a waste and cleanliness audit throughout the downtown area, will provide additional information, insights and a baseline of information about areas of improvement and current issues. It is recommended that the audit review and address elements such as:

- a. The schedule of litter patrols in the River District, throughout the year.
- b. The number of garbage and recycling receptacles. Ensure any new repositories align with the River District brand.
- c. River District garbage standards bylaws. If required, update to ensure the cleanliness of the downtown at all times and enforce the rules.
- d. The current tactics to encourage businesses to place garbage curbside immediately before pickup to eliminate unsightly overnight sidewalk garbage accumulation and decreasing the opportunity for waste to blow around.



- e. The locations of the stoop and scoop waste dispenser stations throughout the area. Consider encouraging users to stoop and scoop using on brand signage and messaging.

5. Ensure adequate (safe and clean) public washrooms are available.

Currently both the availability of public washrooms within the River District and signage directing people to a public washroom location is minimal. Having an adequate volume of public washrooms accessible throughout the entire area creates a healthy community (especially for safe handwashing practices) and allows visitors to effectively spend additional time in the downtown without having to leave to find a washroom elsewhere. In addition to having accessible public washrooms spread throughout the downtown, washrooms should always be clean. While always of importance, the COVID-19 pandemic and associated health crisis has increased the need for access to clean washrooms and handwashing stations as a primary tool for citizens (and governments) to help keep communities safe.

- a. The River District should assess the need and make additional public washrooms available – build new, install alternative washroom facilities and/or make washrooms in public buildings accessible to visitors.
- b. Install signage directing visitors to public washrooms throughout the area.
- c. Ensure public washrooms are safe, clean and open year-round for the comfort of downtown patrons.
- d. Encourage businesses to allow public access to restrooms and registration on apps such as GoHere.

Strategic Objective: Create a visually appealing River District.

River District beautification efforts are recognized by stakeholders and community members. Additional tactics can be used to level up and ensure the River District is an inviting and beautiful place that businesses and local residents can be proud of.

Both the Harbour and Downtown Urban Design/Master Plan Strategy and the River Precinct conceptualization plans are excellent documents which provide visual recommendations to consider in the downtown. These plans can be utilized as tools to achieve the vision for the downtown and the visuals recommended as part of the River District Branding Guidelines should also be used as a tool to continue to move the downtown forward.



Recommendation: Continue beautification efforts

Visually appealing downtowns which have curb appeal, attract visitors and encourage them to spend more time wandering. This equates to more money spent at local businesses.

Actions:

6. Beautify the River District's public spaces.

- a. Continue the current efforts to beautify the River District with flower baskets, bridge planters and flowerbeds, banners and Christmas decorations. Upgrade to River District branded elements and colours when replacing.
- b. Implement streetscaping upgrades such as benches, garbage receptacles, bike racks and lighting to align with the River District brand.
- c. In conjunction with local organizations, expand the community gardens initiative in the area to beautify undeveloped areas such as parking lots, alleyways and empty lots. Align locations to focus on first as recommended in the report entitled *Beautification in the Downtown Improvement Area* by the OSDIA Board of Management, tabled Oct 14 2020.

CITY OF ST. ALBERT BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAM

The City of St. Albert has created an incentive program to encourage downtown businesses to beautify their space in line with their brand. The program elements include perpendicular signage, bike rack installation, planters, hanging baskets and street furniture. Additional funds are available when a business adopts a neighbouring business.

7. Encourage River District business owners and landlords to beautify their property by leveraging CIP Programs.

Business owners take pride in their business and many of them are doing a great job of creating a beautiful space. However, not all business owners or landlords make an effort to beautify their property. Supporting and encouraging them to act will increase their sales and reap rewards for the area. Communicate the current funding available as part of the newest CIP program which includes a façade & beautification incentive. The program, which is available for business owners within the River District, allows them to access funds for the beautification of their property.

In addition to the funding already available with the CIP program(s), the façade and beautification criteria for funding should include:

- Guidelines in relation to upgrades and beautifications in line with the River District brand (colours, signage, awnings etc.).



- An added incentive in the form of additional cost sharing improvement funding aimed at River District properties.
- A strategy for communication to increase participation for building owners to upgrade river and harbour facing properties.
- A River District themed criterion for temporary beautification elements such as types of recommended plantings, Christmas decorations etc.
- Communication highlighting new programs within the CIP such as grants for landscaping and perpendicular signage etc.
- Leveraging opportunities with local suppliers/ partners or discount opportunities for any signage/ beautification installations and upgrades.
- A window painting incentive for landlords of vacant properties, encouraging them to work with local artists to install window art in empty storefronts.
- Targeted expansion of mural beautification efforts along the backside of buildings in areas that are currently lacking in visual appeal in order to make them more approachable and enticing. (Consider installations primarily in the 3rd Avenue East area between 10th Street and 8th Street).
- Marketing tactics to entice program applications on an annual basis including direct email and personally delivered flyers.

Strategic Objective: Entice transient tourist traffic to stop in the River District.

Setting the stage to tempt visitors to stop and spend time in the River District can take some preliminary work in order to attract their interest and to guide them to the area.

Recommendation: Create visually appealing arterial routes through the city.

Beautifying the River District's feeder streets will create a good first impression of the city, piquing the interest of traffic, enticing them to stop and explore. Arterial routes that are unkept provide the opposite effect, giving a negative first impression of the city and what it has to offer.

Actions:

8. Beautify arterial public spaces.

- a. Increase the focus on landscaping and landscape maintenance along 10th Street throughout the entire city, along 9th Avenue East from the entrance to the city to 10th Street East, and along 16th Street East.
- b. Similar to the River District area, utilize flower baskets, bridge planters, flowerbeds, and banners along arterial routes to beautify the area.
- c. Update directional signage outside the core to direct traffic to the River District.



9. Encourage arterial route property owners to beautify their property.

Much like business owners in the core, arterial route businesses and residential property owners have the ability to create a good first impression for visitors by beautifying their properties. The newly updated CIP and related landscape/ façade programs can be leveraged to assist with improvements in arterial areas.

Communicate the eligibility of the façade / landscape programs to property owners on the arterial routes especially those located along 10th Street East and West and 9th Avenue East from the city's entrance to 10th Street East. Similar to the overarching recommendation for specific enhancements and refinements of criteria for River District façade and beautification themed upgrades, consider developing guidelines pertinent for arterial routes which may consider the following:

- Area specific guidelines,
- Encouragement to install perpendicular signage,
- Partnership opportunities, and
- A window painting incentive for vacant properties.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF BEAUTIFICATION

Internationally recognized destination developer, Roger Brooks noted one of the top three elements every downtown should invest in includes seriously reviewing beautification practices.

“70% of first-time sales at restaurants, retail shops, lodging facilities, and attractions can come from curb appeal. Travellers often use these phrases: “That looks like a nice place to eat.” or “That looks like a nice place to stay”. Beautification or curb appeal will always be an investment with a tremendous return.

<https://www.destinationdevelopment.org/articles/the-three-statistics-that-every-downtown-should-live-by>

Recommendation: Make it easier to for visitors to find their way and stop in the River District.

Installing wayfinding to direct traffic to the River District, and to support navigation while in the area will help to attract the attention of drive through traffic and ensure they find their way once they arrive. Making parking easy and effortless will encourage them to stop, spend time and money.



Actions:

10. Undertake a River District wayfinding plan.

Undertake a wayfinding plan, outlining River District signage needs. The plan should include recommendations regarding:

- River District wayfinding needs,
- Branded gateway signage welcoming visitors to the River District,
- Arterial route signage directing traffic to the River District,
- Signage to River District parking areas (directed from the main retail area), and
- Signage to key attractions (i.e. River District Retail Area, River Precinct, rest area, Farmers' Market, public washrooms etc.).

11. Continue to offer complimentary parking for River District patrons.

Business and city sponsored parking is a great way to welcome visitors and entice them to spend time wandering the River District. Consider continuing the complimentary parking initiative and implementing creative leniency solutions for those that park for extended periods of time, or for businesses that park in locations meant for visitors such as reminding instead of ticketing, offering coupons or gift cards, or eliminating tickets with receipt validation.

THE WISMER HOUSE, PORT ELGIN

The Wismer House has gained attention for its creative way to deal with downtown patrons parking overnight. Instead of a slap on the wrist for breaking parking rules, they place a Wismer House creative version of a ticket on windshields parked outside their restaurant overnight, thanking them for their responsible behaviour and offering them \$10 off their next visit.



River District Experience Development

Strategic Objective: Create an engaging space.

Making public spaces consistently engaging and entertaining takes more than having a one-off event. The public needs to have a reason to frequently and repeatedly visit the downtown. A well programmed public area or activated space can be a primary motivator to attract (and retain) visitors in the downtown core.

Recommendation: Continue to invest in animation and activation of the River District.

Encourage and invest in animation and activation that will increase the appeal of the area and encourage visitors to spend time there. Activations should be in line with the brand and entice the target market.

Actions:

1. Ensure River District properties are open for businesses.

Having a vibrant selection of businesses in the downtown, that serve the target markets' needs which are open during key operating hours will help to attract (and retain) visitors.

- a. Create an environment of opportunity to allow River District businesses to open on Sundays, past 4pm on weekdays and on holidays. If tourist traffic is to be attained, it is important to have the area open at consistent times, especially on weekends, when the most transient traffic is moving through the area. A critical mass of businesses adjusting their opening days and hours will be integral to the success of the change.

2. Invest in infrastructure to support animation.

- a. Continue to develop infrastructure to attract residents to the downtown area and encourage them to spend time there. Developments should be in line with the brand and attractive to the local target market. Connections to the water will be beneficial. Some potential examples include: a river walk, water fountain, skating rink, amphitheatre and stage for outdoor music, food truck gathering area etc. The location and format of these developments and infrastructure elements should be determined in conjunction with city's planning department. Adding infrastructure items with attraction appeal that provide ambiance and vibrancy for the area is key.
- b. Continue implementation and use of a policy that encourages sidewalk cafes and patio dining to increase the approachability and create a warm ambiance for the River District.
- c. Research and investigate closing a section of the River District to vehicular traffic on an ongoing or scheduled basis. (i.e. Friday evenings July-September).



- Start by communicating with and surveying OSDIA members to facilitate acceptance.
 - Encourage additional animation during this time period such as live music and craft beer sampling on patios.
 - Develop a walking only area with a quaint pathway and waterfront businesses along 1st Avenue East from 10th to 9th Street. Similar, but on a smaller scale to an Intrawest village such as Blue Mountain or Tremblant, businesses located in this area should be animated and engaging. The area would allow vehicular access during scheduled times, after hours for deliveries and loading/unloading goods.
- d. Consider an expansion of the OSDIA boundaries to include the west side of the river and harbour to ensure the inclusion of key properties that align with the River District brand.

DOWNTOWN KINCARDINE

Through a partnership between the DIA, Town and Chamber, downtown Kincardine took advantage of main bridge closure and COVID-19 to pilot a pedestrian outdoor shopping concept. A full block was closed to vehicle traffic consistently Friday-Sundays starting in mid-June through September 2020. Strong communication alongside increases to accessible parking, access for business deliveries and patio bylaws changes positively supported this initiative. Economic results included:

- A trackable large increase of locals shopping in downtown
- Tourism marketing reached new urban markets (without spending any marketing money) including media recognition by the Toronto Sun
- 90% businesses indicated satisfaction with street closures
- More than 60% of businesses saw an increase in revenues compared to previous years with the remaining businesses maintaining existing revenues (even during COVID-19)
- An increase in street animation and volume of time people spent overall in the downtown thanks to patios, events, and rotating vendor booths
- Council has endorsed the program to continue in 2021 and is considering the option to expand days to include Holiday Mondays and add additional blocks to be closed to vehicles traffic

[Kincardine's Road to recovery: Toronto Sun Article](#)

3. Encourage animation of the River District.

- a. Encourage new and continued programming including (but not limited to) interactive heritage tours (i.e. Saints & Sinners Tour), music series and on street art activities or displays in partnership with local galleries or the TOM.
- b. Encourage new activities and attractions to engage visitors and locals. Examples of potential on brand examples could include an inner harbour water taxi, boat cruise, riverfront canoe and kayak rentals, waterfront vendors/shops.



LITTLE FLEET, TRAVERSE CITY, MI

Traverse City Michigan is home to the Little Fleet hub of food trucks. The location, which features full time trucks and a rotating blend of differing vendors. This offers diners a diverse flavor of dining options from an eclectic group of street vendors who use a common outdoor eating space to create an element of consistent community activation.

(<https://mynorth.com/2015/04/little-fleet-trucks-to-open-in-traverse-city/>)

TORONTO PUBLIC ART STRATEGY

The City of Toronto's 10 year public art strategy, calls for utilizing temporary public art to animate and change the dynamics on city streets. Specifically focusing on areas that need 'life' infused into them (such as laneways, walls, underpasses, utility boxes etc.) the goals include increasing the volume and frequency of temporary art installations in an effort to refresh, enliven and aminate all areas of the city through the use of creative, rotating and diversity of art in public places. Additionally, the city has created image databases, mobile apps, spin off complementary programming and walking tours to make the city's 1000+ works of public art accessible to visitors, residents and historical archives.

4. Continue to plan and deliver a roster of exciting events that will attract the target market to the River District area.

Events have the ability to attract a large amount of people to the city's downtown. However, they also often require an abundance of resources to implement. Care should be taken to ensure they are beneficial, purpose driven, targeted to the market and on brand.

Actions:

- a. Create an annual event plan.
- b. Create a criterion to evaluate and determine the most effective (and strategic) events to continue based on the resources required to hold the event versus the attendance attained, as well as the connection for the target market and River District brand. Additional consideration for COVID-19 pandemic requirements may include local health regulations and the changing nature of permitted public events should be reviewed as applicable. Smaller more intimate gatherings which are able to be booked in advance are required in the immediate term, and this could become the expectation going forward.



- c. Plan and deliver a roster of new events.
 - Ensure any new events considered align with the target market.
 - Give preference to events that align with the River District brand.
 - Consider events that will attract residents (primarily in the shoulder season), connecting them with city's downtown and the waterfront. Examples include (but are not limited to), a floating concert series, jazz festival, wine tasting and pairing events, craft beer festival, evening Christmas farmers' market.
 - Consider a major summer event that will attract tourists, is distinctive and ties to Owen Sound's unique selling propositions. A community harvest event along the harbour or in the River District with connections to local food, drink and music could be held at varying times throughout the year.
 - Ensure event partners are defined, engaged and assisting with event delivery.
- d. Work with the Festival of Northern Lights Board to upgrade the light show to current standards and extend the light show. Assist with applications for funding to support the developments.
- e. Work with the Georgian Bay Folk Society to encourage the expansion of Summerfolk programming to the River District. Programming could include a floating barge concert area and/or the closure of a street.
- f. Recap events each year and summarize key performance indicators, to inform decisions about future delivery. Provide a minimum two-year test phase for new events.

FARM TO TABLE COMMUNITY HARVEST DINNERS, ORILLIA

Selling out 125 tickets in less than an hour, this annual [downtown local food dinner event](#) is a sought after experience that occurs in downtown Orillia. Sharing a meal with community members along a 128' table this dining experience links local/ regional food producers with restaurateurs and after dinner entertainment in the downtown.



Strategic Objective: Learn from and lean on others to build success.

The River District can benefit from utilizing information about best practices, downtown development, strategic planning and downtown economic successes from other communities of all shapes and sizes, in an effort to build on successes and learn from challenges.

Recommendation: Leverage the experience, mistakes and successes of other destinations.

With access to information easily available, downtown trends rapidly changing and resources being finite, it is essential to leverage the knowledge, experience and successes from others to help inform planning and provide inspiration which could be used in the River District.

Actions:

5. Undertake an annual best practices mission.

Undertake an annual best practice mission. Provide an opportunity to expand views and learn from other destinations that are doing a great job of attracting the target market to their downtown. Hire a tourism/downtown visitor experience expert to plan and guide a best practice mission trip for select members of the OSDIA Board and city staff as well as River District business members. Destinations for exploring and topics of consideration could include:

- Traverse City, Michigan – similarities to Owen Sound in geographical location, example of successful downtown development of retail, accommodation, dining and experiences.
- Stratford, Ontario – Riverfront development, downtown development and beautification, retail, accommodation and dining inspiration.
- Other communities as they become applicable.

Recommendation: Create the environment to attract businesses.

Business attraction and retention campaigns aren't new, but strategically considering how specific niche business recruitment tactics can help to effectively transform the downtown and attract the target market audience is unique. Leverage the strategies used by other DIA's and communities to create a tailored approach to downtown business curation and recruitment.

Actions:

6. Cluster and develop assets that will attract the target market.

A destination business is a business that motivates people to drive out of their way to shop at or experience. In any downtown, it is critical that there are anchor destination businesses that draw



people into the downtown. Additionally, ensuring there are complimentary assets will encourage visitors to make a 'trip' or day of their time in Owen Sound by layering on multiple experiences.

- a. Through the BR&E, undertake a River District business gaps and location planning exercise. While completing a new or updated BR&E study, identify River District business gaps and potential clustering opportunities. Locating like-minded businesses that are positioned to attract the target market in a specified area will help to entice visitors, as they will experience businesses of interest to them. The planning exercise should note business types which may be in limited supply and map out strategic locations for River District businesses.
 - Target businesses that would be attractive to the desired market and support their wants and needs including businesses such as a butcher or deli, bakery, refillery, microbrewery or distillery, wine bar, waterfront dining, boutique inn and upscale souvenir shop.
 - Aim for targeted clusters of ideal business in the River District area, to attract visitors.
 - Encourage and provide support for targeted business development along the river and the harbour.
 - Provide an attractive and supportive environment for businesses to move to an identified targeted location.
 - Provide landlords with target business information which they can utilize when considering potential tenant applications at their building locations.
 - Review the existing vacant property incentives (within the CIP) in an effort to combat having vacancies in areas where business clustering practices are attempting to form.
- b. Mentor potential new River District entrepreneurs. Develop and implement an entrepreneurial support program (or collaborate with an existing program such as Catapult Grey Bruce) to support potential new businesses which will be located in the city's downtown. The program could include mentoring, a familiarization tour by a current business owner or city representative and/or an online resource for business planning.

TARGETED CLUSTERS

Contrary to popular business owners' belief, a cluster of similar businesses can actually be beneficial for downtown retail areas. This creates a destination what will attract people from greater distances. Think how easy wedding dress shopping would be in a town with five bridal boutiques, or buying furniture if you could check out 10 nearby showrooms. Niagara Falls does a great job of this with their wineries, as does Lancaster PA with its quilt and fabric shops.

As a minimum, Roger Brooks of Destination Development International recommends a targeted rule for effective downtowns that visitors have 10 places to dine, 10 destination retail shops and 10 places open after 6pm within 3 blocks.



Recommendation: Leverage the experience, mistakes and successes of other businesses.

Distribution of information and sharing of best practices among businesses and downtown leaders can inspire others.

Actions:

7. Enhance OSDIA communication tactics to create success.

- a. Create a newsletter to OSDIA members with a simplified format. Designed to inspire and keep OSDIA businesses up to date, the emailed newsletter should be a short enticing read, with only snippets of information with links to further online information leaving the reader with a desire to learn more about a topic. Content should inspire members to get involved, and to make their businesses the best that it can be by profiling River District business owners who are doing new and unique things, as well as examples from other communities.
- b. Create an annual OSDIA summit for businesses. Plan a River District annual conference. Include:
 - Guest speakers from other successful small cities that been successful in reinventing themselves, cleaning up their downtown, animating and/or attracting the target market.
 - Forums for discussion of important area topics with focus on positive input and creating viable options.
 - Learning sessions including topics such as social media marketing, the façade upgrade program, the little things that make the difference for consumers etc.
 - Contact other DIA's to obtain best practice information on business recruitment, membership engagement and unique marketing strategies such as Yonge Street BIA, Downtown London BIA etc.

River District Promotion

Strategic Objective: Attract people to the River District.

Word of mouth promotion is a powerful tool (especially in a smaller community), and tackling many of the above recommendations will create spin off marketing and promotion, discussion, referrals and motivations to experience the River District. However, word of mouth advertising can't be controlled, measured or planned. Ensuring there is a strategic, noteworthy promotions and marketing plan to support Owen Sound's River District is essential.

Recommendation: Follow a strategic, multi-layered collaborative and bold promotions plan for the River District.

Actions:

1. Create a River District consumer website.

A stand alone, branded, up to date consumer website that is aimed at the target market will provide the inspiration for local residents to spend time in the River District and for visitors planning their visit to Owen Sound. For example, Vancouver's Gastown uses a content-based stand-alone website (gastown.org) to inspire visitor and residents to spend time in the area.

- a. Register a River District domain (i.e. owensoundriverdistrict.ca & .com).
- b. Design and program a River District content-based consumer website in line with the brand
- c. Create and post content regarding River District business owners, events and activities.
 - Hire third-party writers to create content when developing the site, and throughout the year.
 - Focus on topics that will be of interest to the target market (primarily local residents).
 - Provide an insiders' guide to the best finds.
 - Highlight unique goods and services, tell the secrets behind the delivery or focus on the business owners to create a connection and pride of place. For example, highlight Casero's margarita, the Milk Maid's scone making workshop, the new owners of a River District business, a walking tour itinerary etc.

2. Create an annual promotional tactical schedule & social media content calendar.

A schedule and content calendar will help to guide tactics throughout the year, ensuring they are tactical, on schedule (and on budget) which will assist in planning for future content development.



The document should include the timeline and the key point of contact. Considerations should be given to the resources available to implement the tactics and assignment of the tasks to city staff, OSDIA representatives or a third-party marketing firm. It will also help in ensuring branding consistency.

- a. Outline an annual social media content calendar to guide social media content and future content development, ensuring it is on brand, on topic and delivered in a timely manner.

3. Implement social media marketing tactics.

Social media is an effective way to reaching targeted markets.

- a. Brand OSDIA social media accounts with the new River District look and feel.
- b. Ensure there are regular social media posts occurring. Focus the post content to excite the target market, encouraging visits by showcasing interesting businesses and products offered in the River District, as well as events. Keep posts on brand in content and look and feel.
 - Be mindful of posting frequency without overloading followers.
 - As new website content is loaded, push it to the audience.
 - Boost key posts to the local target market, using advertising budget.
- c. Digital advertising - Deliver digital ad campaign(s) to local and nearby residents in the target market.
- d. Social media influencers - Enlist local influencers to create and post target market focused content (i.e. Rrampt, 44 North Media etc.)
- e. Claim the River District Google business and Trip Advisor page.

4. Develop and deliver a promotional campaign to attract new and exciting businesses to the River District.

Attracting new businesses will increase the vibrancy of the River District and reduce vacant storefronts which will in turn attract more visitors the area.

- a. Encourage targeted businesses to locate in or to relocate to the River District (in line with the targeted businesses to attract determined above).
- b. Invest in a program or creative marketing campaign for attracting entrepreneurs and targeted businesses to the River District.

5. Deliver a campaign designed to attract people who work from home to the city.

Enticing residents from nearby cities, who are in the target market to the city as residents and encouraging them to live in or near the city's downtown area has the potential to increase the vitality of the River District and enhance visitation.



- a. Create a relocation campaign.
- b. Market to potential residents who work from home in the target market age bracket.
- c. Provide an incentive to relocate to the city and live in or near downtown.
- d. Encourage downtown landlords to upgrade the residential rental stock in a targeted area of the River District creating a prestigious River District rental area and investing in full renovations, high end finishes and hip heritage home curb appeal.

6. Create a locals' love it here program.

Build upon the shifting consumer awareness of the impact of local shopping (compounded by economic conditions created by COVID-19) and create a local's love promotional program complete with an incentive. The program would be branded to align with the River District and through incentives or promotion encourage residents to shop and experience the River District.



Moving Forward - The roadmap to get there

The strategic objectives and recommendations above related to the River District branding, management, experience development and promotion will:

- Enhance future marketing programs and create long term economic success in the downtown area.
- Positively change the attractiveness of the River District based on measurable long-term development initiatives, which will in turn, create a critical mass of marketable assets for the future.
- Enhance the tourism appeal of the area.
- Stimulate word of mouth marketing, and
- Appeal to residents to increase their interaction with businesses, public areas and programming within the River District.

The implementation of this plan and following the steps outlined through strategic objectives, recommendations and actions is critical to the overall success of rebranding and enhancing the River District.

Ensuring that the plan is implemented in a layered, methodical manner will allow for critical elements to be developed ensuring that they support and solidify the River District rebranding. Rushing tactics or not fully executing them, may result in the new brand not be realized on the ground and/or not meeting visitor expectations which poses additional challenges for both the City of Owen Sound and OSDIA in terms of reputation management and future development.

In addition to the initial key steps outlined below, a soft brand launch is recommended to start to slowly and quietly trickle out communications related to the River District while River District management and experience development initiatives occur concurrently in the background.

To create momentum and strategic development, the key steps below are positioned as the most important tactics for the DIA to tackle first. (See the Summary of Recommendations & Timelines below for more information on timing.)

1. Register the River District domain.
2. Undertake a brand touchpoint audit
3. Consider an expansion the OSIDA boundaries to include the west side of the river and harbour to ensure inclusion of key properties that align with River District brand.



4. Change the organization's name
5. Place an increased focus on waste management.
6. Encourage the development and activation of a substance use and River District housing initiative.
7. Create a business rewards program
8. Continue to offer complimentary parking for River District patrons.
9. Encourage River District business owners (and landlords) to beautify their property.
10. Beautify the River District's public spaces.
11. Ensure the accessibility of places of business and public areas.
12. Undertake a River District Wayfinding Plan.
13. Create an annual promotional tactical schedule & social media content calendar.

Summary of Recommendations

Branding <i>(Ordered in terms of execution timing)</i>			
Strategic objective: <i>Create an impactful and bold identity</i>			
Recommendation: <i>Rebrand Owen Sound’s downtown</i>			
2. Undertake a brand touch point audit.			
6. Change the organization’s name.			
1. Leverage downtown’s connection to the river through branding.			
4.. Follow the brand toolkit in all applications of the brand.			
3. Follow a predetermined timeline for rebranding.			
5. Throw a brand launch party.			

River District Management <i>(Ordered in terms of execution timing)</i>			Partners	Resources	Measurables	Y1	Y2	Y3
Strategic Objective	Recommendation	Tactics						
<i>Create a safe and clean space</i>	<i>Increase the safety and comfort of patrons and business owners</i>	1. Encourage the development and activation of a substance use and River District housing initiative.	Grey County Social Services (lead), City of Owen Sound, OSDIA, Public Health, Owen Sound Police Services	Staff time to participate/ support initiative	• Plan outlined • Tactics implemented • Decrease in substance use issues in the area • Decrease in crime in the area • Consumer and stakeholder perception of safety increased			



River District Management (<i>Ordered in terms of execution timing</i>)			Partners	Resources	Measurables	Y1	Y2	Y3
Strategic Objective	Recommendation	Tactics						
Create a safe and clean space	Increase the safety and comfort of patrons and business owners	2. Facilitate the implementation of an accessibility program. a. Undertake a River District public space accessibility or walkability audit. b. Deal with any sudden and/or unforeseen accessibility issues in a timely manner. c. Ensure businesses and landlords are aware of accessibility requirements. d. Enforce the requirement for snow clearing on sidewalks in front of downtown buildings. e. Establish an accessibility program under the CIP.	City of Owen Sound (lead), River District business, landlords	Staff time, funds to rectify issues where required	- Walkability score increases - River District common areas and businesses accessible in all four seasons			
Create a safe and clean space	Ensure the cleanliness of the River District	3. Create a business rewards program.	OSDIA (lead), City of Owen Sound, River District businesses, landlords	OSDIA Board or member time, City staff time	Program implemented			
Create a safe and clean space	Ensure the cleanliness of the River District	4. Undertake a waste and cleanliness audit. Include elements such as: a. The schedule of year-round litter patrols. b. The number of garbage and recycling receptacles. c. The River District garbage standard bylaws. d. The tactics to encourage specific timing for curbside garbage. e. The locations of the stoop and scoop waste dispenser stations within the River District.	City of Owen Sound (lead), PW division and Bylaw	Staff time, funds for placement of additional infrastructure and resources for additional pickup (if required)	- Litter patrols increased - Trash management elements increased - Consumer and stakeholder perception of cleanliness increased			
Entice transient tourist traffic to stop in the River District	Create visually appealing arterial routes through the city	8. Beautify arterial public spaces. a. Increase focus on landscaping and landscaping maintenance. b. Utilize flower baskets, bridge planters, flowerbeds, and banners along arterial routes to beautify the area. c. Update directional signage outside the core to direct traffic to the River District.	City of Owen Sound (lead), OSDIA, River District businesses and property owners	Staff time, funds to support CIP program initiatives and installations	- Number of flower baskets, bridge planters, banners and flowerbeds - Number of gardens developed - Number of businesses applying for upgrade program support - Number of businesses applying for upgrade program support			



River District Management (<i>Ordered in terms of execution timing</i>)			Partners	Resources	Measurables	Y1	Y2	Y3
Strategic Objective	Recommendation	Tactics						
					Number of properties upgraded Consumer and stakeholder perception of the visual appeal of the River District increased			
<i>Entice transient tourist traffic to stop in the River District.</i>	<i>Make it easy to find your way and stop in the River District</i>	10. Undertake a River District wayfinding plan.	City of Owen Sound (lead), OSDIA River District businesses	Funds for planning, development and installation, staff time	- Plan completed - Number of wayfinding and gateway signs installed Increased ease of navigation by visitors			
<i>Create a visually appealing River District</i>	<i>Continue beautification efforts</i>	6. Beautify the River District's public spaces. - Continue with beautification efforts in the River District with flower baskets, bridge planters and flowerbeds, themed banners and Christmas decorations. - Implement streetscaping upgrades to align with the River District brand. - In partnership, expand the community gardens initiative in the area to beautify undeveloped areas such as parking lots, alleyways and empty lots.	City of Owen Sound (lead), OSDIA, community representatives	Funds for beautification and/or installations, City staff time to implement	- Number of flower baskets, bridge planters, banners and Christmas decorations installed - Upgraded streetscaping installed - Number of gardens developed - Increased positive perception of the area			
<i>Create a visually appealing River District</i>	<i>Continue beautification efforts</i>	7. Encourage River District business owners and landlords to beautify their properties by leveraging CIP programs. Develop additional program criteria such as: - Guidelines in relation to upgrades and beautifications in line with the River District brand (colours, signage, awnings etc.). - An added incentive in the form of additional cost sharing improvement funding aimed at River District properties. - Strategy for communication to increase participation for building owners to upgrade river and harbour facing properties. - A River District themed criterion for temporary beautification elements such as types of recommended plantings, Christmas decorations etc.	City of Owen Sound (lead), OSDIA, River District businesses and landlords	Staff time, funds to support CIP program initiatives and installations	- Number of businesses applying for upgrade program support - Number of properties upgraded - Number of perpendicular signs installed - Number of murals installed - Consumer and stakeholder perception of the visual appeal of the River District increased			



River District Management (<i>Ordered in terms of execution timing</i>)			Partners	Resources	Measurables	Y1	Y2	Y3
Strategic Objective	Recommendation	Tactics						
		• A grant to encourage the installation of perpendicular signage to allow passersby to easily identify the business. • Leveraging opportunities with local suppliers/ partners or discount opportunities for any signage/ beatification installations and upgrades. • A window painting incentive for landlords of vacant properties, encouraging them to work with local artists to install window art in empty storefronts. • Targeted expansion of mural beautification efforts along the backside of buildings.			The number of applicants to the CIP landscape program			
<i>Entice transient tourist traffic to stop in the River District</i>	Make it easy to find your way and stop in the River District	11. Continue to offer complimentary parking for River District patrons.	City of Owen Sound (lead), OSDIA River District businesses	Staff time, funds for incentive program development	• Parking remains free Number of coupons/incentives distributed			
<i>Create a safe and clean space</i>	<i>Ensure the cleanliness of the River District</i>	5. Ensure adequate, (safe and clean) public washrooms are available. a. Assess the need for additional public washrooms. b. Install public washroom signage. c. Ensure public washrooms are safe, clean and open year-round. d. Encourage businesses to allow public access to restrooms	City of Owen Sound (lead), OSDIA, River District businesses	Funds for infrastructure and signage (if required) from both City & OSDIA, staff time	• Additional public washrooms available • Signage installed • Washrooms are clean upon inspection • Businesses listed on GoHere or other washroom apps			
<i>Entice transient tourist traffic to stop in the River District</i>	Create visually appealing arterial routes through the city	9. Encourage arterial route property owners to beautify their property.	City of Owen Sound (lead), OSDIA, River District businesses and property owners	Staff time, funds to support CIP program initiatives and installations	• Number of flower baskets, bridge planters, banners and flowerbeds • Number of gardens developed • Number of businesses applying for upgrade program support • Number of businesses applying for upgrade program support • Number of properties upgraded			



River District Management (<i>Ordered in terms of execution timing</i>)			Partners	Resources	Measurables	Y1	Y2	Y3
Strategic Objective	Recommendation	Tactics						
					• Number of perpendicular signs installed • Consumer and stakeholder perception of the visual appeal of the River District increased			

River District Experience Development (<i>Ordered in terms of execution timing</i>)			Partners	Resources	Measurables	Y1	Y2	Y3
Strategic Objective	Recommendation	Tactics						
<i>Create an engaging space.</i>	<i>Continue to invest in animation and activation of the River District.</i>	2. Invest in infrastructure to support animation. a. Continue to develop infrastructure to attract residents to the downtown area. b. Continue implementation and use of a patio policy to utilize sidewalk cafes and patio dining. c. Research and investigate closing a section of the River District to vehicular traffic on an ongoing or scheduled basis. d. Consider the expansion of the OSDIA boundaries to include the west side of the river and harbour to ensure the inclusion of key properties that align with the River District brand.	City of Owen Sound (lead – a, b, c), OSDIA Board (lead d), River District businesses	OSDIA Board or member time, infrastructure funds, City staff time	• New infrastructure developments • Street closures • Number of patios and sidewalk cafes • Development of 1st Avenue East • Adjustment of OSDIA boundary			
<i>Create an engaging space.</i>	<i>Continue to invest in animation and activation of the River District.</i>	1. Ensure River District properties are open for business. a. Create an environment of opportunity to allow River District businesses to open consistently.	OSDIA Board/ members (lead), City staff, landlords	OSDIA Board or member time, City staff time	• Number of businesses open consistently on Sundays and regular extended hours			



River District Experience Development (<i>Ordered in terms of execution timing</i>)			Partners	Resources	Measurables	Y1	Y2	Y3
Strategic Objective	Recommendation	Tactics						
<i>Create an engaging space.</i>	<i>Continue to invest in animation and activation of the River District.</i>	4. Continue to plan and deliver a roster of exciting events that will attract the target market to the River District area. a. Create an annual event plan. b. Create a criterion to evaluate and determine the most effective (and strategic) events to continue. c. Plan and deliver a roster of new events. d. Work with the Festival of Northern Lights Board to upgrade the light show and assist with applications for funding to support the developments. e. Work with the Georgian Bay Folk Society (and other organizations) to encourage the expansion of Summerfolk programming to the River District. Recap events each year and summarize key performance indicators, to inform future delivery.	OSDIA (co-lead), City of Owen Sound (co-lead), Event committee	OSDIA Board or member time, City staff time, potential funds for development and delivery of events	• Annual event plan created, event report delivered • Targeted roster of on brand events delivered each year • Partners assisting with development and delivery of events • Increased volume of visitors to the area			
<i>Learn from and lean on others to build success.</i>	<i>Leverage the experience, mistakes and successes of other businesses.</i>	7. Enhance OSDIA communication tactics to create success. a. Create a newsletter to OSDIA members with simplified format Create an annual OSDIA summit for River District businesses.	OSDIA (lead), City of Owen Sound	OSDIA Board or member time, City staff time, funds to support conference delivery	• Newsletter updated • Newsletters distributed • Newsletter open rate, click through rate • OSDIA business conference held annually • Number of conference attendees			
<i>Learn from and lean on others to build success.</i>	<i>Leverage the experience, mistakes and successes of other destinations</i>	5. Undertake an annual best practices mission.	OSDIA (lead), City of Owen Sound, River District businesses	OSDIA Board or member time, City staff time, funds for program delivery	• Number of familiarization tours held • Number of participants • Number of River District businesses participating • Number of actionable ideas brought back to Owen Sound			
<i>Create an engaging space.</i>	<i>Continue to invest in animation and activation of the River District.</i>	3. Encourage animation of the River District. a. Encourage new and continued programming. Encourage new activities and attractions to engage visitors and locals.	OSDIA (lead), City of Owen Sound, other stakeholders as applicable	OSDIA Board or member time, City staff time	• Programs continued and developed • New activities and attractions developed			



River District Experience Development (<i>Ordered in terms of execution timing</i>)			Partners	Resources	Measurables	Y1	Y2	Y3
Strategic Objective	Recommendation	Tactics						
					• Increased visitor positive perception of the area			
<i>Learn from and lean on others to build success.</i>	<i>Create the environment to attract businesses.</i>	6. Cluster and develop assets that will attract the target market. a. Through the BR&E, undertake a River District business gaps and location planning exercise. b. Mentor potential new River District entrepreneurs.	OSDIA (lead), City of Owen Sound, Grey County, Catapult Grey Bruce	OSDIA Board or member time, City staff time, funds for BR&E, planning exercise,	• Business location plan completed • BR&E completed • Mentorship program established • Number of new businesses			

River District Promotion (<i>Ordered in terms of execution timing</i>)			Partners	Resources	Measurables	Y1	Y2	Y3
Strategic Objective	Recommendation	Tactics						
<i>Attract people to the River District.</i>	<i>Follow a strategic, multi-layered collaborative and bold promotions plan for the River District.</i>	1. Create a River District consumer website. a. Register a River District domain. b. Design and program a River District content-based consumer website. c. Create and post content regarding River District business owners, events and activities.	City of Owen Sound (lead), OSDIA	City staff time or third-party developer, funds for programming, design and content development	• Website launched • Content posted • Website traffic			
<i>Attract people to the River District.</i>	<i>Follow a strategic, multi-layered collaborative and bold promotions plan for the River District.</i>	2. Create an annual promotional tactical schedule & social media content calendar. a. Outline an annual social media content calendar to guide social media content and future content development, ensuring it is on brand, on topic and delivered in a timely manner.	City of Owen Sound (lead), OSDIA	City staff time or third-party marketing agency	• Schedule/calendar completed			



River District Promotion (<i>Ordered in terms of execution timing</i>)			Partners	Resources	Measurables	Y1	Y2	Y3
Strategic Objective	Recommendation	Tactics						
Attract people to the River District.	Follow a strategic, multi-layered collaborative and bold promotions plan for the River District.	5. Deliver a campaign designed to attract people who work from home to the city. a. Create a relocation campaign. b. Market to potential residents in the target market age bracket. c. Provide an incentive to relocate to the city. d. Encourage downtown landlords to upgrade the residential rental stock in a targeted area of the River District.	City of Owen Sound (lead), OSDIA	City staff time, or third-party marketing agency, funds for program delivery	• Program engagement – measurements to be determined based on tactic			
Attract people to the River District.	Follow a strategic, multi-layered collaborative and bold promotions plan for the River District.	3. Implement social media marketing tactics. a. Brand OSDIA social media accounts for alignment with River District look and feel. b. Regularly schedule social media posts. c. Digital advertising. Deliver digital ad campaign(s) to local and nearby residents in the target market. d. Leverage local social media influencers. e. Claim the River District Google business and Trip Advisor page.	City of Owen Sound (lead), OSDIA	City staff time, or third-party marketing agency, funds for program delivery	• Social engagement • Social account growth • Content posted • Website traffic • Ad and post click through rates			
Attract people to the River District.	Follow a strategic, multi-layered collaborative and bold promotions plan for the River District.	6. Create a local's love it here program.	City of Owen Sound (lead), OSDIA	City staff time, or third-party marketing agency, funds for program delivery	• Program engagement – measurements to be determined based on tactic			
Attract people to the River District.	Follow a strategic, multi-layered collaborative and bold promotions plan for the River District.	4. Develop and deliver a promotional campaign to attract new and exciting businesses to the River District. a. Encourage targeted businesses to locate or relocate to the River District. b. Invest in a program or creative marketing campaign to attract entrepreneurs and targeted businesses to the River District.	City of Owen Sound (lead), OSDIA	City staff time, or third-party marketing agency, funds for program delivery	• Number of new businesses			

Additional Anticipated Outcomes

There are a number of anticipated outcomes that can be used to gauge the success of the initiative as it is implemented.

- A more engaged business community,
- A decrease in the vacancy of storefronts,
- Growth in the uptake of programs within the CIP,
- An expanded toolset available to be leveraged by the City's economic development staff to more easily attract, and retain niche businesses,
- Strengthened pride of place for residents (as noted in feedback on future survey's and outreach),
- Improved social media engagement, increased reach, and increased conversation with the target market,
- Increased pedestrian traffic in the downtown core,
- Increase in length of visitation,
- Greater public engagement with programmed and events,
- Increased tourism and tourism receipts,
- Mitigation of safety concerns,
- Increased accessibility of public places and business storefronts,
- Stronger dialogue with the business community, developers, landlords and the city,
- Increased website traffic,
- Additional beautification resources focused on all areas of the OSDIA, and
- Increased opportunity for public and private partnerships.

2024 OPERATING AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT as of the 29th day of April, 2024.

BETWEEN:

**THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF OWEN SOUND
(hereinafter referred to as the "City")**

-and-

**The River District Board of Management
(hereinafter called the "River District Board")**

WHEREAS the Ontario Municipal Act (Section 204) establishes the mandate for all BIAs (DIAs) within the province as follows:

A local municipality may designate an area as an improvement area and may establish a board of management, (a) to oversee the improvement, beautification, and maintenance of municipally-owned land, buildings and structures in the area beyond that provided at the expense of the municipality generally; and (b) to promote the area as a business or shopping area.

AND WHEREAS it is the goal of both the River District Board of Management (River District Board) and the Corporation of the City of Owen Sound (the City) to maintain the River District in a manner that showcases the territory as a safe, clean, and vibrant residential, business, and tourism area;

AND WHEREAS the City is committed to increasing the potential of the River District and harbourfront in accordance with the City's Strategic Plan;

AND WHEREAS the City and River District Board agree to work together to support the improvement, beautification and maintenance and marketing and promotion of land, buildings, and structures within the River District area;

AND WHEREAS the City and River District Board have agreed to provide a system of complimentary business sponsored parking within the River District;

AND WHEREAS the City and River District Board have an existing operating agreement with a term ending February 28, 2024 (the "2019 Agreement");

AND WHEREAS the City and the River District Board have negotiated updated terms for the operating relationship between the parties as contemplated by subsection 1.4 of the existing agreement;

AND WHEREAS the updated terms which are incorporated into this revised agreement were approved by the River District Board on March 13, 2024 (Resolution No. RD-240313-006) and by City Council on April 15, 2024 (Resolution No. R-240415-003);

NOW, THEREFORE, THIS AGREEMENT WITNESSETH THAT, in consideration of the mutual covenants set out together with other good and valuable consideration (the receipt of which is acknowledged), the parties agree as follows:

1.0 TERM

- 1.1 The term of this agreement shall be for a period of approximately five (5) years commencing February 29, 2024 and ending February 28, 2029.
- 1.2 Either the River District Board or the City can provide a notice of termination of the Agreement at any time during the term of this Agreement. Notice by the River District Board shall be endorsed by resolution of the River District Board and notice by the City shall be endorsed by resolution of City Council.
- 1.3 Prior to December 31, 2028, the River District Board and City will determine whether, by mutual agreement, they wish to enter into negotiations to extend the Agreement beyond February 28, 2029.
- 1.4 The City and the River District Board agree to review the contents of this Agreement on an annual basis for the purpose of ensuring that the Agreement continues to reflect the needs of both parties. Amendments to this Agreement may be made by mutual agreement of the parties in writing. This review should occur prior to December 31 each year.

2.0 ADMINISTRATION

- 2.1 The Agreement will be administered jointly and cooperatively. The Director of Community Services will be the City's lead staff person responsible for the implementation of the Agreement. The River District Board Chair, working through the direction of the River District Board, will be the River District's lead responsible for the implementation of the Agreement.
- 2.2 The Director of Community Services will determine and assign on the basis of this Agreement, the staff and other resources required by the City to support and implement this Agreement. The River District Board and Chair will provide direction through the Director of Community Services as a Board, by resolution.

- 2.3 The River District Coordinator role will be dedicated to supporting the mandate of the River District as outlined in the Constitution, to implementing the River District Action Plan. Annually, the River District Coordinator will prepare a work plan which will be presented to the River District Board in the first quarter of each year.
- 2.4 City administrative staff will be assigned to provide administrative support for the River District Board. This support will include publishing agendas, streaming meetings, recording and publishing minutes and notices as well as financial and IT. The agenda will be established by the River District Board Chair in accordance with their policies and procedures.
- 2.5 The Director of Community Services or designate will be responsible for incoming service requests, complaints and items that require action and will be responsible for assigning these items for action to City staff as for current City requests.
- 2.6 The City will track calls that are received through the City main customer service line and report on these calls as part of the year-end financial report. City staff time (Parks and Public Works) spent on work within the River District area will be logged and reported but not invoiced in the year-end financial report.
- 2.7 River District Board members will be appointed in accordance with Section 204(3) of the *Ontario Municipal Act* and the River District Constitution.
- 2.8 The City will work with the River District Board to update and maintain a website and work with the River District Board as approved to retain services for content development.
- 2.9 Schedule "A" to this Agreement outlines the services provided in kind by the City to the River District Board.

3.0 BUDGET

- 3.1 The River District Board, with the assistance of City staff, will establish a draft annual budget. The annual budget will include the levy and other revenue sources as well as all costs toward beautification, maintenance and marketing and promotion and complimentary parking within the River District area.
- 3.2 The River District Board will prepare the budget in accordance with Section 205 of the *Municipal Act* and River District Constitution. The Board shall prepare a proposed budget for each fiscal year and hold one or more meetings of the members for discussion. The River District Board will then submit the budget to Council who may approve it in whole or in part, but who may not add any expenditures to it.

- 3.3 City staff will be responsible to assist the River District Board to pay invoices, procure goods and services, collect fees and the levy as well as other matters relating to financial services and bookkeeping.
- 3.4 The City will provide quarterly updates to the Board with respect to the budget. On a monthly basis, the City's Director of Corporate Services or their designate will provide a detailed summary of revenue and expenditures to the River District Treasurer.

4.0 BEAUTIFICATION – FLOWER, PLANTINGS AND TREES

- 4.1 The City and River District Board will each contribute half (up to \$7,500 each) to plants for the public areas of the River District. This will include, but not be limited to, hanging baskets, sidewalk pots, flower boxes, and plant material for permanent planting pods and beds within the River District. The City will determine, together with the River District Board, the number of hanging baskets.
- 4.2 The City will provide flowers for the boxes at City Hall and other City facilities in the River District.
- 4.3 City staff will be responsible for the placement at the beginning of the season and the removal at the end of the season of the hanging baskets and planter boxes.
- 4.4 The City is responsible to provide trees and undertake planting and tree maintenance within the public areas of the River District.

5.0 SEASONAL BANNERS & DECORATIONS

- 5.1 The design and location of banners shall be done in accordance with the Downtown and Harbourfront Master Plan, and in particular, the streetscape plan prepared by Northwood and Associates, Landscape Architects. Prior to the manufacture of new banners, approval of the City through its Community Services Committee is required.
- 5.2 The City will put up and take down all vertical hanging banners on the streetscape light poles and decorative posts on a seasonal basis. The banners will be stored by the City.
- 5.3 The City will be responsible for the replacement of the banners within the River District, including 2nd Avenue East, 10th Street East and West, and 8th and 9th Streets East.
- 5.4 The City will put up and take down the cross-street banners for events (maximum two per year). With the assistance of City staff, the River District Board will apply for and obtain approval under the City's Sign By-law for cross-street banners.

- 5.5 The City will undertake and pay for the installation and removal of the cross street “Noma” style Christmas light displays on 2nd Avenue East.
- 5.6 If the River District Board provides any seasonal decorations such as corn stalks or greenery, the purchase will be the responsibility of the River District Board. Installation will be done, as determined, in cooperation between the River District Board and the City.
- 5.7 Decorations will be stored by the City.

6.0 WATERING

- 6.1 The City will be responsible to water and fertilize the plants, hanging baskets, and flower boxes within the River District.
- 6.2 Watering will be done on a 7-days-per-week schedule or as otherwise determined by the City.
- 6.3 Watering will be done by City staff.
- 6.4 The City will provide the truck and equipment necessary to undertake this task. There will be no charge for the use of this vehicle to the River District Board.

7.0 STREET AND SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE & WASTE REMOVAL

- 7.1 The City will use the street sweeper in the River District once a week from spring until fall each year. At the request of the River District Board, the City can provide additional sweeps of the River District at a per run cost, payable by the River District Board to the City. There will be no charge for the weekly sweeping.
- 7.2 The City will be responsible to undertake sidewalk litter removal and maintenance at a level to be determined by the City in consultation with the River District Board. The Board will contribute through the annual budget \$5,000 toward this sidewalk maintenance.
- 7.3 The City will be responsible for the maintenance of tree grates and the removal of other weeds along sidewalks and laneways in the River District as City staff resources permit.
- 7.4 The City will provide replacement garbage receptacles for the River District when necessary, upon one-year notice for budget purposes.
- 7.5 The City is responsible for clean-up and removal of dead animals, hazardous materials, and debris from automotive accidents.
- 7.6 The City will continue to provide weekly curbside garbage pickup in the River District.
- 7.7 The City will provide a maximum of once daily sidewalk snow removal using the City’s sidewalk plow as staff resources and equipment allow.

- 7.8 By-law No. 2008-046 (City of Owen Sound Snow Removal By-law) shall continue to apply within the River District.
- 7.9 The City is responsible for notifying property owners if they are not in compliance with snow clearing/removal by-laws.
- 7.10 The City will be responsible for the removal of snowbanks within the River District at a level of service to be determined by the City.
- 7.11 The City and River District Board have agreed to partner on a sidewalk power washing initiative. The River District Board will contribute up to \$3,000 toward this initiative in accordance with their approved budget. The City will develop a plan for the area to be included considering in part the volume of pedestrian traffic and areas in most need.

8.0 EVENTS AND ACTIVATION

- 8.1 The River District Coordinator and other City staff will work with the River District Board to establish, based on the River District budget, a program of annual River District events/attractions/activations. This event planning will be completed by the end of January each year.
- 8.2 The River District Coordinator will work to plan, market, and promote and deliver each event in accordance with the plan set and approved by the River District Board.
- 8.3 City staff will report on the progress and do a wrap-up of each event, including financial performance, to the River District Board.

9.0 MARKETING AND PROMOTION

- 9.1 The River District Coordinator will work with the River District Board to establish, based on the River District budget, an annual plan for marketing and promotion reflecting the goals and objectives identified in the River District Action Plan.
- 9.2 The River District Coordinator will work to implement the plan and report to the River District Board twice annually on the progress.
- 9.3 The River District Coordinator will work with the River District Board collaboratively to implement the recommendations of the River District Action Plan subject to budget approval each year including a Wayfinding Signage Strategy.

10.0 PARKING AND ENFORCEMENT

- 10.1 The City and River District Board will provide complimentary business sponsored parking in the River District.
- 10.2 The City and River District agree that enforcement toward ensuring turnover is important.
- 10.3 The City will be responsible for enforcement and to establish the level of enforcement. Changes to the level of enforcement will be reviewed with the River District Board prior to implementation.
- 10.4 The River District Board will contribute on an annual basis toward the complimentary business sponsored parking (\$120,000). This amount would be reflected in the annual approved River District budget. The City and the River District Board will share equally the revenue generated from the sale of parking passes each year. This revenue will be reported annually as part of the year-end budget report.
- 10.5 The City and River District Board will work together to establish a parking signage and communication strategy to implement the new complimentary business sponsored parking arrangement.

11.0 ENTIRE AGREEMENT

- 11.1 This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the parties with respect to the subject matter hereof and supersedes all prior agreements, understandings, negotiations, and discussions, whether written or oral. There are no conditions, covenants, agreements, representations, warranties, or other provisions, express or implied, collateral, statutory or otherwise, relating to the subject matter hereof except those provided for in this Agreement.
- 11.2 For greater clarity, the City and River District Board acknowledge and agree that as of February 29, 2024, the first day of the term of this Agreement, this Agreement shall supersede and replace in its entirety the 2021 Agreement dated the 7th day of June 2021 between the City and the River District Board.
- 11.3 Any amendments to this Agreement must be in writing.

12.0 SUCCESSORS AND ASSIGNS

- 12.1 This Agreement shall ensure to the benefit of and be binding upon the parties hereto and their respective successors and permitted assigns. Neither party may assign all or any part of this Agreement without the written approval of the other party, which approval shall not be unreasonably withheld.

- 12.2 For greater clarity, the River District Board and the City acknowledge that this Agreement shall continue to be legally binding in the event that the River District Board undertakes a legal name change.

[Signatures follow on next page]

The Corporation of the City of Owen Sound

Per: 
Mayor, Ian C. Boddy

Per: 
City Clerk, Briana Bloomfield

We have the authority to bind the Corporation.

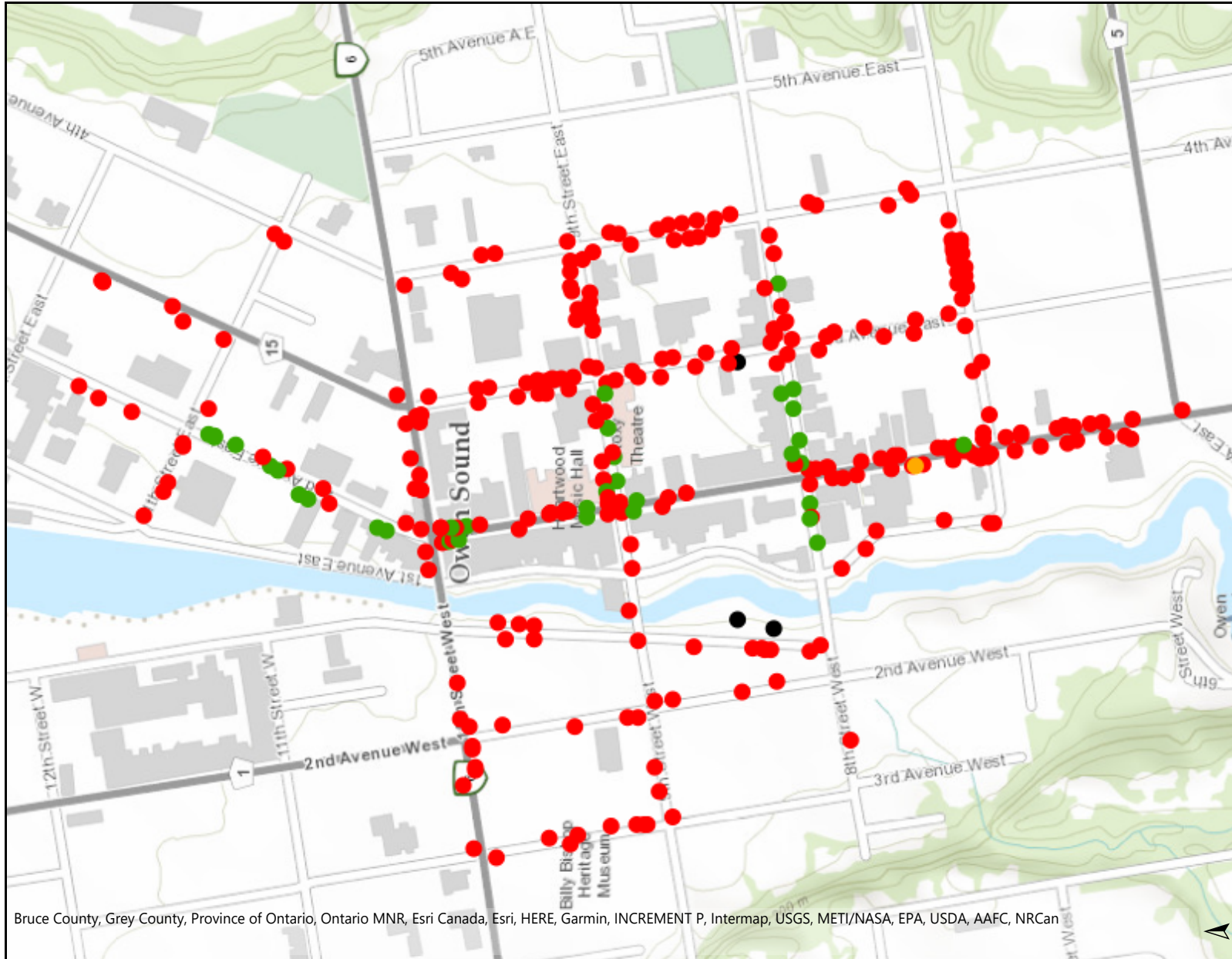
Owen Sound River District Board of
Management

Per: 
Chair, Dave Parsons

Schedule "A"

In-Kind Contributions by the City of Owen Sound

- Administrative support, including but not limited to, the preparation and publishing of agendas and minutes, and the livestreaming and recording of meetings using the City's eSCRIBE software.
- Financial services, including processing and payment of invoices, administration of the River District gift certificates, and receipt of payments.
- Human Resources support.
- IT support.
- City watering truck and equipment.
- Installation and removal of Noma Lights.
- Installation and removal of banners and flowerpots.
- Installation and removal of Hottest Street Sale banner.
- Additional garbage collection (weekly curbside).
- City events in the River District.



Bruce County, Grey County, Province of Ontario, Ontario MNR, Esri Canada, Esri, HERE, Garmin, INCREMENT P, Intermap, USGS, METI/NASA, EPA, USDA, AAFC, NRCan



Legend

Downtown Repairs

- BENCHES
- OTHER
- SIDEWALK
- TREES

Notes

This map is a user generated static output from an Internet mapping site and is for reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable.

THIS MAP IS NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION

Project Charter

1.0 Project Identification

Name of Project

Fostering a Vibrant River District

Sponsor

(Accountable) Tim Simmonds and Pamela Coulter

Project Manager

(Responsible) Viveca Gravel

Project Team Members (Responsible or Consult)

Lara Widdifield, Director of Public Works & Engineering
 Manager or Supervisor, Public Works and Engineering
 Eckhard Pastrik, Manager of Parks & Open Spaces
 Bradey Carbert, Manager of Corporate Services

Approved Budget

Existing annual operating budgets and project specific capital budgets

2.0 Business Need

The City's Official Plan identifies the River District as the primary economic, commercial, financial, cultural, tourism, and employment hub for Owen Sound and the surrounding region. The area faces challenges related to aging streetscape elements, cleanliness, and perceptions of safety, particularly in connection with homelessness.

3.0 Project Objectives (Purpose)

Revitalize the River District as a safe, vibrant, and welcoming downtown core that reflects its role as the City's cultural and economic heart. Increase foot traffic, perception of safety and decrease vacancy rate.

4.0 Project Scope

In Scope: Coordination, planning, service standards, stakeholder engagement, partnerships.

1. Expand River District Coordinator role to lead and integrate initiatives.
2. Develop a Revitalization Plan for infrastructure renewal.
3. Establish Service Level Standards for cleanliness, safety, amenities, and programming.
4. Update the River District Action Plan (Nov 2025 → implement 2026).
5. Update governing Bylaw to align with revitalization priorities.

Out of Scope: Direct delivery of social services

5.0 Stakeholders

Name	Consult or Inform
Tim Simmonds, City Manager	Consult
Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services	Consult
Lara Widdifield, Director of Public Works & Engineering	Consult
Eckhard Pastrik, Manager of Parks & Open Spaces	Consult
Bradey Carbert, Manager of Corporate Services	Consult
Grey County (Housing, Social Services, Paramedics and Economic Development and Tourism)	Consult
Briana Bloomfield, City Clerk	Consult
River District Board of Management	Consult
River District Membership	Inform
Social Service Providers (i.e., OShare, United Way)	Consult & Inform
Chamber of Commerce	Inform
Residents in River District	Consult and Inform
Owen Sound Police Services	Consult and Inform

6.0 High Level Deliverables / Milestone Dates

Item	Deliverables / Milestones	Date
1.	Updated River District Action Plan	Q 2 2026
2.	Prepare RFP and retain Landscape Architect	Q 1 2026
3.	River District Revitalization Plan Approval	Q 2 2026
4.	Define Service Level Standards	Q 2 2026
5.	Bylaw Updates	Q 2 2026

7.0 Risks

Severity	Description	Mitigation Tactic
High	Funding Gaps	Pursue external grants, partnerships, phased implementation
High	Competing City Priorities	Assign clear responsibilities, integrate River District initiatives into departmental workplans, and maintain leadership oversight.
Medium	Stakeholder fatigue	Maintain transparent communication, celebrate quick wins, and engage regularly to sustain momentum.
Medium	Safety perceptions lag	Coordinate closely with Police Services and social service agencies to address safety concerns while fostering inclusion.
Medium	Delays in consultant deliverables or project approvals	Set clear timelines, milestone tracking, and early engagement with City departments and external consultants to ensure accountability.
Medium	Public opposition or negative perception	Maintain consistent, transparent communication, provide opportunities for stakeholder input, and highlight visible “quick wins” to build confidence.
Low	Weather or seasonal impacts on construction/maintenance	Schedule works with seasonal considerations in mind and plan for temporary mitigations (e.g., snow removal, temporary lighting).
Low	Insufficient staffing or resource constraints	Clearly define roles, consider temporary staffing support or partnerships, and monitor workloads to prevent bottlenecks.

8.0 Key Results for Success (Must Be Measurable or Quantifiable)

1. Revitalization Plan
 - Plan completed by Q2 2026
 - Includes short/medium/long-term actions + 3+ major streetscape upgrades
2. Infrastructure Renewal
 - 100% asset deficiencies mapped by end of Q1-2026
 - 25% of deficient assets replaced within 3 years
3. Service Level Standards
 - Standards adopted by Q1 2026
 - 90% compliance by end of 2026
4. Bylaw & Property Standards
 - 1 new Bylaw Officer in place by 2026
 - Quarterly audits + published results
 - 15% reduction in complaints by 2027
5. Public Washrooms
 - Options report by Oct 2025 to City Council and Actions stemming from report implemented in 2026.
6. Economic & Cultural Vitality
 - 12+ cultural events/year in River District
 - 10% annual increase in foot traffic
 - 70%+ business satisfaction by 2027
7. Partnership & Engagement
 - 4 stakeholder meetings/year with 80%+ participation
8. Retail and Office Occupancy
 - Reduce total sq.ft commercial vacancy by 10% by 2027

Staff Report

Report To: City Council
Report From: Tim Simmonds, City Manager
Meeting Date: October 27, 2025
Report Code: CM-25-033
Subject: River District Public Washroom Infrastructure and Operational Assessment

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CM-25-033 respecting River District Public Washroom Infrastructure and Operational Assessment, City Council directs staff to:

1. Include Option 1 as outlined in the Financial Implications section of the report as a new 2025 capital project for the renovation of the Farmers' Market Washroom in the current 5-year Capital Plan, with a scheduled completion date in 2026;
2. Allocate \$75,000 from the Capital Reserve to fund the capital costs required for Option 1;
3. Include for consideration in the Mayor's 2026 Operating Budget the estimated annual operating cost of \$12,000 to \$15,000 for Option 1, with the corresponding amount offset by revenue from the City's allocation of the Municipal Accommodation Tax;
4. Report back annually on the operation of the Public Washroom in the River District including the operational costs; and
5. Incorporate the annual operating and maintenance of Option 1 into the Community Services Portfolio.

Highlights:

- Automated self-cleaning public washrooms offer advanced hygiene and convenience, but require careful consideration of costs, maintenance, and user experience.
- Public washrooms are highlighted in the River District Action Plan as important for meeting strategic goals related to downtown appeal and public health.
- Most people support adding a public washroom in the River District, but success depends on careful planning for safety, cleanliness, and ongoing management.
- Providing a public washroom in the River District is a practical step that supports Owen Sound's Vision 2050 by making downtown more accessible, inclusive, and welcoming for everyone.
- The recommendation to renovate the Farmers' Market Washroom balances community needs and practical realities using capital reserves and non-taxation revenue for annual operating costs.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

A public washroom in the River District is a practical step that supports Owen Sound's Vision 2050 by making downtown more accessible, inclusive, and welcoming for everyone.

There is a clear connection between providing a public washroom in the River District and the goals outlined in the recently adopted Owen Sound Vision 2050 Strategic Plan. The plan emphasizes creating a city that is accessible, inclusive, and welcoming for all residents and visitors. One of the guiding principles is accessibility, which means making sure everyone can connect, contribute, and thrive in the community. Adding a public washroom directly supports this principle by removing a barrier for people who spend time downtown, including families, seniors, people with disabilities, and tourists.

The Vision 2050 plan also highlights the importance of revitalizing the downtown area and increasing satisfaction with city amenities and public spaces. Community feedback in the plan specifically mentions the need for more public space projects and better public washroom access as part of making the downtown more vibrant and welcoming. Providing a washroom would be a visible action that shows the City is listening to community needs and is committed to improving the River District for everyone.

Metrics in the plan, such as increasing satisfaction with the revitalization of the downtown area and ensuring residents do not encounter barriers to accessing city facilities, are also directly related to this kind of project.

Providing a public washroom in the River District is not just a basic service – it could be an action that aligns with Vision 2050’s goals of accessibility, inclusion, and downtown revitalization. It would be a positive first step in showing how the City can turn its long-term vision into real improvements that matter to people’s everyday lives.

Climate and Environmental Implications:

Providing a public washroom in the River District supports Owen Sound’s Climate Action Strategy and Climate Mitigation Plan by advancing goals related to sustainable municipal infrastructure and resource efficiency. While neither plan directly references public washrooms, if Council decides to move forward with Option 1 as noted in the recommendations, the Climate Mitigation Plan’s “Facilities” actions encourage maximizing energy and water efficiency in municipal buildings, including the use of low-flow fixtures and water-saving technologies. Incorporating low-flow toilets, faucets, and other efficient fixtures in the washroom aligns with these objectives by reducing water consumption and associated greenhouse gas emissions from water treatment.

Additionally, the plans emphasize the importance of integrating green building standards and energy-efficient systems in new municipal facilities. By using sustainable materials and efficient fixtures in the washroom’s construction, the City demonstrates leadership in climate action and supports its commitment to a “Green and Resilient City” vision, contributing to both environmental stewardship and operational cost savings.

Previous Report/Authority:

[Report CM-25-027 from the City Manager Re: Update Following the July 28 Community Stakeholder Discussion to Foster a Vibrant River District](#)

[Report CM-25-032 from the City Manager Re: Fostering a Vibrant River District - Report II](#)

[Minutes \(Motion\) of the September 22, 2025](#) R-250922-004 Moved by Councillor Middlebro "THAT in consideration of Staff Report CM-25-027

respecting Update Following the July 28 Community Stakeholder Discussion to Foster a Vibrant River District, City Council directs staff to bring forward a report to the October 27, 2025 Council meeting with options for public washrooms in the River District, including associated capital and operating costs."

Background:

Recent Stakeholder Input and Staff Activities Related to River District Public Washroom Access

At the July 28 facilitated River District Stakeholder session – where more than 100 River District business owners and social service providers gathered to discuss downtown concerns – public washrooms were raised as an opportunity to improve the River District and were specifically highlighted in the facilitator's report.

Members of Council listened closely to these concerns and, in response, made it a priority to seek out practical solutions while attending the Association of Municipalities of Ontario Conference held the week of August 18 in Ottawa.

Mayor Ian Boddy, Councillor Melanie Middlebro', Councillor Suneet Kukreja, and the City Manager who all attended, specifically set aside time to meet with representatives from [Urban Blu](#) and [Niu Corporation](#), two leading Canadian manufacturers of self-cleaning public washrooms. Both companies had full-sized washrooms set-up, allowing the Owen Sound delegation to inspect the quality, materials, and ask detailed questions about the products. Urban Blu and Niu Corporation manufacture, deliver, and install a range of self-cleaning washroom solutions across North America. Since the conference, staff have followed up with both manufacturers to gather information on timelines, costs, and potential options for Owen Sound.

In addition, resident Ms. Greaves organized a public workshop at Harmony Centre on September 4, extending an open invitation to River District stakeholders, City staff, Council, and community organizations. Ms. Greaves's invitation encouraged attendees to "bring along anyone else who should be there," reflecting the desire for broad input on the issue of public washroom access. Seven people attended the session, which included Councillor Merton, four City staff, and one community member and social service provider (OShare). Ms. Greaves facilitated the discussion, presented

a PowerPoint outlining options for self cleaning and free-standing (Portland Loo) washroom facilities, and led conversations about placement, hours of operation, and interim solutions such as partnering with local businesses. She later provided her presentation slides to participants for reference.

The idea of broadening future discussions to include a wider range of perspectives was not just Ms. Greaves's suggestion, it reflected the overall sentiment of the meeting and the need for inclusive input. In response to this, staff launched a public survey about washroom access when Council brought forward the motion to report back on this topic to ensure that feedback would be gathered from as many community members as possible. A summary of the survey results is provided later in this report, and a copy of the full survey report is attached. (Attachment 1). In addition, Staff learned that Bruce Grey Community Well Being had held a Community of Practice meeting on September 9 that was focused on public washrooms and used that information to further inform this report.

What is the current situation - where are the current washrooms and what are the operating times

Owen Sound's public washrooms are distributed across city buildings, cultural, recreational, and on the waterfront, with a mix of year-round and seasonal availability. Chart 1 titled City Washroom Facilities identifies in each column and row the location, the operational hours, and if the washroom is in the River District or within 400m or 800m of a centre point located from the intersection of 2nd Avenue East and 9th Street East (Attachment 2). These radii are used as a planning best practice because when siting bus stops and amenities, these distances represent typical five and 10-minute walks, which are considered comfortable and practical for most people.

The City's year-round facilities generally operate during business hours or extended hours, with daily or more frequent cleaning. Seasonal washrooms, primarily at parks, open from May 1 to shortly after mid-October, with daily or twice-daily cleaning and additional attention during events.

Cleaning responsibilities are shared between contracted services and in-house teams, with seasonal staff supporting cleaning operations. Although the City used to provide additional portable washrooms (porta potties), the City does not provide portable washrooms when permanent washrooms are closed due to the availability from providers as porta potties have had extensive misuse. This is discussed further in the report.

The current operational budget for washroom maintenance is integrated with broader departmental operational budgets, making it challenging to isolate costs for public washrooms alone.

Chart 1: City Washroom Facilities*

Facility Name	Operational Hours	Year Round / Seasonal	River District (RD)
A. City Hall	Mon–Fri, 8:30am–4:30pm	Year Round	RD
B. Owen Sound Farmers' Market	Sat, 8:00am–12:30pm And other times the market is open for events/bookings.	Year Round	RD
C. Transit Terminal	Mon–Fri, 6:30am–6:00pm; Sat, 9:00am–4:00pm	Year Round	RD
Facility Name	Operational Hours	Year Round / Seasonal	Within 400m or 800m of RD
D. Billy Bishop Museum	Summer: Mon–Sat, 11am–4pm; Winter: Tue–Fri, 12pm–4pm	Seasonal/Partial	Yes
E. Community Waterfront Heritage Centre	Summer: Thu–Mon, 10:00am–4:00pm; Winter: Fri–Sat	Seasonal/Partial	Yes
F. East Side Boat Launch Washroom	Daily, 6:00am–9:00pm (Victoria Day–Thanksgiving)	Seasonal	No
G. Harrison Park Inn Washroom	Daily, 8:00am–10:00pm	Year Round	No

H. Harrison Park Island Washroom	Daily, 8:00am–10:00pm (Victoria Day–Thanksgiving)	Seasonal	No
I. Kelso Beach at Nawash Park – Good Cheer	Daily, 8:00am–9:00pm (Victoria Day–Thanksgiving)	Seasonal	No
J. Owen Sound North Grey Union Public Library	Mon, 1–8pm; Tue–Thu, 10am–8pm; Fri–Sat, 10am–5pm	Year Round	Yes
K. Police Station	24/7	Year Round	Yes
L. Tom Thomson Art Gallery / Tourism Centre	Mon–Sat, 10:00am–5:00pm; Sun, 12:00pm–5:00pm	Year Round	Yes
M. West Side Boat Launch Washroom	Daily, 6:00am–9:00pm (Victoria Day–Thanksgiving)	Seasonal	No

*The chart does not include sports fields and Rec Facilities.

With regard to non-city washroom availability in the River District, the public survey asked the following question: As a business owner/operator in the River District, do you have a washroom available for public use during business hours?

26 reported that they have an available washroom for use by the public. However, only 13 noted that the washroom is available to anyone that asks. The other 13 businesses provide washroom use for paying customers. Of note, there is no provincial legislation that requires businesses to provide washrooms to any person that may ask.

Analysis:

Key Considerations: Safety, Cost, Accessibility, and Community Impact

When considering a public washroom in the River District, it's important to first identify which specific user group the solution is intended to serve. Each group may have distinct needs, but there are also points of intersection and commonality among them. This means that any proposed solution must be multi-faceted, addressing a range of practical, social, and accessibility considerations. Ultimately, the goal is to understand each core problem being solved for each user group and ensure that the chosen approach reflects both their unique requirements and shared priorities. In other words, no one size fits all.

For some, the goal is to support tourists and shoppers (including seniors, families, young children, and those with health-related issues) by improving daytime access to amenities and enhancing the River District's appeal as a destination. For others, the focus may be on place-making and infrastructure development, creating a welcoming, vibrant downtown. For others still, it is about providing essential services for unhoused individuals who may need access to facilities during evenings and weekends.

Although each individual user group may view the need for a public washroom through the lens of their own unique needs and perspectives, what may seem like a straightforward decision quickly becomes complex. Each potential washroom option addresses different requirements and presents its own set of challenges. There is no single perfect solution, as the issues outlined in this report range from safety and cleanliness to cost, accessibility, and community impact. These considerations vary depending on the target audience and the specific problem being addressed. Staff hope the information provided helps highlight, at a high level, the many factors involved in solving this issue. Ultimately, the optimal approach will require balancing capital and operating costs with the diverse needs of user groups, recognizing that a public washroom in the River District may not fully meet every group's expectations, but can still represent a meaningful step toward improving downtown amenities.

Information from a September 9, 2025 Community of Practice Meeting highlights public washrooms as important for community well-being, with concerns about upkeep and safety.

The [Community Wellness and Safety Plan](#), developed through Community Safety and Well-Being Planning in Bruce and Grey, reflects the input of more than 70 community partners from a range of sectors including municipalities, police services and boards, education, health, and community and social services. The Grey Bruce Community Safety and Well-Being Plan Coordinator provided Staff with information from the Community of Practice (CoP) meeting that they held on September 9, 2025 that was focused on public washrooms.

In researching public washroom access and related issues, the CoP reviewed a variety of municipal strategies and perspectives. Examples they found include city-wide toilet strategies from New Westminster B.C. and Guelph, inclusive washroom and change room policies from Regina, and commentary on the challenges women face with urban washroom design. The resources they used also addressed accessibility for people with medical needs, such as the [GoHere Washroom Access program](#), and the importance of inclusive facilities for seniors and those with disabilities. Smart restroom technologies were considered for their potential to improve cleanliness and reduce maintenance demands.

Several perspectives emerged from the information. Some resources highlighted the importance of public washrooms for health, dignity, and social inclusion, especially for vulnerable populations. Others noted operational challenges such as vandalism, misuse, and the costs associated with maintenance and security. There was discussion about the need for clear signage, reliable year-round access, and the role of public washrooms in supporting tourism, local business, and community events. The issue of balancing accessibility with safety and sustainability was a recurring theme. These perspectives are very similar with the data and findings received through the City's Public Washroom Survey which garnered 555 responses.

The information gathered through the Community Wellness and Safety Plan CoP gave City Staff a timely opportunity to explore public washroom access and related community needs through a larger group of stakeholders in Grey and Bruce Counties which offer Council and Staff valuable context for local decision-making and highlights the multifaceted nature of this issue.

Public washrooms are highlighted in the River District Action Plan as important for meeting strategic goals related to downtown appeal and public health.

The River District Action Plan makes multiple references to public washrooms, highlighting their importance in the context of downtown revitalization. The concept of public washrooms is mentioned at least seven times throughout the document. The Plan identifies the availability and cleanliness of public washrooms as a key factor in enhancing the visitor experience, supporting health and safety (especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic), and encouraging longer stays in the downtown area. It notes that current signage for public washrooms is minimal or difficult to find and recommends both the assessment and addition of new facilities, improved signage, and ensuring year-round accessibility and cleanliness. The Plan also encourages businesses to allow public access to restrooms and to participate in programs such as GoHere. These recommendations are positioned as part of the broader strategic objective to create a safe, clean, and welcoming River District, and are included in the summary of actionable tactics for implementation. Overall, the Plan clearly supports the concept of adding public washrooms, viewing them as integral to achieving its goals of increased visitation, improved public health, and enhanced downtown appeal. While public washrooms are one of several priorities, their repeated mention and inclusion in the implementation roadmap indicate that they are considered an important component in relation to the Plan's overall vision.

Most people support adding a public washroom in the River District, but success depends on careful planning for safety, cleanliness, and ongoing management.

The survey, titled [River District Public Washrooms](#) launched on October 7 on the city's online engagement platform, OurCity, and collected 555 responses from a diverse group of residents, business owners, property owners, and visitors connected to the River District over the course of nine days. The majority of respondents (59.1 per cent) supported the concept of adding a standalone public washroom, while 30.3 per cent opposed it and 10.6 per cent were undecided. Most participants rated the need for a public washroom as important or very important, and many indicated that the lack of such a facility negatively affects their experience in the River District. The survey also found that a significant number of people would be more likely to visit the area if a public washroom were available.

A total of 429 individuals provided feedback to the open-ended question “What concerns or challenges do you foresee with adding a public standalone washroom in the River District?”

Analysis of open-ended responses revealed these main themes:

- Many respondents stressed the importance of keeping the washroom clean and well-maintained to ensure it remains inviting for everyone.
- Concerns were raised about the potential for drug use and related activities occurring within or near the facility.
- Several people noted that the washroom could become a gathering place for individuals experiencing homelessness, which may present additional challenges.
- There were worries about the possibility of the washroom being misused, including vandalism, loitering, or inappropriate behavior.
- Safety was a recurring topic, with respondents expressing a need for measures to prevent unsafe situations for users and the surrounding community.

While many comments expressed caution or concern, there were also practical suggestions for design, monitoring, and accessibility, as well as references to successful models in other cities. A significant number of respondents remained neutral, and a small group shared encouraging or constructive comments about the project.

The survey identified both a need and a desire for improved public washroom access in the River District but also highlighted the importance of thoughtful planning and ongoing management. The community’s feedback suggests that a successful public washroom will require careful attention to design, maintenance, and security.

Misuse and vandalism of porta potties is straining the ability of rental companies to supply units for long-term municipal use, leading to a shift toward single-event rentals.

Porta potties have long been a practical solution for outdoor events, construction sites, and seasonal municipal needs. However, recent trends show that misuse, including vandalism, tipping, graffiti, theft, and even arson, has become a significant problem for rental companies. These incidents not only create unpleasant and unsafe conditions for users, but also result in costly repairs, downtime, and operational disruptions for providers.

Repair costs for a single damaged unit can reach hundreds or even thousands of dollars, and repeated vandalism can drain resources and reduce the number of units available for future rentals.

Owen Sound has experienced this issue firsthand. The City used to provide seasonal porta potties at various locations, but in June 2023, the city Manager had to inform Council that graphic images had been sent by the City's contractor showing the extent of misuse. Council was told that some portable units would be removed from the Visitor Centre and St. George's Park, and that the city had essentially been put on notice that the contractor might not continue providing portable washrooms for any city function. The contractor noted that remaining units would be monitored, but if other locations became hot spots for misuse, those units would also be removed. The contractor also reported having to call police to attend and pick up needles, pipes, and other items before cleaning, which added strain on City resources. Importantly, the contractor indicated that Owen Sound is not unique in facing these challenges.

Because of these difficulties, many porta potty suppliers are reconsidering how they offer their services to municipalities. Instead of providing units for extended periods – such as for parks, trails, or seasonal use – companies are increasingly confining rentals to single events or short-term contracts. This shift is driven by the need to minimize exposure to misuse and reduce the financial risks associated with long-term deployments in unsupervised or high-traffic public areas. When units are left in place for weeks or months, the likelihood of vandalism and inappropriate use rises, making it difficult for companies to guarantee cleanliness, safety, and reliable service.

The impact of this trend is felt by municipalities as it has been with Owen Sound, which may struggle to provide adequate restroom facilities for residents and visitors outside of special events. While porta potties remain a vital resource for short-term needs, the strain on suppliers means that cities must look for alternative solutions, such as investing in permanent public washrooms or exploring automated, self-cleaning options. In summary, the misuse of porta potties is reshaping the rental landscape, with companies prioritizing single-event rentals to protect their assets and maintain service quality and limiting Owen Sound's ability to provide this as a viable option for consideration in providing public washrooms.

Automated self-cleaning public washrooms offer advanced hygiene and convenience, but require careful consideration of costs, maintenance, and user experience.

Automated self-cleaning public washrooms, such as those offered by [Niu Corporation](#) and [Urban Blu](#), are designed to address many of the challenges associated with traditional public facilities. These units feature touchless operation, automated cleaning cycles, and remote monitoring, which help maintain high standards of hygiene and reduce the need for constant human intervention. For example, Niu's system uses UV light and high-pressure water jets to clean and disinfect the toilet and surrounding space after each use, while Urban Blu's restrooms employ programmable cleaning cycles for both the toilet and the floor, with antimicrobial coatings to further enhance cleanliness. In addition, they also provide in-depth data through client portals about usage such as how many times a day the washroom is used, and the duration of each use. This type of data helps build practical and efficient operating models around cleaning and restocking, etc.

Both suppliers' washrooms are built with durable, vandal-resistant materials and are designed to be accessible for people with disabilities. Features like automatic door locking during cleaning, LED status indicators, and remote-control access add layers of safety and convenience. Both companies emphasize energy and water efficiency, with systems that only activate lights, heating, and water when needed. The ability to monitor and adjust settings remotely can help facility managers respond quickly to issues and optimize maintenance schedules.

However, there are also drawbacks to consider. The initial cost of installation is significant, with some units costing upwards of \$450,000 for a single-seat facility. While automated cleaning reduces daily maintenance, these systems are complex and may require specialized servicing if mechanical or electronic components fail. There can also be challenges with user experience, such as the time required for cleaning cycles, which may lead to wait times during busy periods. Additionally, while vandal-resistant, no system is entirely immune to misuse or damage, and ongoing monitoring is still necessary.

Automated self-cleaning public washrooms present a modern four-season technological solution to public washrooms, offering improved hygiene, accessibility, and operational efficiency. Their advanced features can help address many common concerns, but cities and organizations must weigh these benefits against the high upfront costs, technical complexity, and the

need for ongoing oversight to ensure reliable service and a positive user experience.

Balancing Community Needs and Practical Realities: Staff's Approach to River District Public Washroom Options

Through this report, Staff have provided an overview of the considerations, challenges, and opportunities related to public washroom infrastructure in the River District. For example, the analysis highlights how misuse and vandalism of porta potties have made long-term rental unsustainable, and how automated self-cleaning washrooms – while offering advanced hygiene – come with significant capital costs and maintenance considerations. The information in this report is intended to help Council understand the strategic alignment, community feedback, operational realities, and financial implications associated with each option. While there are many possible approaches and each approach could include a range of sub-options, staff have narrowed the focus to four options for Council's consideration;

1. Renovation of the Farmers' Market Washroom that takes advantage of the current infrastructure and location. (Recommended)
2. The purchase of a partial self cleaning portable unit.
3. The design and build of a permanent free-standing self cleaning washroom.
4. Status Quo with no further action.

Costs and funding considerations are highlighted in the Financial Implications section of this report.

A Realistic and Responsible Path Forward, Why Renovation of the Market Washroom Outweighs Other Models

Staff used all the available information to work through each option and assess the most suitable location for a potential public washroom. Of the 87 total survey responses that included 'pin drops' indicating preferred washroom locations, the area around City Hall and the Owen Sound Farmers' Market received the highest concentration, with 52 pins dropped, making it the most identified location by the public.

Based on this strong community preference, and after evaluating infrastructure, accessibility, and cost-effectiveness, Staff recommend refurbishing and renovating the existing washroom at the Farmers' Market as

the best option. This approach balances public need, strategic location, and financial responsibility.

If Council prefers to pursue a self-cleaning washroom model, Staff recommend the small parkette south of the Farmers' Market on 8th Street East as the ideal location. This site benefits from existing water, sanitary, and electrical infrastructure either within or at the edge of the parkette, making installation more feasible. Additionally, the parkette is open and accessible, avoiding the challenges associated with secluded or out-of-sight areas, which are often linked to misuse and vandalism.

Recognizing the need to balance accessibility with operational realities, Staff propose that the washroom operate daily from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., Monday through Sunday, rather than 24/7. This applies to any model of public washroom that is discussed as an option in this report. This recommendation is informed by seasonal schedules of other city washrooms and feedback from other municipalities, which report that overnight hours tend to see the highest levels of misuse and vandalism. The annual estimated operational costs for each model presented with each option are based on these operating hours. Cleaning would be limited to twice daily and when required. Staff also note that the need for a 24/7 washroom is currently available and accessible to the population that may need this support at Safe-N-Sound. The washroom there operates 24/7, November 1 through March 31 (winter months). Safe-N-Sound are also looking at operational changes that would allow for a 24/7 washroom all year. Operational open and close times can and will be adjusted depending on use, misuse, and vandalism.

From a cost/value/need perspective, Staff cannot justify the additional \$150,000–\$370,000 required for a stand-alone self-cleaning model with advanced technology, especially when compared to the more practical renovation of the Farmers' Market washroom. Although the technology and data that would be incorporated into a self-cleaning washroom would be welcomed and valuable, in Staff's opinion, it does not pass the test of the cost/value/need aspect. Staff also reviewed the commonly referenced Portland Loo model; however, this option is not designed for four-season use and would require similar operational support as the other proposed models and would require the additional infrastructure of the self-cleaning models, therefore offering no significant advantage.

Additionally, Staff explored the idea of providing incentives or credits to local businesses to operate public washrooms. While creative, this concept

presents several challenges that render it non-viable. For example, it does not address after-hours access, which is a key component in balancing community needs. Each participating business would require additional insurance and legal agreements to cover maintenance, operations, and liability concerns. Furthermore, accessibility compliance, particularly with AODA standards, would likely fall short compared to a municipally renovated facility. Lastly, as mentioned at minimum, 26 businesses already provide washroom access to either paying or non-paying people and as noted in the communications section, Staff are proposing that they work with other River District Businesses to register on the free GOHere website/app, thus we only have knowledge of 26 based on the survey and are confident other businesses also currently offer washroom access.

Lastly, through discussions at the Harmony Centre public washroom workshop on September 4, Staff learned from OShare that they had completed washroom renovations and are willing to share insights on materials and design, which could further support Staff's option to renovate the Farmers' Market Washroom rather than procure a new asset. Staff will also look to incorporate, when appropriate and within budget, as much technology, including data gathering in the renovation as possible. Staff will also incorporate a water bottle filling station if design allows, which is an approved [capital project \(25M.5\)](#).

Financial Implications:

Public Washroom Investment: Capital Build vs. Ongoing Operations

There are two specific components when considering any type of public washroom option in the River District. Capital and Operating. From a capital perspective, the costs to provide an additional public washroom in the River District range from \$75,000 to \$450,000. The capital costs are only associated with the initial build of the project. Operating costs include the cleaning of the facility, annual maintenance, and repair and warranties.

Operations: Proposed Funding Source Supported by Municipal Accommodation Tax

The MAT Tourism Action Plan specifically lists public washrooms as an example of infrastructure that MAT funds should support as a priority for tourism infrastructure improvements, specifically recommending the use of the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) revenue for such amenities.

By funding the operating costs through the City's portion of the MAT proceeds, the City can address stakeholder-identified needs and enhance the visitor experience without increasing the municipal tax levy.

This approach ensures that the financial burden of ongoing operations is not borne by Owen Sound taxpayers but instead is covered by revenue generated from overnight stays, as permitted under the plan's infrastructure enhancement objectives (see Recommendation 11, p. 38).

Capital: Proposed Funding Source from Sufficient Reserve Balances

Capital for this project (Options 1, 2, and 3) may be fully funded from the City's Capital Reserve. The reserve maintains a contingency buffer to accommodate cost overruns and receives reimbursements when previously approved projects are cancelled or completed under budget. Based on current balances and historical reserve activity, sufficient funds are available to support this initiative without requiring additional tax levy contributions. However, if Council was to approve Option 4, (Self Cleaning Permanent Structure) a percentage of the proposed funding would also be recommended from the City's Capital Reserve. Option 4 would take significantly more time to analyze for finding appropriate funds and timing and staff recommend that this Option come forward with capital budget in 2026 so that it can be funded and scheduled in the context of the rest of the capital plan.

Option 1: Renovate Owen Sound Farmers' Market Washroom: Capital Cost \$75,000. Operating Costs: \$12,000 to \$15,000 (Annually)

Option 2: Mobile Washroom Unit – Partial Self-Cleaning: Capital Cost: \$105,000. Operating Costs: \$25,000 to \$30,000 (Annually). Includes warranty costs.

Option 3: Free Standing Permanent Self-Cleaning Washroom. Capital Cost \$225,000 to \$450,000. Operating Costs: \$40,000. (Annually). Includes warranty costs.

Option 4: Status Quo with no further actions and Farmers' Market Washroom continuing to operate during Market hours only.

Communication Strategy:

As part of the communication plan, staff will work to promote the GOHere Washroom Access Program with River District Businesses and encourage businesses to register, making it easier for residents and visitors to locate accessible facilities. While the public survey identified 26 businesses that allow public washroom access (some for any person's use and others for paying customers), it is certain that additional businesses also provide this service, and by promoting the GOHere program staff will seek to have those locations registered. To further support public awareness of public washrooms, staff will prepare a media advisory and collaborate with the River District to promote the program using River District, Tourism, and City social media channels. Additionally, the city currently maintains a webpage listing of public washrooms at City facilities in and outside the River District along with operating hours, available at the following [link](#).

Consultation:

Sources noted in the report, stakeholder meetings, manufacturers, River District Washroom Survey and City Staff.

Attachments:

1. City of Owen Sound River District – Public Washroom Survey
2. Walking Distance to Current Washrooms

Recommended by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Tim Simmonds, City Manager at tsimmonds@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 ext. 1210.

City of Owen Sound River District – Public Washroom Survey

SURVEY RESPONSE REPORT

23 June 2022 - 16 October 2025

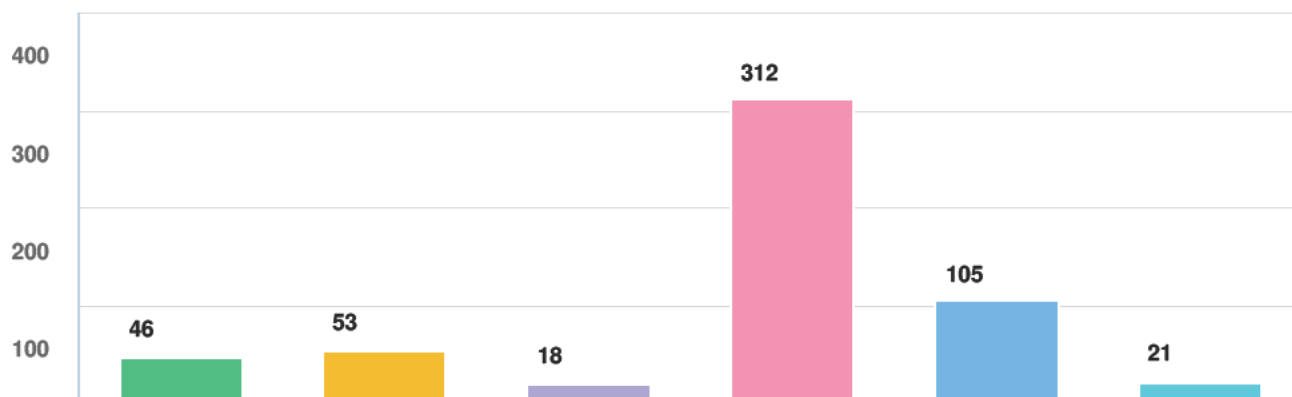
PROJECT NAME:

River District Public Washrooms



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1 | What is your connection to the River District? (Choose the one answer that best/most applies).

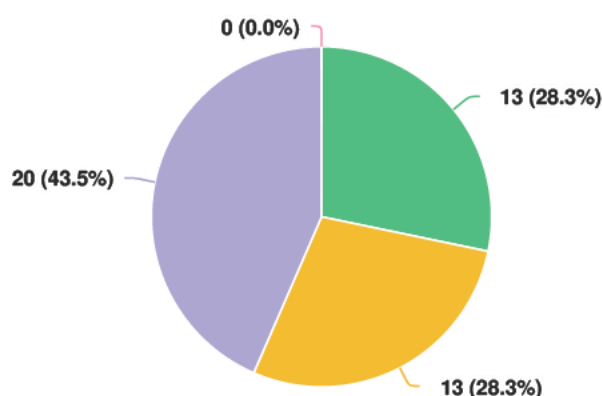


Question options

- River District Business Owner/Operator
- River District Resident
- River District Property Owner
- City of Owen Sound Resident (outside of River District)
- Grey County Resident (living outside of Owen Sound)
- Visitor (living outside of Grey County)

Mandatory Question (555 response(s))
Question type: Checkbox Question

Q2 | As a business owner/operator in the River District, do you have a washroom available for public use during business hours?

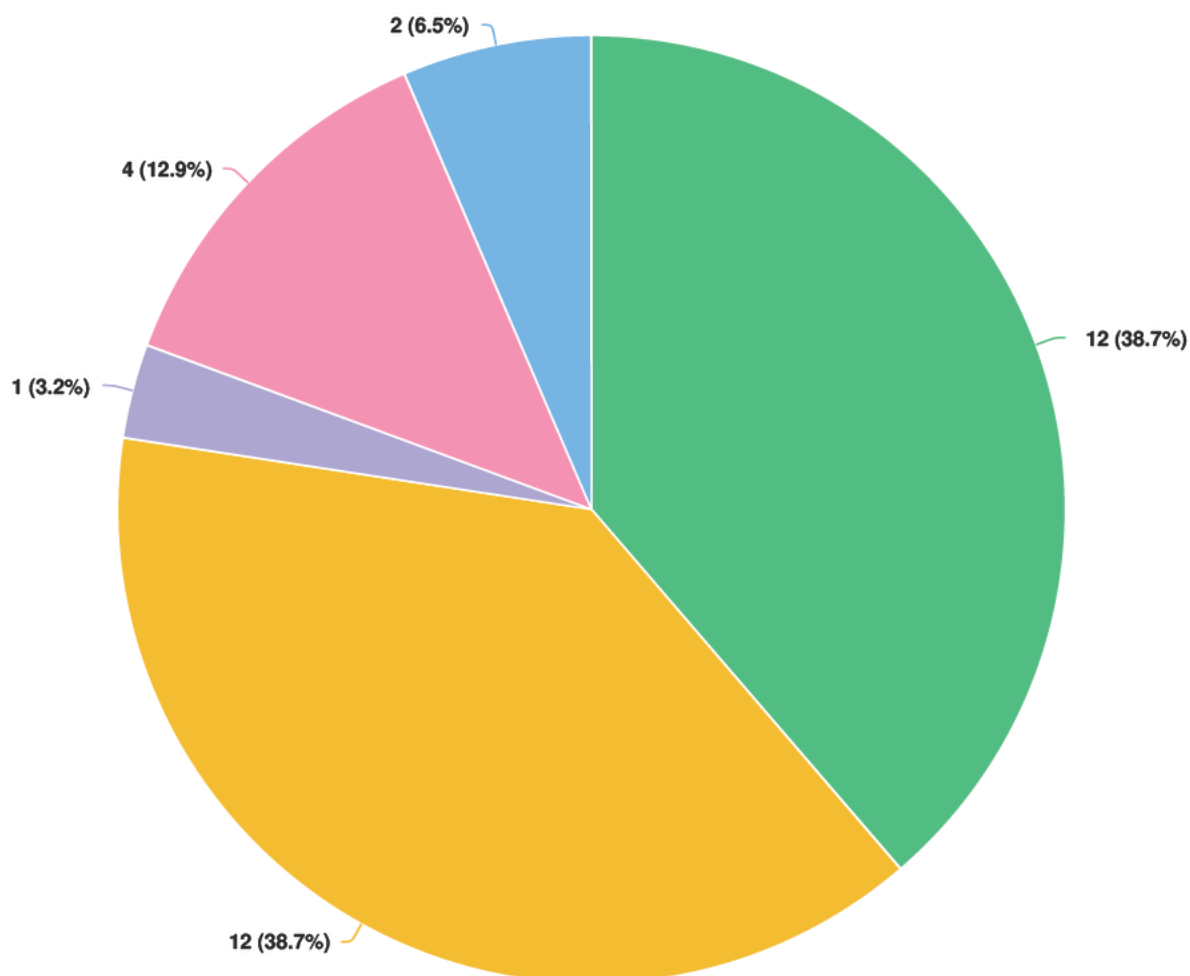


Question options

- Yes, available to anyone who asks
- Yes, but only for paying customers
- No, not available to the public
- We do not have a washroom on-site

Mandatory Question (46 response(s))
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q3 | If you offer public washroom access in your business, how often is it used by non-customers?



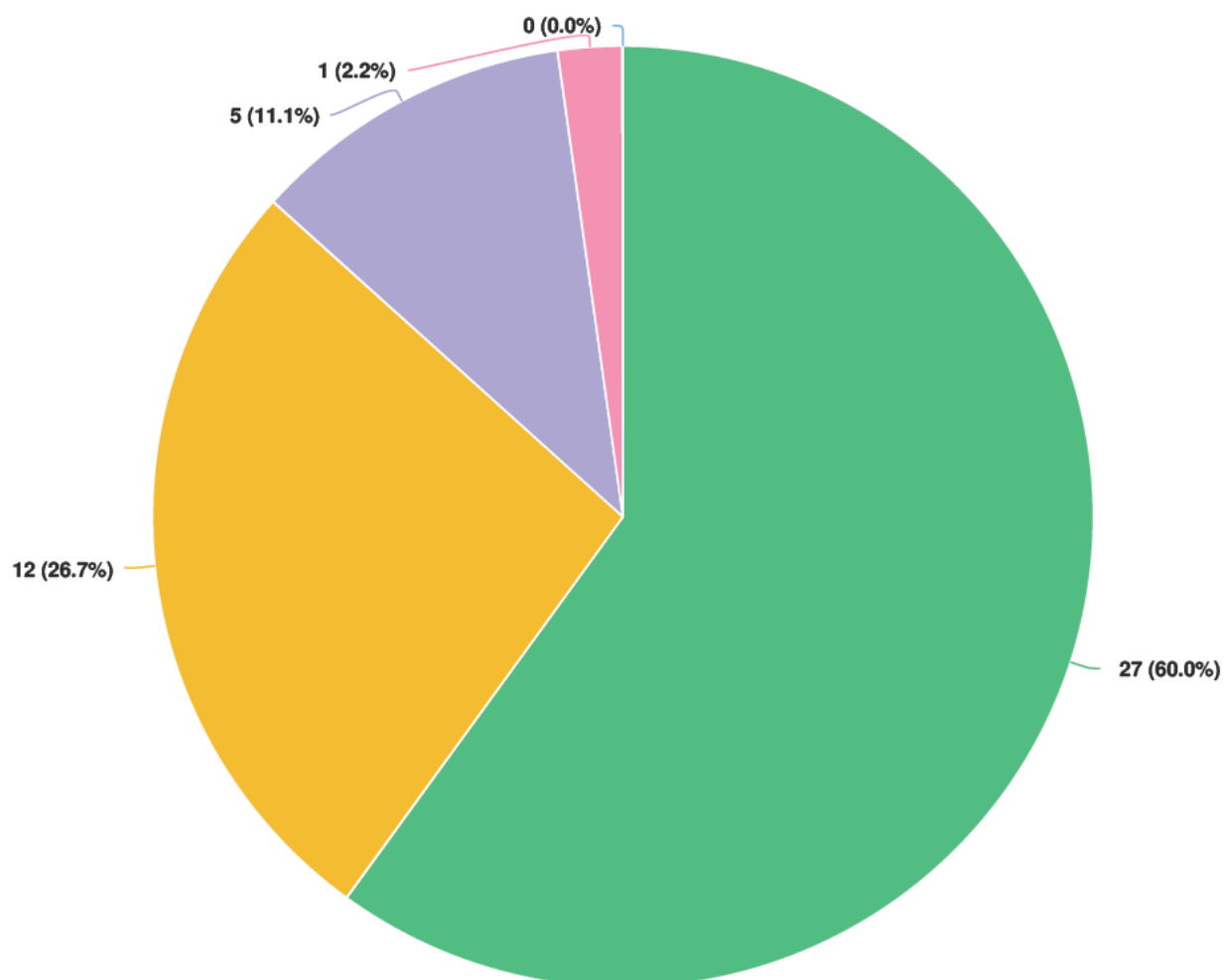
Question options

1 - Never 2 - Rarely 3 - Sometimes 4 - Often 5 - Daily

Optional question (31 response(s), 524 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q4 | How willing would you be to continue to expand public access to your washroom if supported by the City (e.g. signage, cleaning support, recognition, etc.)?



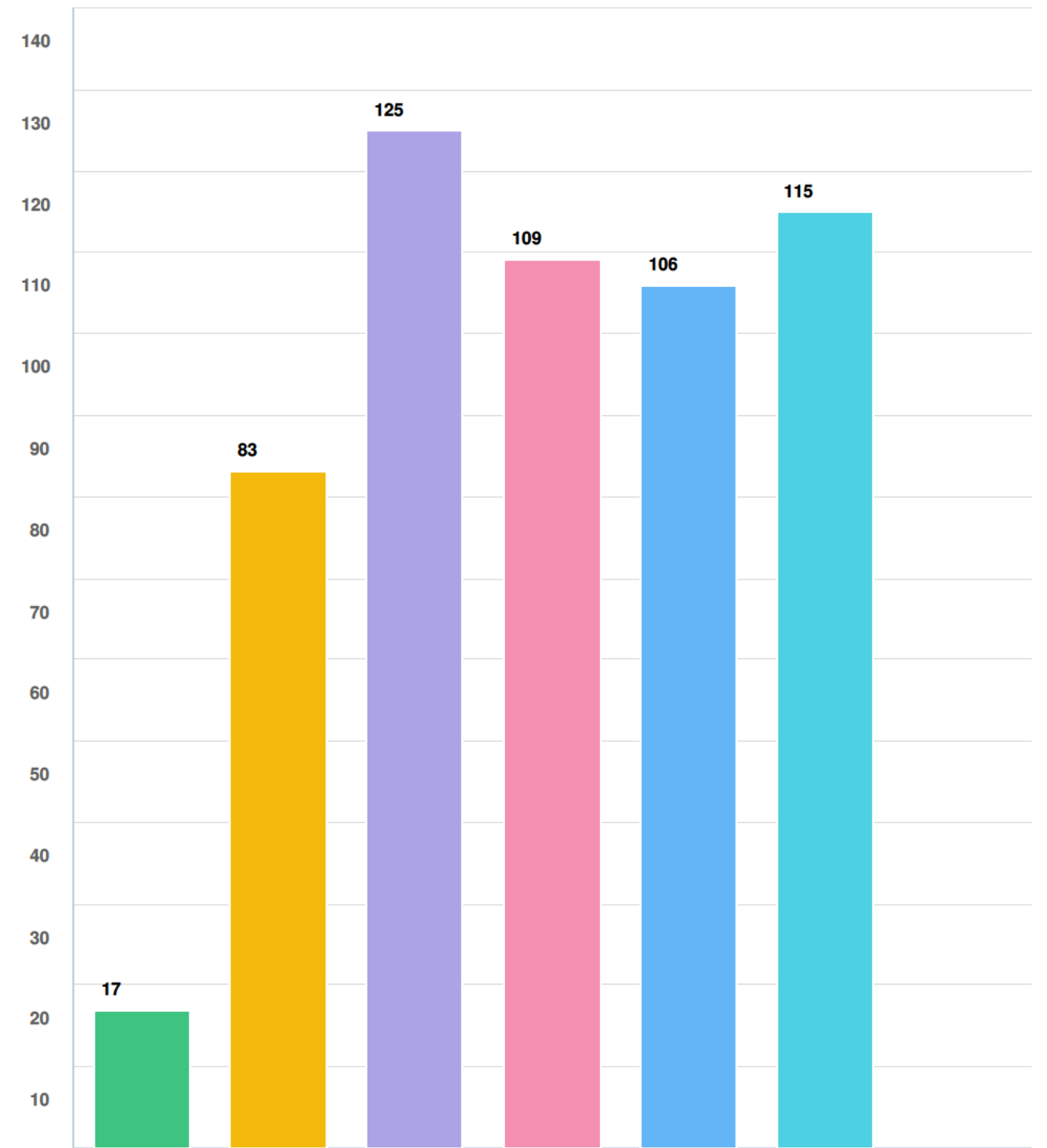
Question options

1 - Not at all 2 - Not likely 3 - Somewhat 4 - Quite willing 5 - Absolutely

Optional question (45 response(s), 510 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q5 What is your age group?

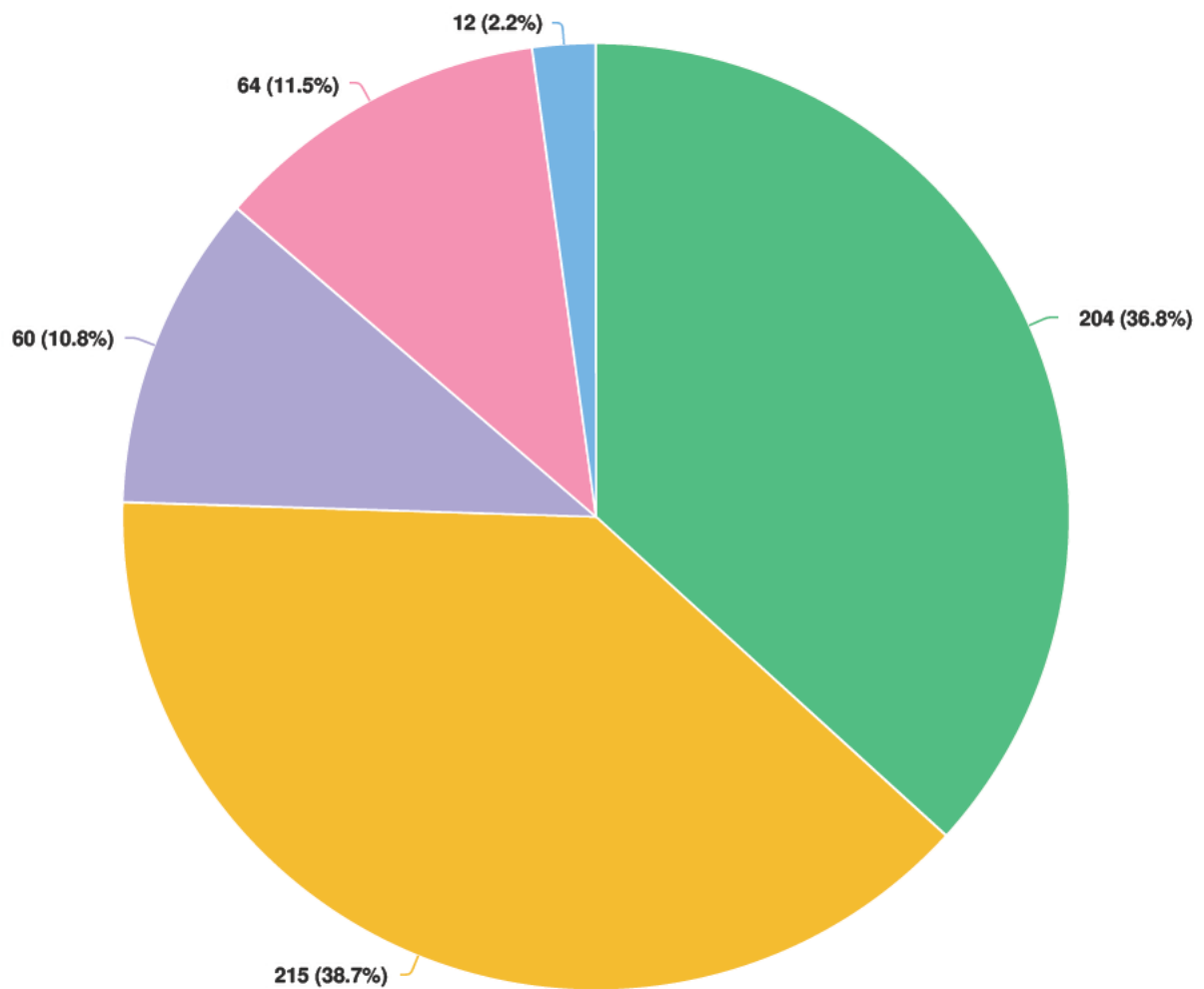


Question options

18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+ Under 18

Mandatory Question (555 response(s))
Question type: Checkbox Question

Q6 How often do you visit/spend time in the River District (on average)?



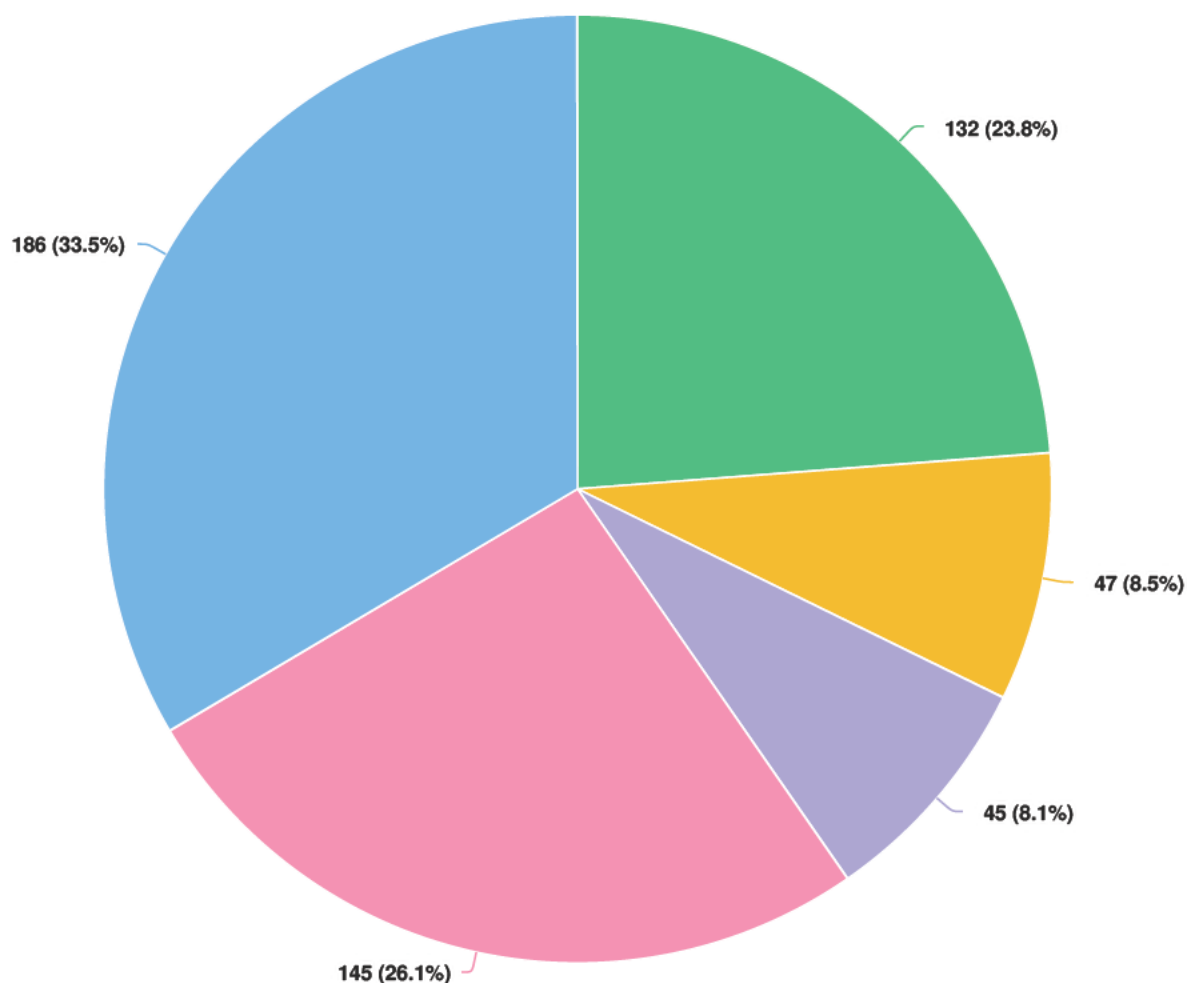
Question options

● Daily ● Weekly ● Monthly ● A few times a year ● Never

Optional question (555 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q7 | Please rate how important is it to you to have a standalone public washroom in the River District?

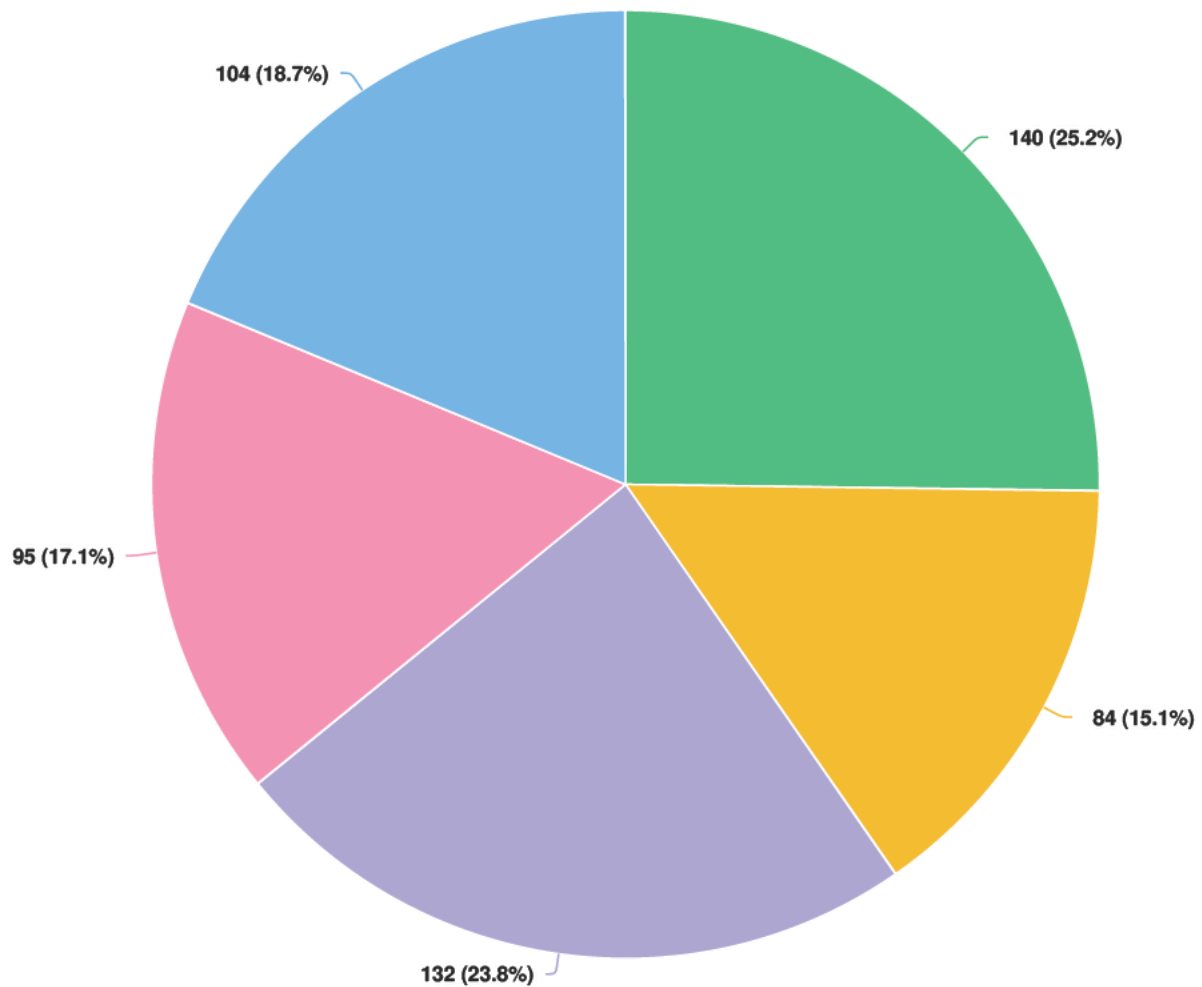


Question options

- 1 - Not important to me at all 2 - Not really important 3 - I don't care either way 4 - Important to me
5 - Very important to me

Mandatory Question (555 response(s))
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q8 | Please rate how often you find yourself or others needing a standalone public washroom in the River District?



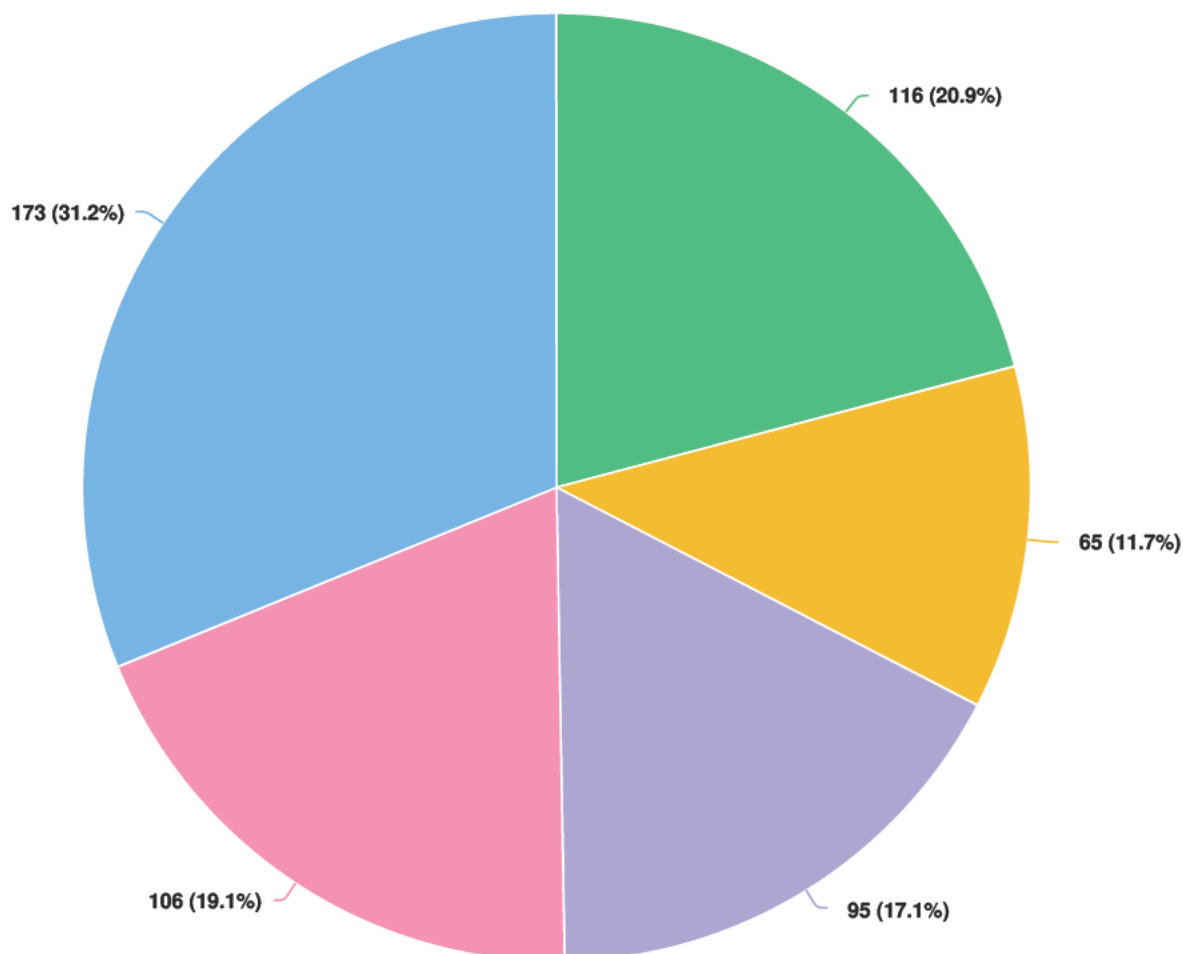
Question options

1 - Never 2 - Not often 3 - Sometimes 4 - Often 5 - Frequently

Mandatory Question (555 response(s))

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q9 | Please rate how you believe the lack of a standalone public washroom negatively affects the River District?



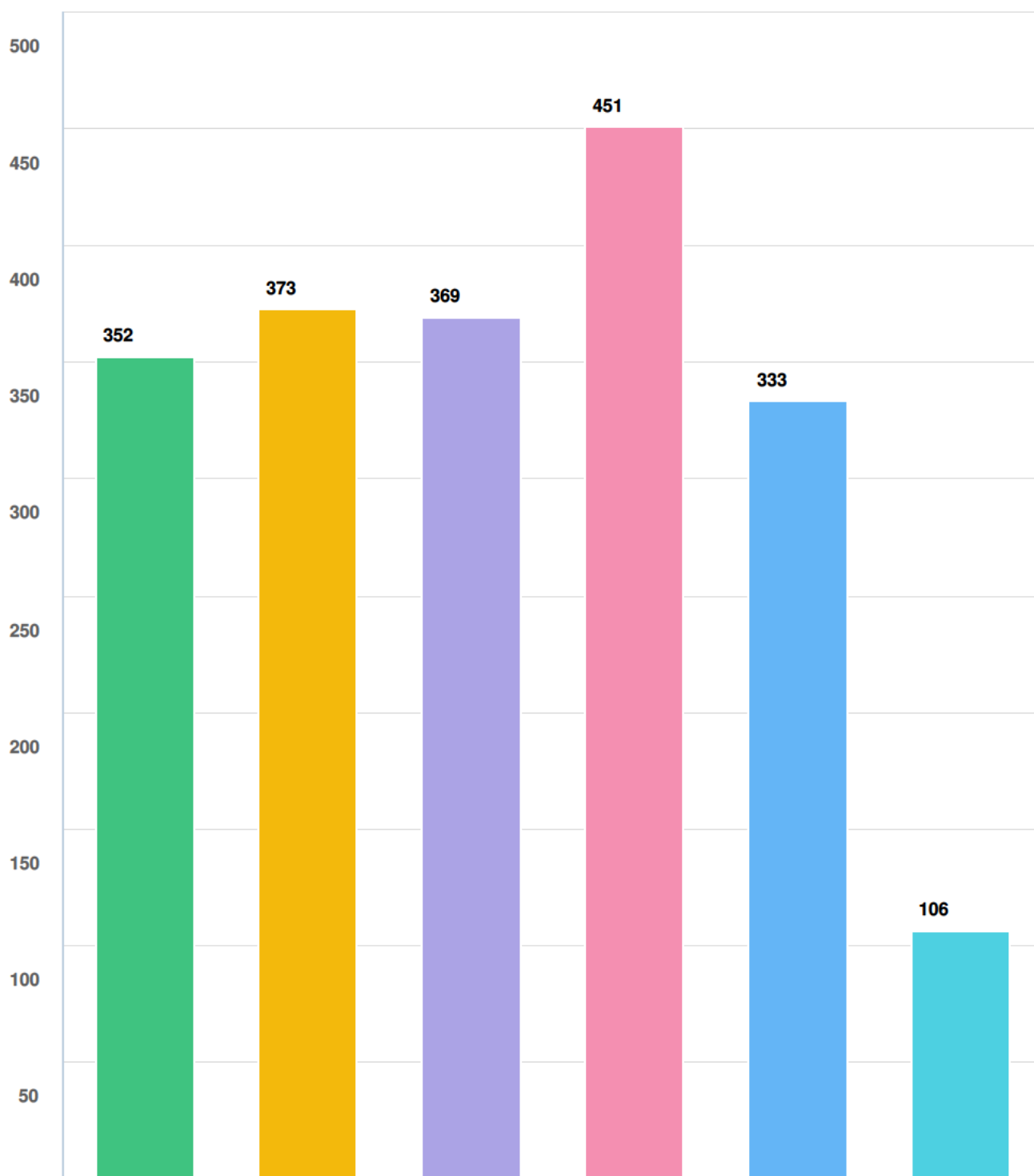
Question options

1 - Not at all 2 - Not really 3 - Somewhat 4 - A lot 5 - Very much so

Mandatory Question (555 response(s))

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q10 What concerns, if any, would you potentially have with a standalone washroom in the River District? Check all that apply.



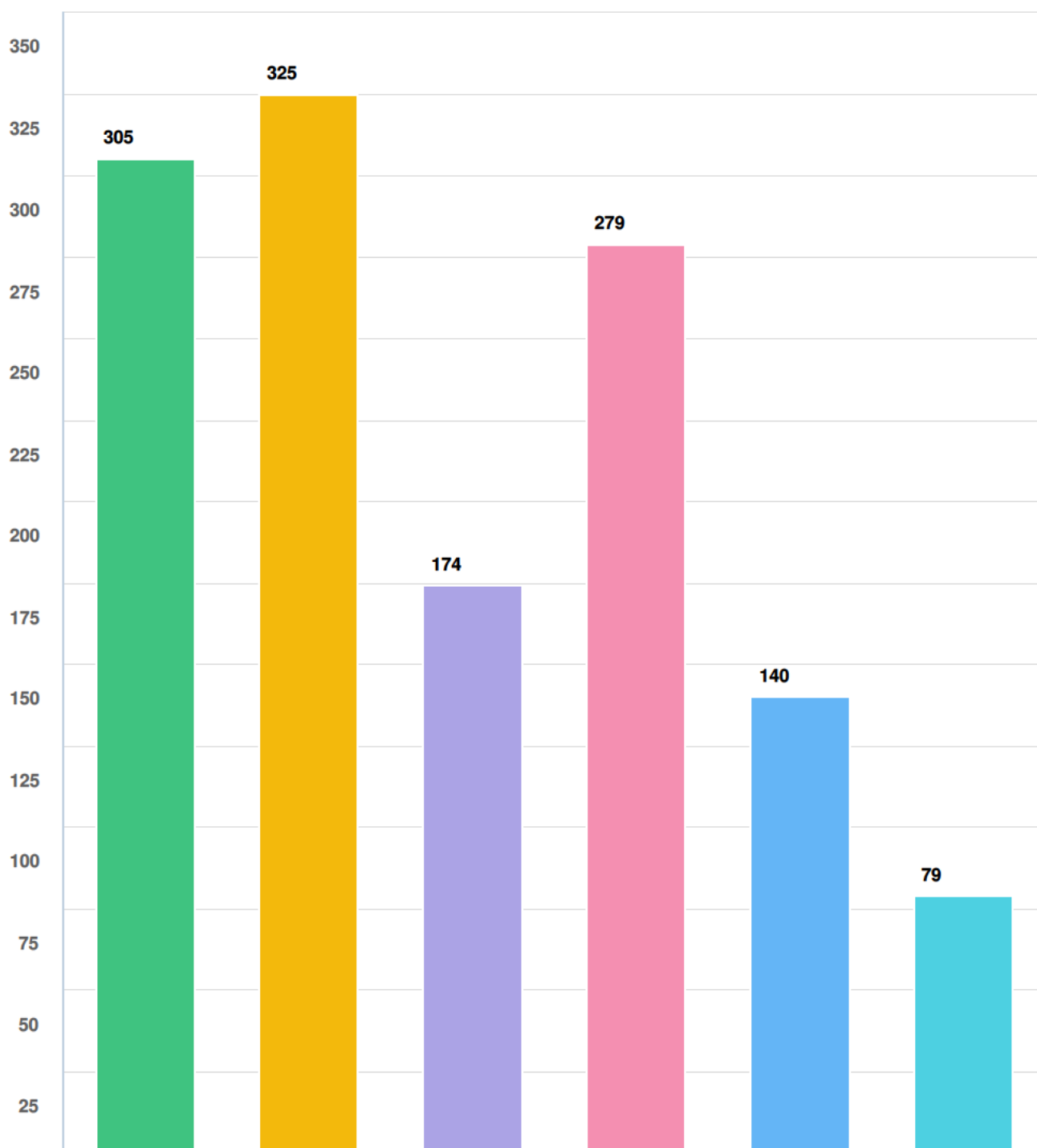
Question options

● Safety
 ● Misuse of space
 ● Vandalism
 ● Cleanliness
 ● Maintenance
 ● Other (please specify)

Mandatory Question (555 response(s))

Question type: Checkbox Question

Q11 | What benefits do you think a standalone public washroom would bring to the River District? Check all that apply.



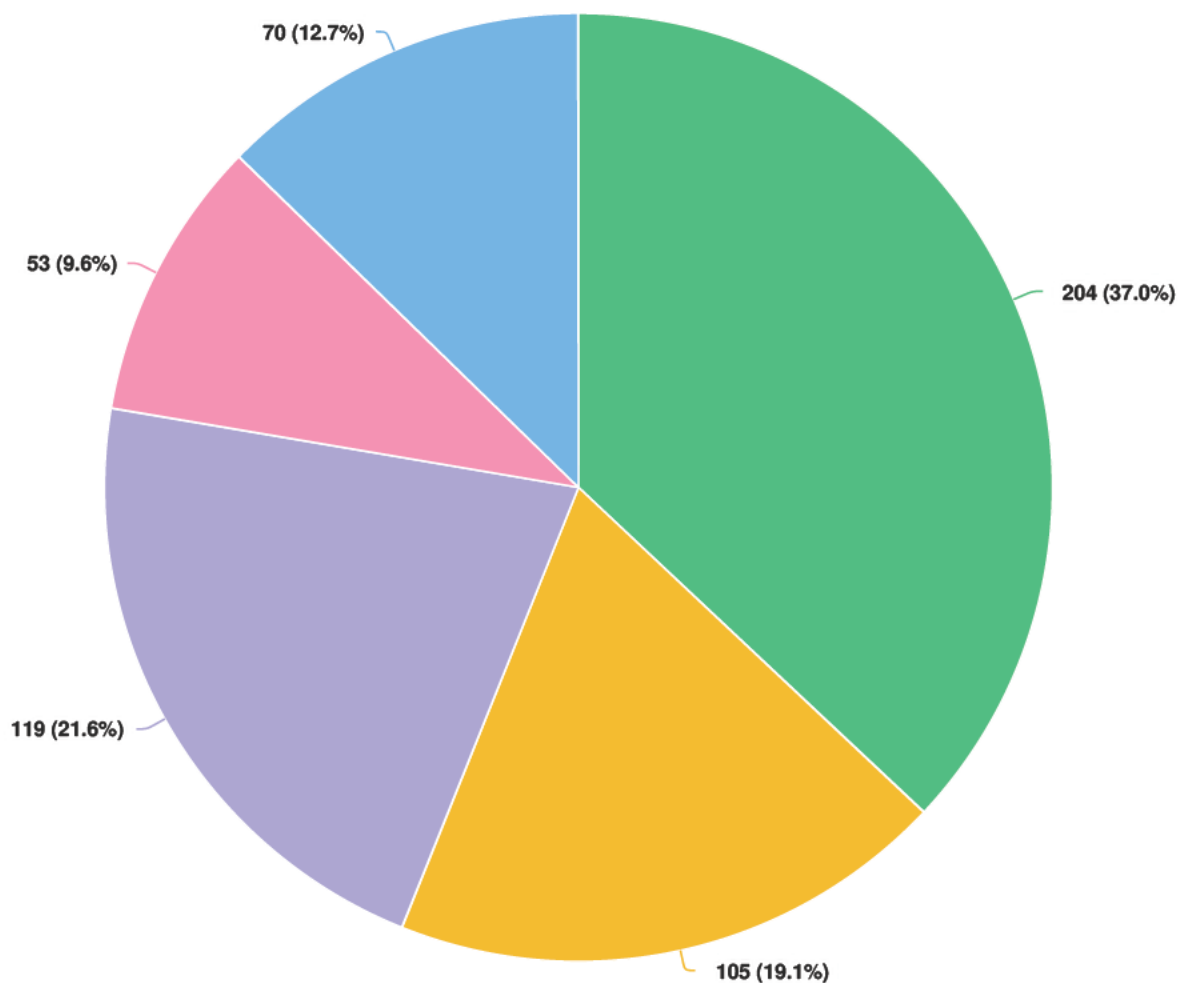
Question options

- Improved visitor experience
- Support for events and festivals
- Increased foot traffic for businesses
- More inclusive and accessible public space
- No significant benefit
- Other (please specify)

Mandatory Question (555 response(s))

Question type: Checkbox Question

Q12 | Would a standalone public washroom make you more likely to visit the River District more often?



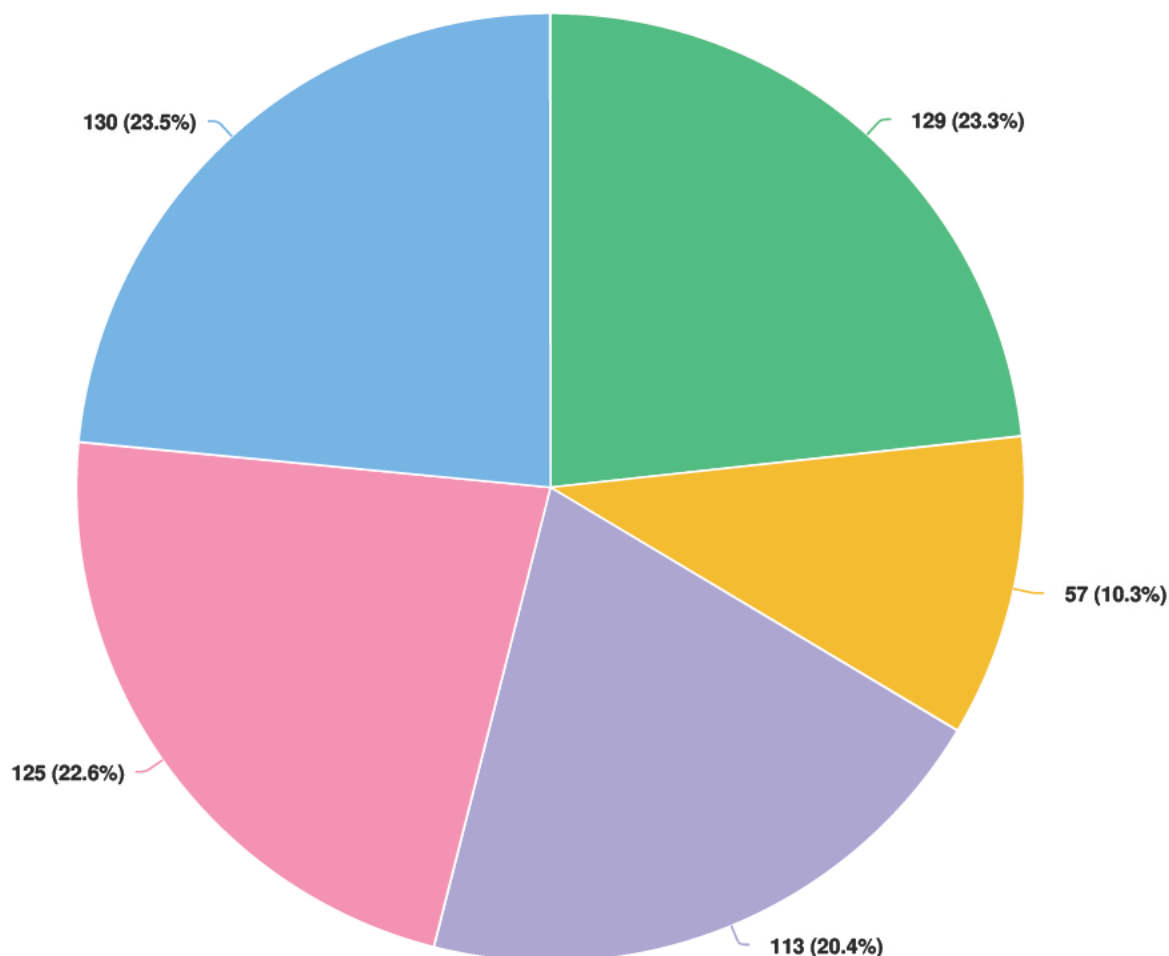
Question options

1 - Not at all 2 - Not really 3 - Somewhat 4 - A lot 5 - Very much so

Optional question (551 response(s), 4 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q13 | Please rate how you believe a standalone public washroom would make the River District more attractive to shoppers and tourists?



Question options

1 - Not at all 2 - Not really 3 - Somewhat 4 - A lot 5 - Very much so

Optional question (554 response(s), 1 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q14 | What concerns or challenges do you foresee with adding a public standalone washroom in the River District?

Anonymous

10/07/2025 12:15 PM

That it will become a gathering area for people who are living outside and that there will be issues like were evident around the bandshell and this type of use will discourage use by others

Anonymous

10/07/2025 12:57 PM

I would be nervous that my kids would use the washroom and it wouldn't be clean or safe. I had a negative experience when the washroom at the farmers market was open to the public and my child entered it.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 01:21 PM

The city using it to further stigmatize homeless individuals by blaming them if issues arise

Anonymous

10/07/2025 01:33 PM

Who hangs out in there and how to monitor that without is costing a fortune. But this shouldn't deter the building of a washroom for all.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 01:41 PM

The unhoused will abuse them and you will be in the same situation you are in now. No one wants to go to the river district

Anonymous

10/07/2025 01:45 PM

public perception that adding a public washroom would be unsafe to use.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 01:46 PM

Vandalism, cleanliness, inappropriate use, cost of installing and cleaning

Anonymous

10/07/2025 01:47 PM

Where do you put it?

Anonymous

10/07/2025 01:48 PM

Stigma by community members around the uses for this facility, all members of our community need access to washroom spaces regardless of their housing status or community stature.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 01:50 PM

The design of this facility must take into consideration the current climate of homelessness and addiction that we are seeing in the downtown. Experience and data from other municipalities which have

purchased such facilities point to a need for a product that prevents the space from becoming a place used for illicit and dangerous activities. The current models of "self-cleaning" public washrooms do little to discourage such activities. A product like the "Portland Loo" has a proven track record of providing the amenities required while discouraging the negative activities that can be associated with public washrooms.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 01:51 PM

As above - misuse by our population of homeless and marginalized peoples

Anonymous

10/07/2025 01:53 PM

There was a lotta potty at St. George's but is was being abused by drug addicts

Anonymous

10/07/2025 01:55 PM

More street people congregating

Anonymous

10/07/2025 01:59 PM

Given the current challenges in the area involving high rates of homelessness and substance use, there is a huge risk of vandalism, safety issues, and misuse, which would make the facility unsafe and unwelcoming for the general public.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:02 PM

I think that these bathrooms will be very misused by the downtown residents. Unless you have a security guard monitoring the washrooms at all times I think that these washrooms will become a place where homeless hangout and drug use will happen.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:03 PM

Cleaning is part if the cost, not a thing to complain about

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:03 PM

Place for the homeless to make camp

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:04 PM

Maintaining cleanliness - regular cleaning schedule or self cleaning spaces could help

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:06 PM

Drug use, overdosing, people camping out/moving into shelter. It's happened already downtown.

Anonymous

I get the idea that a washroom that is readily available to residents

10/07/2025 02:06 PM

would be a benefit. But the drug use using needles has risen and those individuals unfortunately don't care for others for the most part. They clean their dirty needles which can be problematic for so many staying safe. We don't need bathrooms downtown. We need a safe consumption site. All funds should go towards that. You want to make the river district better, helped the unhoused and people suffering from substance use disorder.slapping kn a bandaid won't fix the infection...start looking at the bigger picture.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:08 PM

I could foresee an inappropriately resourced washroom being something that people point to as enabling undesirable behaviour. It is critical that if the city puts in a washroom, they set it up for success.



10/07/2025 04:45 PM

Maintenance has to be a priority

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:11 PM

Cost to the city. Safety and cleanliness of space being maintained

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:11 PM

I think this would be of benefit to vulnerable community members downtown but not really necessary for shoppers and visitors.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:12 PM

Any facilities downtown will serve visitors, shoppers and our unhoused neighbours. Washrooms are necessary for all of these groups, and all of them should be entitled and encouraged to use them. The reality is that those in desperate situations are more likely to use these facilities in ways that are not intended. The city needs to plan for all of these groups' needs with thoughtful design and consistent maintenance.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:13 PM

Keeping them clean and maintained. And you don't want anyone setting up in there. So they'll have to be patrolled.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:13 PM

Street people using it for their own uses and making it unsafe for the shoppers and tourists you're trying to attract.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:14 PM

I lived in Europe for 4 years where stand alone washrooms are very common. However, they need to be constantly cleaned and checked for vandalism

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:15 PM

I thought city hall had a washroom? Did they remove it? Why? Every city needs public toilets. It is simply a must for a city. Of course there are challenges in keeping it clean but tourists and locals need an accessible toilet. It was the best spot - part of city hall.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:15 PM

Daily maintenance should be built into the budget with the expectation that the space will probably be abused.

[REDACTED]

10/07/2025 02:18 PM

Overemphasis of the challenges that are bound to occur

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:19 PM

As a resident that lives just beyond the river district, I have great concerns that a standalone washroom would be misused by the significant and continually increasing population of migrant drug addicts that litter the streets and openly consume drugs near the abandoned properties within the harbour, river district, mill dam, 2nd Ave W areas

[REDACTED]

10/07/2025 02:21 PM

That's two questions asked about the potential downside (7 and 11).

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:21 PM

This space would inevitably be misused, vandalized, etc., which will require city staff and police time to manage and address. While there may be some positive aspects to a washroom, I don't feel that the costs associated with building and ongoing maintenance are a good trade off in our current context.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:22 PM

It will be a detriment to the city. The washrooms will quickly get taken over by the homeless and drug addicted and will attract even more vagrants to the river district.

[REDACTED]

10/07/2025 04:45 PM

Vandalism and cleanliness.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:26 PM

Drug use inside the washroom space. People sleeping inside them

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:29 PM

No concerns with the washroom itself. I hope that it would be regularly cleaned and monitored.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:30 PM

Who would clean up the needles left behind? The city already can't keep up on the mess

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:32 PM

doing drugs in the washroom since people are already doing it in public.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:40 PM

As mentioned above.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:42 PM

Balance between ensuring safety overnight and ensuring access for individuals who may need to use the facility overnight. The city should look into whether there are novel interventions that can help enable overnight access while promoting safety, I.e ensuring that people do not overdose behind locked doors where aid cannot be administered.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:42 PM

Cleanliness and misuse

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:47 PM

Many homeless people in the river district, specifically around the library and farmers market. I have concerns that they may utilize this space inappropriately and make others uncomfortable using this space for all of the above reasons.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:47 PM

Noted in question 7



10/07/2025 04:45 PM

I have no concerns.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:55 PM

We have a major homeless and drug use issue in this town there are businesses that allow you to use their rest rooms when shopping there is a grocery store and circle k as well as Tim Hortons to mention a few it's not our issue that people have been banned from these places to misuse a washroom that's stand alone

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:59 PM

Same answer as #7. I think without a good plan, it will be problematic and cost-prohibitive, which is probably why they were removed.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:05 PM

Misuse and cleanliness are my biggest concerns. And as a resident of the RD who often feels unsafe and has had to deal with drug use,

theft and waste in my neighbourhood my concern is providing another “private” opportunity for some will just make the problems greater.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:05 PM

As above

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:05 PM

It will be used only for the drug addicts and no people will feel it is safe or clean enough to use. Parents will fear fentanyl particles will cause overdoses in their children should they accidentally touch any.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:06 PM

I live on the edge of the district but am concerned that there is only one 24 hr facility in the area and it is in a location which some may feel intimidated using . I expect the self cleaning bathroom is cost prohibitive but a time limited location , such as that , would help provide basic human dignity and discourage its use for other activities .

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:10 PM

Cleanliness

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:15 PM

Cleanliness, Maintenance and monitoring of the washroom.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:26 PM

Ensuring it's clean and well maintained.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:30 PM

Drug use, public expense and vandalism

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:31 PM

Misuse, vandalism, safety.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:33 PM

Maintenance and cleanliness by city staff.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:34 PM

The washrooms will definitely be used by our homeless population as well as regular residents and visitors. Ensuring that the washrooms are only used for their intended purpose will be challenging. Keeping them clean and drug paraphernalia clear is essential.



Maintenance and frequent cleaning to keep it germ and odor free and

10/07/2025 04:45 PM

pleasant for all to use (including children and infants)

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:56 PM

Misuse of the facility if not monitored

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:57 PM

There would probably be used drug needles, and feces all over the place. normal people like myself wouldn't use it

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:58 PM

Adding, literally, to the reputation of The River District being a shit-hole.



10/07/2025 04:45 PM

Keeping the place clean and safe could be a challenge

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:59 PM

City staff needs to step up and deal with cleanliness and maintenance

Anonymous

10/07/2025 04:09 PM

That is not well maintained or cleaned daily and therefore not a welcoming space to use

Anonymous

10/07/2025 04:29 PM

Safety, Maintenance

Anonymous

10/07/2025 04:31 PM

Safety & cleanliness would be an issue. Without 24/7 monitoring it would attract the homeless and drug users. Would not be a safe space.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 04:42 PM

It would have to be monitored regularly for vandalism and misuse, but seems like a wonderful idea to take pressure off of local businesses.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 04:51 PM

Nimby's complaining about taxes and poor people

Anonymous

10/07/2025 04:56 PM

Misuse

Anonymous

10/07/2025 05:10 PM

Another huge bill to make it more attractive to be a junkie in Owen Sound

Anonymous

10/07/2025 05:21 PM

Maintained

Anonymous

10/07/2025 05:29 PM

Drugs, homeless. Fix that

Anonymous

10/07/2025 05:30 PM

The homeless camping out in it



10/07/2025 07:45 PM

Drug use and homelessness in space.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 05:35 PM

Vandalism and cleanliness

Anonymous

10/07/2025 05:47 PM

Homeless people doing drugs and sleeping in the bathroom

Anonymous

10/07/2025 05:47 PM

Homeless and addicts (maybe we should open an actual shelter)

Anonymous

10/07/2025 05:53 PM

OS history of public maintenance is not good in my opinion, e.g. normal wear & tear on heritage black fencing and lampposts is not attended to, 2nd Ave trees are allowed to die, trash often overflowing. There seems to be a culture of "install it once and then leave it". I am assuming that the same attitude will prevail here

Anonymous

10/07/2025 05:53 PM

I believe the stand alone washrooms would just be a mess that most visitors won't want to use . I just watched a video how druggies clean used needles by sticking them into roles of Tiolet paper. What poor person would have to clean up the washrooms. My son had to clean zehrs washrooms when he worked as a cart boy and it was disgusting people would smear feces all over the walls and a 15 yr old would have to clean up their mess

Anonymous

10/07/2025 05:55 PM

Cost is high on the list of concerns. Not just to build, but to maintain.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 05:55 PM

Vandalism

Anonymous

10/07/2025 05:56 PM

Location and accessibility

Anonymous

10/07/2025 06:01 PM

City ensuring the cleanliness and safety.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 06:01 PM

Keeping them clean and safe. Not becoming a shelter for the homeless, or a place to do drugs.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 06:04 PM

Vandalism and misuse

[REDACTED]

10/07/2025 06:08 PM

Nothing out of the ordinary - every city or destination should have a public washroom. Much smaller communities have them and just part of doing business.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 06:09 PM

People using it for other things than a washroom, and drug paraphernalia being left behind .

Anonymous

10/07/2025 06:13 PM

Safety and vandalism

Anonymous

10/07/2025 06:17 PM

There is a model called Portlandloo. It looks really good and would address some of the concerns.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 06:17 PM

Drug use.

[REDACTED]

10/07/2025 07:45 PM

Cleanliness. Frequent maintenance would be necessary

Anonymous

10/07/2025 06:33 PM

Crack heads and meth addicts using it for free rent

Anonymous

10/07/2025 06:41 PM

Deciding on ideal location, maintenance and cleaning.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 06:55 PM

There are a lot of homeless people who will probably take advantage a public washroom and hopefully not set up camps close by.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 07:10 PM

The city needs to clean it twice daily

Anonymous

10/07/2025 07:24 PM

It will be a challenge to maintain but it is essential for the homeless population in the area.

[REDACTED]

10/07/2025 10:45 PM

Cleanliness (would have to be self-cleaning or at least very easy and regular cleaning) Squatters who lock themselves in Drug use inside Vandalism

[REDACTED]

10/07/2025 10:45 PM

Should be temperature controlled for year round use.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 07:33 PM

The library is a public space and the washrooms are available to use. If the library is closed, visitors can support our local stores and businesses and use their washrooms. If someone is downtown at night after the stores close, they will be going to a local business. Safety is a huge factor and as a female, I would not be going to a standalone washroom.

[REDACTED]

10/07/2025 10:45 PM

Misuse, vandalism, safety

Anonymous

10/07/2025 07:51 PM

I would want the washrooms monitored so they are safe and clean.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 07:51 PM

The downtown homeless situation

Anonymous

10/07/2025 07:57 PM

The concerns and challenges are pretty obvious - if they weren't, the Farmers Market washroom would be open for public use on a regular basis, right? The solution here isn't to find a washroom that will service the everyday visitor to the River District - respectfully, most normal functioning human beings know where to find the washrooms or if they ARE shopping, are permitted to use a washroom at a place of business they are visiting. I regularly shop downtown with my kids. In the last month we have used a washroom at Becker Shoes and Hometown Sports because the kids needed to. We clearly don't pose a threat and clearly weren't going to do drugs in their bathroom - or leave it a mess. This isn't a solution for the everyday Joe or visitor, it is a solution for the homeless, because they aren't permitted to use bathrooms in privately owned businesses because that privilege has

been abused. It will happen because there is clear political pressure for it to happen. Nothing more, nothing less.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 08:02 PM

Cleanliness and drug users using it for illegal purposes or as a warming center



10/07/2025 10:45 PM

This is insane. Give the people a washroom. They have self-cleaning ones now and our homeless problem isn't going away.



10/07/2025 10:45 PM

None

Anonymous

10/07/2025 08:11 PM

maintaining the washroom - long weekends, public holidays are often busy. City garbage cans are often full on busy weekends.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 08:18 PM

I am concerned that access for disabled downtown patrons wouldn't be fully considered. I am concerned that "concerned citizens" would want restrictions placed on the basic needs of people in the downtown.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 08:48 PM

Maintenance and cleaning

Anonymous

10/07/2025 08:55 PM

Ensuring the facility is accessible 24/7 and self cleaning.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 08:57 PM

Misuse- becomes a shelter or hangout. If you're already uncomfortable going downtown, the washroom isn't going to help.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 09:03 PM

Safety, vandalism, drug stuff from users ,displaced using it for drug use etc.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 09:15 PM

Ensuring that toilet paper is filled, cleaned on a regular basis, that there is a proper lock.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 10:24 PM

More money being "wasted" on something our town does not need. People who live in town can use their toilet before going out. If you are visiting town you can use washrooms at local businesses your visiting. City hall has public washrooms and they are right down town.

Nothing stops bad people from misusing the space and nothing guarantees it Tobe safe for our children.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 03:42 AM

With the homeless and drug situation, I'd worry the bathrooms would be misused

Anonymous

10/08/2025 04:21 AM

Cleanliness

Anonymous

10/08/2025 04:39 AM

maintenance needs to be funded, we pay people to water flowers, surely we can pay people to maintain washrooms.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 05:14 AM

Misuse

Anonymous

10/08/2025 05:24 AM

Spot for drug use.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 05:26 AM

Cleanliness and safety from homeless

Anonymous

10/08/2025 05:43 AM

"Challenges" and "concerns" that pretty much every other municipality figured out decades ago??!! Give me a break! Shouldn't even be a discussion

Anonymous

10/08/2025 05:45 AM

Drug use inside of the washrooms. Uncleanliness of facilities as most will not clean up after themselves. The cost to taxpayers that are all really way too high! Unhoused people sleeping in them. Vandalism and just unsafe in general if they are stand alone buildings that can not be monitored 24/7

Anonymous

10/08/2025 05:59 AM

the cleanliness would be a concern

[REDACTED]

10/08/2025 07:45 AM

Obviously vandalism and misuse is a concern. Pay a city worker to clean them. It's not complicated.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 06:14 AM

Needles

Anonymous

10/08/2025 06:15 AM

Drug use shelter, a washroom for the homeless keeping them glued to the downtown area. However they would maybe use the sidewalk less to do their business

Anonymous

10/08/2025 06:19 AM

Drug use.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 06:22 AM

Our taxpayer dollars will have to be justified because there is so much negativity around the unhoused and drug addicted in our city core. Staffing for cleanliness and safety is vital but there will be those who cannot see it. Pressure must be taken off the library and the art gallery to provide these services, Businesses and shoppers need these services first and foremost.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 06:26 AM

The current economic climate and drug dependency epidemic have created unsavory conditions in many communities. Unfortunately, despite the wonderful shops and the efforts of both Municipal staff, OSPS, small business owners and community members, several social services (Safe n' Sound, O Share, CMHA, emergency housing etc.) have been centralized in the River District; this concentration of marginalized individuals has resulted in a tangible increase in (often blatant) mischief activity, vandalism and acts of indecency making River District patrons increasingly uncomfortable. A standalone washroom would have to be heavily monitored (by already overburdened services) around the clock to remain a safe facility (for all) vs. a safe use space (for a minority) that ultimately puts unsuspecting citizens at risk of uninvited traumas. City Hall used to have washrooms accessible from the street vs. accessible only during business hours from inside the building, influenced by concerns about illicit drug use in public building spaces at the time. While I am cognizant of public health/human dignity concerns being relevant considerations, a standalone washroom in the River District will only enable unpalatable behaviours. IF this facility moves forward, whether or not the River District is the most appropriate location for it needs to be given serious consideration.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 06:34 AM

There are concerns and challenges with the status quo (no washrooms apart from the library and private businesses). So whatever maintenance and safety issues a public standalone washroom will bring, the city needs to deal with them. If the public washroom must be locked at night, I suggest a separate mobile toilet (such as used for construction work) be placed beside the public washroom for use by homeless people. This mobile toilet could be swapped out for another one every month or so.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:01 AM

Cost and maintenance of the facility

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:12 AM

The city would need dedication to keep it clean and accessible and safe for all users and not solely the transient population.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:12 AM

It has TROUBLE WRITTEN ALL OVER IT!!! I HAVE GRAVE CONCERN ABOUT PUBLIC SAFETY!!!! Have you done a RISK ASSESSMENT and RISK ANALYSIS?? Has anyone weighed the ASSETS AND LIABILITIES (aka pros and cons) TAKING MONEY RIGHT OUT OF THE EQUATION!!!!!!!!

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:20 AM

Ensuring it is kept clean/sanitary for all users on a regularly basis.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:23 AM

Maintenance + important to be in a well lit area.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:24 AM

Already commented in my 2 previous comments

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:31 AM

Another gathering place for undesirable people.



10/08/2025 10:45 AM

Maintenance, there will have to be staff to monitor and maintain the washrooms otherwise it will be misused, dirty and unsafe. Maybe a by-law officer's duties would be to patrol the area more frequently.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:36 AM

My Concern is that it may not be the cleanest, and vandalized.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:42 AM

I think people might use them for shelter, for privacy, for hookups. I like the idea of open toilets, with openings under the doors and at the top, just privacy to actually "go to the bathroom" but we would also need a facility for washing, plus our winters don't really work for the open concept.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:45 AM

I would not utilize a stand alone public washroom that is accessible 24hrs a day with the current situation in Owen Sound or any other place. It would be an absolute miracle to keep the washroom clean,

not vandalized without costing an huge amount of funds. If I need use a washroom, which I have I would go to the Bayshore, Rec Centre or City Hall. To have this open all the time it would also have to be heated with the weather we have which would then promote homeless folks to crowd in there for the night

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:47 AM

I am concerned that the washrooms could be taken over by the unhoused and used to do drugs in and therefore making it less safe for the general public

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:48 AM

I think if a standalone washroom was installed and a 5-yo or a 75-yo would feel comfortable (environment, cleanliness) using the washroom, and actually use it because it is clean enough, then i would support it (today and into the future). Sustained operational funds would be very important for this. I'm not sure why a standalone washroom is important... what about securing funds to make existing washrooms available/clean/secure/welcoming ... the library? the one at the farmers market?. I was unaware that the Police station had an available washroom that is 24/7... I feel like advertising this as an option, providing signage would basically solve the need for a 24/7 public bathroom in the river district, no? ... I think the primary reason for a publically accessible washroom should be to support visitors to our town. I think a washroom that is open 6am–midnight (for example) would serve this purpose just as effectively as a 24-hr bathroom.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:51 AM

The cleanliness of the washroom and that it would be misused.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:56 AM

We have a large homeless population in town that I don't find the town is doing much about as years ago they removed the shelter leaving them no where to go and I think this new washroom is an area where they would congregate

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:08 AM

I'm sure there will be concerns related to our unhoused population, but those individuals are also constituents and should be supported.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:31 AM

Misuse of space for residents with no fixed address- more money for social services

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:31 AM

I am greatly concerned about this bathroom being misused. There are already significant issues with the open drug use in the area, and this

will create a space for people to use drugs (and possibly overdose) inside the bathroom. This isn't me just being fearful, this is coming from a former addict. If there is going to be a stand alone bathroom, there will need to be hourly/quarterly checks into the bathroom to ensure someone hasn't passed away inside, please do not ignore this issue, allowing the possibility of a child stumbling into a deceased person is a real thing and should not be taken lightly. I came here from Kitchener, where there is a very large issue with open drug use, a problem many cities across the province face. I had to change my daughter on the floor of a bathroom just like the one you are proposing, and in the stall next to me, a woman was preparing and injecting heroin, she left her needle sitting on the back of the toilet. This is a reality for so many cities, and it is preventable with the proper precautions. So if you are going to provide a bathroom like the one you are proposing, you are also going to have to think about security staff as well as proper handling of hazardous sharps.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:34 AM

With Owen Sounds current downtown state, unless the washrooms are inspected incredibly frequently, multiple times an hour, there is a safety concern as to what is in there. I travel to Owen Sound with small children, one with medical needs and I would never stop to take them in to use a downtown washroom. We would wait until we were on one side of town or the other. This seems like something that is being marketed towards improving the river district, with the actual intention being to provide access to bathroom space for those displaced. I can almost guarantee most other visitors would not use a bathroom in the river district especially if the placement was anywhere around where the festival of northern lights are set up. It's quite terrifying to even think of getting out of my car with small children to use it.


10/08/2025 10:45 AM

It will be misused unfortunatley. It will have to be cleaned regularly.


10/08/2025 10:45 AM

People sleeping in it or using it for taking drugs

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:41 AM

Maintenance and potential for misuse.


10/08/2025 10:45 AM

people sleeping in them

Anonymous

The public washroom at the market was closed because of drug use.

10/08/2025 08:44 AM

It is not open except for market mornings one day-a-week. Events such as PRIDE were not able to obtain a permit to open during the festival. So, I still have concerns about drug use not being monitored and managed in a new public washroom.



10/08/2025 08:46 AM

misuse, safety, maintenance, and making sure the design looks accessible, friendly, and appropriate for the site

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:49 AM

Cleanliness is the only issue I see

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:51 AM

I would be concerned about the maintenance and cleanliness of these washrooms, is there funding for them to be cleaned daily? I believe at least once a day cleaning will be required to keep them in a usable condition, especially in emptying the sharps disposal. I also am concerned about misuse and safety, will they be closed at night time? Will the design make misuse less accessible? How does the city plan to keep it a safe and usable while still being accessible to all people?

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:58 AM

Misuse could be a major impact. However, i believe that the positive outweighs the negative. It pulls pressure from businesses to offer a bathroom and allows the unhoused the ability to have a safe space for their daily needs.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 09:06 AM

If it is not properly taken care of

Anonymous

10/08/2025 09:10 AM

It would need to be properly monitored and cleaned regularly

Anonymous

10/08/2025 09:11 AM

None

Anonymous

10/08/2025 09:15 AM

Nothing aside from the concerns checked above.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 09:17 AM

Drug use

Anonymous

10/08/2025 09:29 AM

Vandalism, unauthorized uses

Anonymous

10/08/2025 09:36 AM

There is already loitering and drug use in the area (observed directly while out during the day with my children). Fear it would drive many users away from the river district as the area is not welcoming due to misuse even during the daylight hours already. Providing washrooms to could make the issue worse.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 09:38 AM

I've used standalone accessible facilities extensively in Australia and it has been a huge help! It's one of the reasons why it's my favourite destinations!

Anonymous

10/08/2025 09:41 AM

Cleanliness, security, and misuse of space. Why does the River District need a public washroom available during none business hours?

Anonymous

10/08/2025 09:54 AM

Keeping it clean and safe to use.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 09:54 AM

Misuse will be prevalent. Shoppers/tourists/visitors will not use the washroom because of the misuse of it by downtown residents.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 10:04 AM

Introducing a public standalone washroom in the River District would be a positive step toward supporting a vibrant, accessible, and welcoming downtown. As with any shared public facility, the key considerations are around thoughtful design, consistent maintenance, and sustainable management. Ongoing attention to cleaning schedules, safety measures, and clear communication about hours and expectations will be essential. It's also important that the washroom be designed to serve everyone — residents, visitors, workers, and people experiencing homelessness — in a way that upholds dignity and promotes community well-being. Collaboration with local partners such as public health, social services, and community outreach teams can help ensure the facility remains safe, well-used, and responsive to the needs of all users. By taking a proactive, inclusive approach, we can minimize challenges and maximize the benefits for the entire River District

 10/08/2025 10:45 AM

A public washroom would likely need to be monitored for vandalism, misuse, drug paraphernalia, etc. However, these are problems that are encounter in other urban areas that manage to make public washrooms available, and it seems likely there are design choices that could be made to mitigate those issues. A quick online search reveals lots of solutions that have been proposed and are already in

place for these types of challenges.



10/08/2025 10:24 AM

It seems like the major concern is that adding a public washroom would be inviting misuse. I don't share that concern as the types of activities that it may be misused for are already happening either out in the open or in less appropriate spaces.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 10:24 AM

Safety and cleanliness

Anonymous

10/08/2025 10:31 AM

This will end up just being misused. It won't be long before this will become a safety issue. I am concerned with used needles that will be left behind and please do not suggest just putting a needle dispensary out front. I am also concerned with people trying to use this as a place to sleep. I can't seeing anyone in the downtown area who is shopping that will want to use them, especially when we all know how the downtown is run.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 10:36 AM

It being misused and abused and not kept clean.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 10:37 AM

City willingness to fund adequate cleaning

Anonymous

10/08/2025 11:02 AM

this is a project that does not address the core problem of the river district, adding a bathroom does not remove the unsafe element that the downtown has been taken over by homeless people and drug addicts

Anonymous

10/08/2025 11:19 AM

It will be abused by the usual crowd and become totally unsafe. It will become a magnet for drug users seeking privacy and/or shelter.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 11:31 AM

The key challenge is safety and cleanliness. The last thing the river district needs right now is a public standalone washroom.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 11:56 AM

Maintenance costs. Misuse of them/vandalism.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 12:09 PM

It would just be misused by the drug addicts and homeless downtown

Anonymous

10/08/2025 12:37 PM

Vandalism. It's hard to have pretty things when some people have no vested interest in keeping things in good repair.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 12:41 PM

Misuse and cleanliness

Anonymous

10/08/2025 12:46 PM

Maintaining high standard of cleanliness and safety for users

Anonymous

10/08/2025 12:55 PM

They will not be cleaned and homeless will use them more than anything

Anonymous

10/08/2025 01:25 PM

See question 7

Anonymous

10/08/2025 01:41 PM

Vandalism likely a problem. Cleanliness likely a challenge.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 01:44 PM

It's going to become a safety concern. We already have individuals taking over down town that aren't safe. We are coming into winter they will use it as shelter

Anonymous

10/08/2025 01:53 PM

I have lived and grew up on 1st Avenue West for 25 years of my life. And I and I have continued to live in and around Owen sound and I refuse to go downtown to shop with the state of its current condition. I use the bank on a limited basis.Because I no longer have the opportunity to go to the bank as I choose or when I need to.Because they're locked, you have to constantly look over your shoulder.Because you have no idea whose approaching or what they want , it's a shame to the businesses and the people of owen sound the city needs to clean it up before they invest any more money in the river district that does not get used for the purposes that it is intended.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 02:13 PM

Waste of my tax dollars

Anonymous

10/08/2025 02:16 PM

More tax. More city employees. Homeless people using it for purposes other than its intent. Homeless people sheltering in it or hanging around. Like the library gazebo for one example. This has not worked out well in Barrie. Check other cities. If there is a festival

downtown the washroom portable trailer can be brought in.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 02:19 PM

vandalism; "squatting"

Anonymous

10/08/2025 02:27 PM

As with any public washroom, there is a risk of vandalism/misuse, however I do think the benefits to tourism and overall dignity and wellbeing for residents is worth the extra expense of employing cleaners and patrolling/monitoring the washroom.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 02:33 PM

This project can't be half-assed (pun intended) upkeep is a must! Nobody who's not an asshole cares about unhoused folks using the bathroom, but it can't be a hangout.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 02:40 PM

Security / access/ cleaning challenges - suggest self cleaning facility with pay access

Anonymous

10/08/2025 02:42 PM

Maintaining and keeping clean.



10/08/2025 04:45 PM

Water hook up and drainage regarding freezing.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 02:58 PM

Banks are currently locking their ATM vestibules at night, although the users of the RD need a place to "go" will this just become another place for the unhoused to go & congregate?

Anonymous

10/08/2025 03:07 PM

Drug use and homeless

Anonymous

10/08/2025 03:34 PM

Junkies destroying it

Anonymous

10/08/2025 03:38 PM

Worry that it will be used for drug use and not kept clean by the city.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 03:45 PM

Drug use or overnight sheltering in the public washroom.

Anonymous 10/08/2025 03:55 PM	Safety, Routine maintenance, vandalism
Anonymous 10/08/2025 04:02 PM	Keeping it clean
Anonymous 10/08/2025 04:05 PM	Overdoses not being found. Or elderly with falls not being heard or found. Just the danger of a facility not having a staffing or monitoring system.
Anonymous 10/08/2025 04:18 PM	Abuse of intended use but I think it is important that there is a washrooms that is accessible to the inhouse.
Anonymous 10/08/2025 04:19 PM	Ensuring adequate cleaning schedule and safe guards on use as shelter
Anonymous 10/08/2025 04:21 PM	As stated above, I think that it would promote the use of drugs and become a dry, warm space for the homeless. I would have to see what the cost would be to the taxpayer, both on building the facility and upkeep/ safety etc.
Anonymous 10/08/2025 04:28 PM	Homeless using it as shelter and drug addicts using it Who's going to clean it up How will this be a safe place with these kinds of people in there
Anonymous 10/08/2025 05:11 PM	Whatever concerns or challenges noted, can be addressed. It is important to make this happen.
Anonymous 10/08/2025 05:19 PM	Addicts, homelessness, needles and garbage being left around, cleanliness and the spread of infectious diseases
Anonymous 10/08/2025 05:21 PM	Unless monitored, it would likely become a haven for the homeless and drug users.
Anonymous 10/08/2025 05:32 PM	Major drug use, people using it as a place to camp, safety of women and children and men using the bathroom, lots of predators around
Anonymous	I would be concerned with people loitering outside of it or trying to

10/08/2025 05:38 PM

stay inside during the colder months.

[REDACTED]

10/08/2025 05:41 PM

This is just encouraging the homelessness that city hall, social workers and police department thrive on.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 05:42 PM

The market has a washroom. They have to keep it locked and only open it when the market is open. Last year they found an overdosed user in there and they had died.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 05:54 PM

It will become a housing unit with drug use, dealing drugs and violence.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 05:56 PM

Increased taxes would be required to support its inappropriate use.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 06:13 PM

You are fucking dumb to use tax payers money to supply a space for drug use

Anonymous

10/08/2025 06:24 PM

Owen Sound needs to consider the type of self cleaning stand alone mechanized washrooms that are found in other tourists spots around the world. This would alleviate the concerns around cleanliness , safety, vandalism.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 06:26 PM

People using this space for drugs, leaving items behind. The River district is far from safe right now, let alone giving people a space to hide to do illegal things.

[REDACTED]

10/08/2025 07:45 PM

Keeping it clean

Anonymous

10/08/2025 06:37 PM

Junkies in the bathroom, passed out, and ODs and finding corpses or dangerous homeless, please stop this nonsense and don't waste our tax dollars!

Anonymous

10/08/2025 06:46 PM

Same as noted above. Just another location for drug use and hornless population to sleep and vandalize.

Anonymous

Given the homeless situation currently I think this would be inviting

10/08/2025 06:47 PM

trouble.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 06:50 PM

drug use

Anonymous

10/08/2025 06:51 PM

Drug addiction and safety

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:03 PM

The greatest challenge will be overcoming the folks with loud voices who oppose any form of harm reduction and holistic community wellness. A facility such as this will require a regular caretaker and funding for same.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:26 PM

The unhoused, mentally ill and drug addicted would use it to sleep in or use drugs in it.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:31 PM

Cleanliness!!!! Needles

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:31 PM

Vandalism, homeless people taking shelter, drug usage

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:40 PM

Cleaning and maintenance

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:40 PM

Owen Sound downtown is an absolute disaster to begin with. There is absolutely NO benefit to having public washrooms.

 10/08/2025 10:45 PM

My only real concern is that it hasn't happened yet. Or, that city staff will choose an overly budget-friendly option not suitable for the usage demanded.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:43 PM

Very obvious ones. Drug use, needles, homeless people sleeping in them, vandalism. They will never be used by people who go downtown to shop. They will be too afraid to see what condition or who is using them. This is not a solution for the human feces that is found on the streets due to homelessness.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:44 PM

See comments in #7. Also, I would be more unlikely to visit if the washrooms become a common spot for drug paraphernalia,

overdoses, vandalism, and homeless persons/panhandling.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:45 PM

People will try to sleep in them, will use drugs in them and will not be respected. Just how the ones were that were on the back of city hall before the renovation.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:52 PM

Drug use, overdoses and overall cleanliness.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:54 PM

The town would need to stay on top of cleanings and keep homeless out, as well as making sure drug users and paraphernalia are removed safely

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:56 PM

I would go downtown, but it is full of drug addicts. We leave near the downtown, but avoid it due to the drug addicts.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:00 PM

It needs to be maintained on a regular basis.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:13 PM

Would become another place people will go to use and overdose. Another area that does not get maintained and shut down due to population.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:15 PM

Cost for building and maintaining washroom

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:20 PM

It would be turned into another spot for homeless people to sleep and do their drugs and the rest of the public would be too scared to go in there to use the bathroom for what it is intended for. They are the reason that downtown is suffering

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:21 PM

We used to like grabbing a coffee and sitting down by the water but we can't do that anymore as we feel unsafe, I believe these washrooms would become a drug haven or place for someone to sleep.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:45 PM

I believe this will just become another trashed space for people to use drugs and a potential safety hazard.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:57 PM

Safety concerns - drug use, sexual assault

Anonymous

10/08/2025 09:03 PM

I think it will be used primarily by homeless which is good for those being respectful but one walk along the east side harbour tells us that the city is allowing the drug users to take over and not cleaning up after them. Drug paraphernalia is all over and I think the public bathroom would need constant security in order for it to stay usable for those who really need it

Anonymous

10/08/2025 09:13 PM

Use will not be as intended similar to the shade sail area across from Tim Hortons. City maintenance will be very costly.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 09:32 PM

I believe that these washrooms would be used more by our street people.....which would be a good thing. After the downtown closes there really is no place for them to attend to their personal needs.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 09:33 PM

If it's unclean or unsafe it will make the River District worse not better.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 12:37 AM

Homeless people. Drug usage. Safety problem. Increase of human trafficking

Anonymous

10/09/2025 05:04 AM

The river district is already the location of the biggest problem in owensound which is the very public in your face amount of drug addicts who are pissing puking and using in public downtown or by the library. Adding a public bathroom gives them a space to do their drugs in private and pass out or OD. Visiting the river district is a huge turn off due to what you have to view and walk past and these public washroom would be a safety concern for anyone who enters.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 05:15 AM

Using the washroom for drug purposes. There is already issues in other areas of the city with discarded needles or used aluminum foil on the ground with burn marks all over it. I foresee it being used after hours for people using drugs or sleeping.


10/09/2025 06:25 AM

I wouldn't be caught using it. It would be comparable to touching a dirty phone in a phone booth. Possibly if it were locked and the person had to go to a chosen business to obtain a code to enter might help. Otherwise it will be misused. A public washroom is a pipe dream if you think it will be respected and used properly. People will

be using it for drugs and who knows what else. Save your money.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 06:45 AM

We have lots of transient resistance over the last few years and I would be concerned to use it as I think they would be using it for other reasons or be hanging around the washroom. They make me uncomfortable and harass me when I'm downtown

Anonymous

10/09/2025 06:52 AM

There will always be a risk of vandalism or misuse but I believe there still is a need.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 06:56 AM

If anyone needs to go to the washroom downtown, you can go to one of the many bathrooms inside a store, restaurant, library, etc. I've been going downtown for 20+ years and there is no need at all for a public washroom. This will just become something that's misused and I would not want to ever go into it.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:03 AM

Weekend monitoring of the bathroom and how to ensure it's kept clean and safe.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:04 AM

It is likely there will be some misuse as there is everywhere. Will this be for complimentary or paid use?

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:04 AM

As above... Homeless sleeping in them.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:08 AM

Homeless people or drug users taking advantage

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:09 AM

It'll be used for drug use by the addicts. It will be used as a shelter for them to die in. It will be filled with needles, patches, blood, infection, etc.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:19 AM

Homeless people hanging out in there

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:22 AM

Well, considering the portapotties that were in the river district were trashed, I anticipate the same thing happening to another washroom. Also - there ARE public washrooms in the river district already! Police station has them!

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:24 AM

Cleanliness, safety and security. It needs to be easy to clean and maintain There should be a timer on the door. IE. a warning light/noise comes on after 10 minutes, after an additional 5 minutes the door automatically unlocks. This would help prevent people from camping inside. Regular and frequent security/police is needed, not just inside the bathroom but whatever the surrounding site is. Loitering should not be permitted.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:26 AM

Mis use by homeless and / or addicts Vandalism

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:29 AM

People overdosing in washroom, sleeping. How about we invest this money is housing and safe injection sites.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:37 AM

Homeless people need proper washrooms

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:44 AM

To many druggies and homeless would be using it and destroying

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:47 AM

That it may become a gathering place for inappropriate usage

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:51 AM

Misuse by the homeless and addicts. I run a business and personally have had to clean excrement, urine and paraphernalia from the downtown area several times on behalf of other businesses located downtown. Although it has been a necessary addition for a while I am concerned that it will become a den for illicit drug use which makes it an inaccessible place for visitors.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:54 AM

That it needs to be accessible to everybody including people in wheelchairs!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



10/09/2025 10:45 AM

Already answered in question 7. Needs to be kept clean, safe etc

Anonymous

10/09/2025 08:06 AM

Safety & cleanliness

Anonymous

TD Bank had to close it's ATM access because unhoused individuals

10/09/2025 08:15 AM

were sleeping in the entrance. How will this be any different?

Anonymous

10/09/2025 08:23 AM

The homeless and drug addicts ODing in the bathroom. It's not what Owen Sound needs. We have enough of that and although there's a warning system, if someone's ODing they are not hearing that so please don't.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 08:24 AM

Safety, Cleanliness, inappropriate usage of the bathrooms.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 08:25 AM

Vandalism, cleanliness

Anonymous

10/09/2025 09:01 AM

I can imagine future councils / city staff de-prioritizing the facilities and them becoming "white elephants" if there are some negative events associated with them (lack of cleanliness, drug use etc.)

Anonymous

10/09/2025 09:04 AM

Homeless and junkies hanging out in them to get high or to sleep or get out of weather conditions

Anonymous

10/09/2025 09:13 AM

Possible misuse. Cleanliness.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 09:23 AM

Misuse of it, drug use

Anonymous

10/09/2025 10:05 AM

I absolutely guarantee it'll be destroyed or vandalized by homeless people and used as a place to use intravenous drugs.


10/09/2025 10:45 AM

Public perception of the unsheltered people downtown really needs to change from a threat to folks needing help and support. If you approach them with food or drinks, they are so grateful. Fear is not helping anyone. I assume an increased police presence in the River District and ongoing cleaning would support a positive experience with this facility for all.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 10:13 AM

Misuse by homeless, depository for drug paraphernalia, maintenance cost and frequency, increased calls to police to deal with problems occurring within washroom.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 10:16 AM

Great idea, however I feel these spaces would be used for other reasons, drug use etc. people might not want to encounter these issues everytime they need to use these facilities or not use them at all, due to these reasons

Anonymous

10/09/2025 10:29 AM

Drugs, and homeless invading. But with the right monitoring and cleaning I see them being beneficial

Anonymous

10/09/2025 10:59 AM

Drug use , sexual activity , they will lock themselves in to sleep and police will be at the site constantly. Kids could discover needles , condoms , profane graffiti...

Anonymous

10/09/2025 11:09 AM

My concern is that it would be misused and thus not maintained properly causing another vandalized building making the downtown area of Owen Sound even less appealing to visitors and residents than it already is. This would end up being just another enclosed area for the consumption of illegal drugs and other undesirable behaviour.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 11:29 AM

Needs consistent maintenance and cleaning. Unhoused will likely be using it and potentially for not intended use, so a plan needs to be in place for dealing with that without causing undue harm to them.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 11:42 AM

The safety and cleanliness issue is 100% related to our homeless population. Will some of them just live in there? Will the toilets only be open say from 8am until 9pm to help negate this issue? Does it become like Europe, where you have to pay to use the bathroom thus keeping some people out. Will it become a place for drug users to go in and do their thing, making it unsafe and dangerous? How will all of this be looked after? Without that knowledge I can not support the building of this bathroom facility.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 11:43 AM

Homeless and drug activity

Anonymous

10/09/2025 12:06 PM

Clean up. And people die who use drugs in their so if public health is giving out harm reduction kits could they not provide a nurse and staff for safe use areas

Anonymous

10/09/2025 12:23 PM

Would mostly be used by the homeless or drug addicted. Others would not feel safe especially to take children.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 12:25 PM

Maintenance

Anonymous

10/09/2025 12:57 PM

-keeping the bathrooms clean -being used for drugs -people changing in there and leaving a mess -who is going to clean them on a regular basis

Anonymous

10/09/2025 01:50 PM

Who's going to monitor it? Who's going to clean up all the used needles, urine and feces? Who's going to protect the law abiding citizens who want to use it but will be harassed by the homeless lurking around. I can't even go to the bank at night without the fear of being jumped!

Anonymous

10/09/2025 02:12 PM

Although the challenges that may occur ie: vandalism, drug use etc are out shadowed by the benefits. The majority of people frequenting the river district are not vandals or have drug problems. I'm down there daily and have to leave to find a washroom. I've been asked countless times by visitors for the nearest bathroom and I'm embarrassed by my answers. People are there with children, elderly folk who cannot always 'hold' it for the long search for relief which can shorten visits and cause discomfort leaving a bad impression of the River District.



10/09/2025 02:14 PM

Maintenance

Anonymous

10/09/2025 02:41 PM

All of the concerns listed above. We can see the entire river district is already misused, mistreated, vandalized, unclean and unmaintained.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 03:18 PM

This question is above

Anonymous

10/09/2025 03:53 PM

Misuse, vandalism, cleanliness



10/09/2025 04:45 PM

reactionaries will complain unhoused people are using it too much, and that there will not be enough funding put aside for maintenance.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 04:45 PM

Homeless people and drug users living in them and destroying them

Anonymous

10/09/2025 04:57 PM

Visitors to town would not be aware of the facility.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 05:27 PM

My concern would be ensuring that it is safe for all to use...not to be used as "housing" and ensuring it is kept clean.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:25 PM

Maintenance and cleanliness

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:45 PM

Druggies do not need a place to hang out.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 08:47 PM

Whose going to monitor it and clean it.

Anonymous

10/10/2025 05:38 AM

Abuse by people with addictions.



10/10/2025 07:45 AM

A way to prevent it from becoming housing.

Anonymous

10/10/2025 06:29 AM

The cost of repairs from ongoing vandalism.



10/10/2025 10:45 AM

Safety, misuse, where would it go? It needs to be somewhere in the middle of downtown - BMO, CFOS parking lot, Beside Tim Hortons or along 1st Ave E 900 block.



10/10/2025 10:45 AM

Unfortunately too often people don't have the ownership or pride to care for property or if they leave it a mess for others. I commend those looking for a solution but want they might not realize it's a challenge to change how people treat properties. I worked in various professional office spaces which often required people access to our employees washroom during their appointment, unfortunately we would have clients that would leave it a mess. We experienced poop all over seat, pee on seat an floor, tp on seat and floor, sinks left with messes and then an employee was left trying to clean so employees could use for remainder of office hours. It's an eye opener and not just the people living in downtown core causing issues. The other issue of course is the potential of using space for privacy using drugs and anything that could be left behind that could cause harm to others. They leave the sharps on sidewalks and anywhere on ground

do you really think they are going to pick up because it's a nice new clean bathroom facility NO.

Anonymous

10/10/2025 10:08 AM

Misuse by street people, drug use

Anonymous

10/10/2025 12:56 PM

Safety, misuse, destruction of property



10/10/2025 04:45 PM

Just it being kept clean. Safe from vandalism and people using it for drugs

Anonymous

10/10/2025 02:54 PM

If we are going to have a standalone washroom in the RD, it needs to be kept very clean and well maintained, well lit, and safe for all to use. This will be expensive, but I believe other cities in the world manage to do this and do it well.

Anonymous

10/11/2025 04:48 AM

Concerned it will be a space for homeless and drug users to misuse

Anonymous

10/11/2025 05:41 AM

Would not be used appropriately and increase the lack of safety for this who want to shop downtown but now do not because of the horrible conditions and lack of draw to downtown. The only time most residents visit the downtown occurs when second avenue east is closed on a Saturday for a specific event.

Anonymous

10/11/2025 06:08 AM

none

Anonymous

10/11/2025 06:56 AM

Keeping it clean and it not being used as a shelter

Anonymous

10/11/2025 08:33 AM

Just another spot for the homeless to hang out?

Anonymous

10/11/2025 12:54 PM

The number of vagabonds in our city is overwhelming and hang out in that area

Anonymous

10/11/2025 01:07 PM

It will require monitoring to ensure cleanliness and safety, and to prevent misuse of space. However, NOT having clean, accessible

public restrooms is a serious deficiency in the visitor experience. We live just outside the downtown, so have no need ourselves, but visitors to the town should expect clean, easily available and free facilities.

Anonymous

10/11/2025 05:52 PM

Neglected washrooms can easily become unhygienic and/or unpleasant to use.

Anonymous

10/11/2025 06:13 PM

This could be a place that would attract homeless or those with an addiction.

Anonymous

10/11/2025 06:35 PM

See above answers

Anonymous

10/11/2025 07:39 PM

METH USERS

Anonymous

10/12/2025 06:56 AM

Challenge of keeping it clean and not being used for other purposes.

Anonymous

10/12/2025 07:53 AM

Another place for drug use and the homeless to leave their trash



10/12/2025 10:45 AM

Challenges are with the large unhoused sector of Owen sound. There is risk that many will feel unsafe. I don't even feel safe going into the library washrooms because of people with mental health and addiction problems often.

Anonymous

10/12/2025 12:19 PM

The already massive homeless/ drug population will misuse this space and it will be unsafe

Anonymous

10/12/2025 04:48 PM

It may provide a warm spot for someone to sleep.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 05:06 AM

It would make the situation worse and only reinforce division due to misuse

Anonymous

10/13/2025 05:37 AM

Misuse of space. Maintenance/cleaning issues. Health and safety concerns.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 05:40 AM

It would be of some benefit but I see more negatives than positives. Downtown is already not a friendly place for shoppers with all the street people lying in doorways or out in the open on the street. A standalone washroom would give them one more place to sleep and I can only imagine how many times it would be vandalized. Vandalism would add to the cost each time it needed to be repaired. If in some way the city could clean up the downtown then a standalone washroom could be a benefit. Right now I would say NO

Anonymous

10/13/2025 05:41 AM

The same as city hall faced and had to close. Abuse and used for drug use.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 05:57 AM

Challenges maintaining cleanliness and safety due to the increasing number of homeless and marginalized people using it as a refuge.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 05:57 AM

Could become a home for addicts and homeless

Anonymous

10/13/2025 06:09 AM

Homeless camping by it . However they may not go in the bushes. We scoop with dogs. They need educated to clean up garbage

Anonymous

10/13/2025 06:21 AM

Safety, maintenance

Anonymous

10/13/2025 06:22 AM

Misuse of the bathroom facility, which might make it unsafe to use for everyone else. Finding a good place to locate it.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 06:36 AM

maintenance intensive if maintaining an hours of operation
acceptable cleanliness for visitors and shoppers miss use by the homeless and undesirables

Anonymous

10/13/2025 06:45 AM

drugs, expensive to maintain

Anonymous

10/13/2025 07:04 AM

- keeping the space clean - if the unhoused are using it , will it just be as simple as the downtown tim's / river area where the general public investing money in the area no longer feel safe -making it safe

Anonymous

People using the washrooms as a sleeping shelter, to do illegal drugs

10/13/2025 07:40 AM

and drinking, bothering other people.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 07:46 AM

Misuse and cleanliness

Anonymous

10/13/2025 07:48 AM

Homeless abusing the space

Anonymous

10/13/2025 07:48 AM

Being used as a homeless shelter

Anonymous

10/13/2025 07:56 AM

Issue with homelessness and drug use. Safety issues for those visiting

Anonymous

10/13/2025 08:26 AM

It would immediately become a drug bathroom as well as homeless would start sleeping in it. Not a good idea at all.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 08:36 AM

Who is going to clean them? Will there be checks for toilet tissue during the day? Are the homeless going to use it for other things. (Place out of the cold to use needles) will they be tipped over and tossed into the river contaminating our water?

 10/13/2025 10:45 AM

I really have concerns about the washroom being used inappropriately. I'm afraid of people using drugs, the bathroom being vandalized, and potentially people sleeping in it because the city of owenstown does not have appropriate homelessness accommodations.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 08:39 AM

Homeless

Anonymous

10/13/2025 08:39 AM

Misuse by drug users

Anonymous

10/13/2025 09:03 AM

I fear that it will just become a place for homeless people to be.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 09:48 AM

Oversight into maintaining daily

Anonymous

10/13/2025 10:00 AM

Since the city does absolutely nothing else to support our unhoused population, I imagine that this would become a place of shelter.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 10:07 AM

.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 11:01 AM

Homeless and addicts misusing the washrooms for warmth or somewhere to use making it uncomfortable for the people needing to use it. Especially those with kids. We find enough needles and other drug related things around town, having them found in a public restroom raises more risk

Anonymous

10/13/2025 11:13 AM

Safety first and foremost most for all residents and visitors. Due to the amount of homeless people in our city right know is very concerning.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 11:26 AM

We have a good deal of unhoused people. This would be an opportunity for many of them to wash themselves, which is great, but it could become a permanent residence for some (think of the bandshell outside of the library). It could become unsafe for the unhoused (violence for the space, assault, drug paraphernalia, etc.) It wouldn't be a desirable location for the public to use because of this. Who would want to walk into that? So it wouldn't benefit the business owners, festivals, or the tourists. It would become a money drain on the taxpayers. Having to build it, maintain it, cleaning it, and police presence to keep it safe.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 11:54 AM

Drug use

Anonymous

10/13/2025 11:58 AM

Repairs all the time and cost

Anonymous

10/13/2025 12:41 PM

Maintaining high level of cleanliness, safety of users and the strong potential for misuse of facility i.e. drug use or occupation by homeless



10/13/2025 01:45 PM

cleanliness, unless you were able to put in a self cleaning one as they have in Montreal.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 01:06 PM

I can see a standalone washroom being used as a make shift shelter. Cleanliness and attentiveness by city staff would have to be a priority without the washrooms feeling like they are under surveillance. it

would be an awful experience to find someone overdosing.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 01:29 PM

EMS using homeless and drug addicts to boost there hours and rate of pay please Ian Boddy fix this problem.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 01:30 PM

Waste of money when roads are garbage. Addicts bringing drugs in a public bathroom children would use. The lack of safety if a homeless individual is hiding/staying in the restroom.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 01:42 PM

Making it a little too attractive for unwelcome visitors.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 02:12 PM

I can't even go to my own bank and get money at a machine outside of business hours anymore due to issues downtown. Let's fix those problems before worrying about washrooms. Businesses have public washrooms but have stopped letting anyone use them because of the issues. City hall had public washrooms at back of holding. Where are those now? Why were they removed? Maybe consider spending money on the issues for why all the washrooms are closed off then just adding to the problem.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 02:31 PM

People abusing the building.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 04:14 PM

Homeless people living there, doing drugs when you open that door you don't know what you'll find. Need I remind you the last time there was a 24 hour open washroom attached to city hall? What happened then??

Anonymous

10/13/2025 04:44 PM

Drug paraphernalia and safety Homeless using it as a living space/shelter

Anonymous

10/13/2025 05:00 PM

Keep a security guard on duty to prevent homeless going in and locking door and sleeping for 12 hours

Anonymous

10/13/2025 05:04 PM

It will be misused by transient people and drug addicts. It poses a safety risk and another place for people to do drugs in our river district.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 05:53 PM

More services will encourage more people without a resident to find their way to our city.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 06:06 PM

Drug use is already public in the river district, let's not add a new space for them to occupy

Anonymous

10/13/2025 07:11 PM

I think misuse and vandalism are very likely to happen. (past history with vandalism at the Farmers Market bathrooms, resulting in them being closed I believe, and recent vandalism/graffiti on the new picnic tables placed near the Farmers Market) There are 24hour washrooms available at the police station which should offer a safe space for people to use if the other venues are closed

Anonymous

10/13/2025 08:21 PM

Drug should be the main reason.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 08:44 PM

This would not help the general public, just the homelessness problem we have downtown.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 08:58 PM

Vandalism, voueurism, safety at night, open drug use, safety

Anonymous

10/13/2025 09:35 PM

The misuse of the washroom, used for drug use or shelter for the homeless, it will mostly be used by the homeless and the public will not be able to or want to use it as if will be dirty and will need to have security or someone monitoring in 24/7. It will be unsafe. The expense of these washrooms is ridiculous that money could be better spent elsewhere. Bring back the public washrooms to city hall. Why does it have to be standalone? We can't even have access to the banks after hours due to the issues downtown why would you think this would be a good idea they will be using them all, all night long making messes. Completely unsafe for the general public unless it's going to be monitored which will cost the tax payers more money.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 11:25 PM

If something is broken, how quick will it be attended to close before any more damage occurs How often will they be checked and cleaned


10/14/2025 05:42 AM

Drug misuse and overdose while using washroom alone Vandalism and blood and body fluids transmission from persons with diseases such as hepatitis c who have open wounds and contaminate surfaces

of washroom and door handles

Anonymous

10/14/2025 06:06 AM

Addicts using it to inject drugs etc.

Anonymous

10/14/2025 06:17 AM

Answered in question 7, also, the unhoused will utilize everyday all day, 24 7.

[REDACTED]

10/14/2025 07:45 AM

There's always the homeless issue. Will they respect the space? Will they use it as shelter? Will it be located somewhere that police and city staff can keep an eye on it? Who and how often will it be cleaned and maintained? Should there be a part time attendant?

Anonymous

10/14/2025 06:54 AM

Homeless using it for drug use

Anonymous

10/14/2025 08:52 AM

Another space to make the downtown more inviting for the homeless and drug users. This will be used for negative far more than the small amount of positive.

Anonymous

10/14/2025 09:59 AM

Cleanliness and abuse of public facility/vandalism.

Anonymous

10/14/2025 10:04 AM

DRUG USERS.

Anonymous

10/14/2025 10:27 AM

The concern is the drug use and places these people go to get high and the homeless people looking for a place to shelter or sleep

Anonymous

10/14/2025 11:26 AM

cost for cleaning and maintenance

[REDACTED]

10/14/2025 01:45 PM

That it will be added and then closed all the time for silly reasons. It will just be the illusion of a public washroom like all the current "public" washrooms.

Anonymous

10/14/2025 12:28 PM

It should be open 24/7, be well lit at night, well maintained, a camera on the exterior of it for safety reasons.

Anonymous

10/14/2025 12:40 PM

-safety

Anonymous

10/14/2025 01:06 PM

This will only benefit homeless and any other residents will not be able to safely use this space. I foresee significant drug use in the space alongside a space for people to overdose.



10/14/2025 02:13 PM

Council being obsessed with not spending money and shooting it down

Anonymous

10/14/2025 03:23 PM

There may be some people that draw on it or something.



10/14/2025 07:45 PM

Appreciating the washrooms are for everyone, not just tourists and visitors. As a society we need to appreciate those of us who are vulnerable and living precariously.



10/14/2025 07:45 PM

perception on the part of tourists as an accessible space

Anonymous

10/14/2025 06:53 PM

Unhoused people will live in it and managing that will outweigh the benefit. Maybe.

Anonymous

10/14/2025 06:56 PM

Keeping it useful and clean to anyone looking to use it. A lot of money being spent for a few individuals.

Anonymous

10/14/2025 09:07 PM

Someone will move into it and no one will remove them. It's a giant waste of time and money.



10/15/2025 07:45 AM

Drug users, cleanliness, unless someone is going to keep it clean I can see it being a mess. Needs to be a well lit area also

Anonymous

10/15/2025 07:14 AM

Same sort of manipulative question. I notice you don't ask or offer space for people to comment in positive terms about what a publicly available, publicly accessible washroom can mean for residents. My concern is that an ineffective Mayor and Council will muck this up.

Anonymous

10/15/2025 08:16 AM

Cleanliness and maintenance would be issues but easily remedied by a self cleaning washrooms as in other cities.

Anonymous

10/15/2025 08:23 AM

Homeless using it as a place to sleep and do drugs making it unsafe for other people

[REDACTED]

10/15/2025 10:45 AM

None.

[REDACTED]

10/15/2025 10:45 AM

None, you should do it regardless of concerns as it would support the downtown businesses.

Anonymous

10/15/2025 09:26 AM

It will simply be a space people to do drugs and leave their mess behind Based on what our customers have told us... that they don't feel safe and that they see the drug users hanging around they would def not use a public washroom The reasons for having a washroom downtown do not include our paying customers having to go to the bathroom.

[REDACTED]

10/15/2025 10:45 AM

There are concerns about drug use in washrooms because of the paraphernalia left behind

Anonymous

10/15/2025 12:30 PM

This question shows bias towards not passing one. My concern is that NOT adding one will be a missed opportunity for our Council to support rejuvenation of our beautiful River District.

Anonymous

10/15/2025 01:49 PM

Costly for the taxpayer. Will it be used for homeless population to get warm and will others misuse it for doing drugs.

Anonymous

10/15/2025 01:59 PM

I think there will end up being some misuse of the washroom (i.e. drug use) as this has happened in the past. This can then pose a safety risk for the individuals that will be cleaning the washroom.

Anonymous

10/15/2025 04:53 PM

Ridiculous waste of taxpayer dollars to maintain and keep clean of illicit and hazardous waste that will inevitably be left behind. Give your heads a shake.

Anonymous

10/15/2025 05:36 PM

Abuse and misuse

Anonymous
10/15/2025 06:40 PM

As above. Not being used as intended—to bring people downtown, but rather homeless using it as shelter or to sell drugs

Anonymous
10/15/2025 07:36 PM

Cleanliness and drug use

Anonymous
10/15/2025 07:45 PM

That the city will overspend and build the wrong type.of facility. Then get made that the semi built.structure.gets.used by the homeless that we don't admit exist and say see this is what happens when we try to do something good and then say we need more police.i stead of just building that damn thing.

Anonymous
10/15/2025 08:42 PM

Lack of maintenance may cause it to be misused or may deter ppl from using it


10/16/2025 01:45 AM

Keeping it clean and well stocked as well as keeping it safe for people to use.

Anonymous
10/16/2025 05:49 AM

The only concerns would be drug users and homeless camping in the washrooms

Anonymous
10/16/2025 06:53 AM

Needles being left in washroom making it a huge biohazard unless being monitored a cleaned multiple times a day. Unhoused people will use it to do drugs in less public spaces and leave gosh knows what in them for shoppers to find.

Anonymous
10/16/2025 08:49 AM

It may become a refuge for the homeless population

Anonymous
10/16/2025 11:39 AM

Cleanliness, safety, vandalism, servicing of unit

Optional question (431 response(s), 124 skipped)
Question type: Essay Question

Q15 | Do you have any additional comments or suggestions regarding public washrooms in the River District?

Anonymous

If there is to be a washroom, the space around the washroom has to

10/07/2025 12:15 PM

be carefully planned and developed to support this use along with bylaw restrictions that limit loitering in this space

Anonymous

10/07/2025 12:57 PM

There are many washrooms in the river district. I never have an issue finding one.


10/07/2025 04:45 PM

A public washroom won't change much for me but it's important for elderly and vulnerable folks in our community. Having a public washroom downtown is never something I thought we'd need to consider whether it was necessary or not - it seems incredibly obvious to me that it's required.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 01:33 PM

Let's make this happen.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 01:41 PM

Washrooms are not the only problem. Bigger fish to deal with.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 01:45 PM

I think this is a great idea! There are many examples of safe public washroom buildings. The River District is a fairly large area, so having a public washroom that is spread out from the library, City Hall and the farmer's market I think would help to support people who are spending time in the River District, but who are not necessarily close to these buildings that have public washrooms. I would also recommend updating the map to show the boundary of the River District to help people know where to place the pin for the proposed washroom site.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 01:47 PM

A facility like the stand alone washrooms at Harrison Park might be a good template.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 01:48 PM

Improved Public washrooms benefit all members of our community not just individuals who are unsheltered in the downtown core, it supports people who exercise or walk pets at all hours of the day, it supports those with young children or people with bladder or digestive issues. The creation of a more accessible washroom system downtown is about a more accessible community for our citizens.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 01:50 PM

I notice that you have asked if business owners might be interested in providing public access to their facilities if they have support from the

City, but there is no mention of actual remuneration for the provision of this service? Why is that? Why wouldn't the City be willing to enter into a paying partnership with a small number of businesses who could meet a list of criteria to provide these necessary services? The City knows how much it will cost to provide and maintain a public washroom. Wouldn't it make sense to use the bricks and mortar and services already in place to deliver this service to the public by out-sourcing it to the River District businesses? Why is this not an option?

Anonymous

10/07/2025 01:51 PM

I think visitors and tourists are often in shops and restaurants where there are washroom facilities.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 01:53 PM

Clean up downtown

Anonymous

10/07/2025 01:59 PM

I think this is an extremely terrible idea, given the current state of downtown.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 01:59 PM

A waste of taxpayers money that would do nothing to improve the community.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:02 PM

If these washrooms do get built and drug use does become an issue please please please do not have any summer student cleaning these washrooms. It is so unsafe for CHILDREN to have to go in and clean this up. Build a safe injection site like Vancouver has before you build a washroom in the River District.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:03 PM

Please make downtown more accessible for lots of older shoppers would spend more if they didn't have to rush home to use a facility. Older people spend money and have weaker bladders

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:04 PM

Access to washroom space should be considered a human right. All people in our community can benefit from this. Families with young children, elderly people who need frequent access to toilets, people with disabilities, people who are visiting our beautiful down town, unhoused people, young people walking home from school. The list is endless. Access to public toilets benefits us all.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:06 PM

I think the money should be spent elsewhere. Public washrooms in businesses are currently a safety issue for employees and their clients downtown. A standalone washroom would be even easier for

those to use for their drug habits.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:06 PM

Don't add them, add a safe consumption site. People who shop and eat in the river district have no problems finding a bathroom to use. If you are clean and don't look unhoused, any place will basically let you use thier washroom without paying for their services.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:08 PM

Safe, well cared for public washrooms are a critical piece of any self respecting city.



10/07/2025 04:45 PM

YES, I would like to know people are voting strongly to have this public standalone washroom in our River District as a sign of potential foot traffic knowing one doesn't have to rely on Tim Horton's or a restaurant to use their washrooms - just like at West Side Boat Launch has public washrooms, downtown also should too I am a new resident of 4 years (also a frequent volunteer for our variety of City events) and hailing from west end Toronto, having access to washrooms are very important and I strongly believe in Deputy Mayor, Scott Greig's thoughts from City Council Meeting on October 6th at 5:30 P.M. He's right about how beautiful our River District has been bragged about by many he encounters *I look forward to the upcoming elections in 2026 as an election poll worker :)

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:11 PM

I do not support this decision

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:11 PM

I think the public washrooms in Tobermory are a good example.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:12 PM

The washroom issue is a small piece that needs to be addressed alongside bigger-picture plans to address the city's housing issue.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:13 PM

Put showers in them.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:13 PM

I would focus on making the River District safer for shoppers and tourists first and then consider washroom facilities. I've had students bring up their concerns about safety. If you want to draw people back to the district that is more important.

Anonymous

Nothing else at this time

10/07/2025 02:14 PM

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:15 PM

I'm sure there are lots of design suggestions that planners have found to make them safe - perhaps good lighting nearby?

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:15 PM

In spite of the possibility of misuse, a stand alone public washroom is essential. It would be even better if it included showers.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:19 PM

No

[REDACTED]

10/07/2025 02:21 PM

We could use more than one. Id suggest one abutting City Hall on the north side of the buidling, and one in or near Carney's Lane or the big parking lot off it. And re: Question 13 since there's no place to comment there, one standalone washroom is not enough.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:21 PM

This seems to be a passion project being spurred by some well-intentioned, but squeaky wheels. I'm so glad that you are asking for general public input to gauge whether this initiative is seen as needed by the community as a whole.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:22 PM

Please don't do this. Please let's focus on providing facilities outside of downtown for our addicted and homeless community.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:29 PM

access to a restroom is a basic human right. I fear that people experiencing homelessness are forced to use the restroom is potentially unsanitary and unsafe places without having 24/7 access to a restroom. This creates an unsanitary environment for residents as a whole. I think this is a step in the right direction to supporting people in our community who are in financially and/or mentally precarious circumstances.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:32 PM

will this be monitored? if so how often?

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:40 PM

I do believe based on the homeless issues as well as the drug issues...both very apparent in the city, a public washroom is still the least that should be available if "we" are serious about drawing people to the downtown. . How it's monitored, maintained and kept available to be used by those visiting downtown and not just as a drug haven.....I don't know.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:42 PM

Our unhoused community members deserve places to use the restroom with dignity and to avoid the need to urinate and defecate outdoors, which is a much bigger public health and safety issue than any concerns about public restrooms. Not having a public restroom does not prevent the issues of homelessness and drug use, and even those who use drugs and are unhoused deserve spaces to use the bathroom and practice basic hygiene. All bathrooms should be equipped with naloxone kits.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:42 PM

Not just one... put 10 ! The one at Kelsi is really nice

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:44 PM

This city needs to move forward on this. It is well overdue.



10/07/2025 04:45 PM

I frequently walk around downtown at night doing black and white photography. I have irritable bowel and have frequently had to cut my time short and rush home.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 02:59 PM

I think it would be more cost-effective to add the public washroom to an existing business, so that there was some supervision. Without 24/7 supervision, I think there will be issues and high cost. I think it would be helpful if OSPS had an office set up downtown and the public washroom was attached to or adjacent to their office. Perhaps offering a vacant storefront a tax waiver for allowing this type of setup would be beneficial.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:05 PM

As above

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:05 PM

This in theory is a great idea for our downtown. Unfortunately we have a very large drug and opioid population that will ruin the possibility of any families or senior citizens wanting or trying to use this facility.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:06 PM

I'm not sure about best location but since many unhoused individuals use Safe N Sound and Oshare , a24 hr bathroom on that side of town would be helpful .

Anonymous

Listen to experience of other communities who have similar facilities

10/07/2025 03:10 PM

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:26 PM

It's definitely needed.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:30 PM

As a vendor at the OSFM I heard many people have concerns when city hall closed the previous public washrooms. Nobody wants to ask to use a small store's facilities.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:31 PM

I think there currently is enough washrooms available in the district. It is an unnecessary expense.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:33 PM

I think it should be only big enough for one person at a time to avoid group/ couple use for other purposes. Not feasible for overnight sleeping. In a well lit location with easy visibility of the door. A needle drop box could be included.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:34 PM

They should be well lit and maybe within range of security cameras to monitor who uses them and for how long at a time might be needed.



10/07/2025 04:45 PM

It needs to be accessible to all and likely supervised to ensure proper use (this may need to include a camera with microphone from the monitor to the user to discourage unwanted behaviour (ie if behaviour is not good a person saying that the police have been dispatched to deal with the issue)

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:56 PM

I believe it would add to the accessibility for visitors to the river district

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:57 PM

I think a public washroom is a good idea if you got rid of those low life drug users. It would be great for downtown festival attendees.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:58 PM

Please stop supporting the indigent.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 03:59 PM

Stop talking and make it happen

Anonymous

10/07/2025 04:09 PM

No

Anonymous

10/07/2025 04:31 PM

It would be nice for visitors and shoppers but unless the downtown core can be cleaned up and made safer most people would not use it. Suggest upgrading the farmers market washroom and having it open for special events and the market.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 04:51 PM

It's long over due

Anonymous

10/07/2025 05:10 PM

Invest in property where the junkies can go be junkies in private with everything they need

Anonymous

10/07/2025 05:21 PM

No

Anonymous

10/07/2025 05:29 PM

Don't give the crackheads a new spot to fuck up

Anonymous

10/07/2025 05:30 PM

Make them chargeable. Like a loonie

Anonymous

10/07/2025 05:35 PM

As someone who frequents the district, I have needed a washroom and not been able to find one available.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 05:42 PM

We need a standalone public washroom.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 05:47 PM

I would like if you could add security outside the bathroom to prevent people from vandalizing or doing drugs or wanting to sleep inside and take it over

Anonymous

10/07/2025 05:53 PM

The more services we provide the homeless more and more will come . Im not sure where they should go but I use to shop downtown all the time now I drive 20 exyra minutes to wiarton to even go to the bank . The only reason I would support these washrooms is so they don't poo on the streets but I think unless they are monitored 24/7 they are going to be a mess Also hopefully the barrie homeless don't come here Anyone that comes to the old Bayview school and doesn't complete the program should be provided with a ride back to where they originated from not just put out on the streets of owen sound

Anonymous

10/07/2025 05:55 PM

It's not fair to rely on private business owners to supply washroom facilities to people needing to use one.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 05:55 PM

I think it's important to have 24/7 accessible washrooms BUT the city also needs to focus on cleaning up the downtown homeless and safety concerns (both real and perception)

Anonymous

10/07/2025 06:01 PM

Washroom are needed for residents and visitors and would make it easier for people to attend and enjoy activities and festivals knowing there was a washroom to use.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 06:09 PM

Regularly monitored unlike the parks around Owen sound which are left with boards on them and not taken care of at all.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 06:13 PM

I think a lot of spaces in the city need attention and I don't think they could maintain the washrooms to the level required.

[REDACTED]

10/07/2025 07:45 PM

Non gender specific washrooms are necessary to make all citizens feel welcome.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 06:33 PM

Don't waste the money

Anonymous

10/07/2025 06:46 PM

This feels like something that would raise flags for people who are concerned with vagrant populations in OS but really this feels like a very cultured European practice. Better access to washrooms (without having to buy something in a store or restaurant) is a fundamental human right and a sign of inclusion and decency in a society. I think it would make the Riverside area more hospitable.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 07:06 PM

A good location might be on the west side of 1st Ave east, just north of the market. Great addition for visitors to the farmers' market, Northern Lights, evening walks, eating at the picnic tables, special events like music, Pride, Earth Day and the like.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 07:10 PM

We need this on both sides of 2nd ave

Anonymous

10/07/2025 07:23 PM

Having a stand aline public washroom in the River District that is available 24/7 would directly decrease incidents of urination in public, etc.

[REDACTED]

10/07/2025 10:45 PM

Should be family friendly with a baby change station and perhaps a separate space for breastfeeding/care needs that aren't in the toilet

Anonymous

10/07/2025 07:33 PM

Don't do it.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 07:34 PM

There should be one at kelso park

[REDACTED]

10/07/2025 10:45 PM

Has research been done for other communities who have already implemented? What are there challenges if any. Other countries? Minimal cost? Blue purple lights for hours 5pm-9am to deter it being used for substance abuse.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 07:51 PM

I hope they could help the homeless but remain safe for them and others.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 07:57 PM

This is viewed as a potential solution to combat some of the perceived homelessness and addiction issues in the downtown. At the end of the day, it's just another service or item to enable the problem. CMHA, OShare, Safe n Sound, old Bayview School (not the river district, but close) etc are all wonderful things, but when put together, an environment has been created allows these issues to compound. Give them a standalone bathroom as well. The conversation and survey about a standalone bathroom can be masked to appear as a benefit to tourists, but this issue and potential solution stemmed from safety concerns - it won't help that. My suggestion: I'm not one for trials or pilot projects, but in this instance, install a temporary standalone portable toilet trailer (the nice kind you see at weddings) from May-October of next year. If it's legal, put a counter of some type to see how much it is used and gain an understanding of what type of maintenance would be required and how often. If it is used as intended, the maintenance would be straightforward. If it's used as a crackhouse, look out. If you need it moved for an event, move it to the desired location. If you want to experiment with different locations, move it. Perhaps it ends up being a permanent solution that can be removed in the winter so it is not mistaken for a warm place to sleep by the friendly locals. Put a wrap on it with your events schedule and make it look welcoming. Maybe it

ends up being a long term solution that alleviates any long term capital liability.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 08:02 PM

Have the outside under video surveillance



10/07/2025 10:45 PM

We need a tent zone with facilities if we can't house the homeless.



10/07/2025 10:45 PM

<https://urbenblu.com/en/> I recommend a washroom and shower for the unhoused.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 08:11 PM

During Covid shutdown, I had to pee outside discretely downtown because there was no open washroom. A standalone public washroom would have been very welcome.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 08:18 PM

They should provide round the clock access, accessibility for physically impaired users, and bottle filling stations.



10/07/2025 10:45 PM

Presently, persons are using our parking lot as a defaecation station.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 08:55 PM

Choosing a "Made in Canada" self cleaning option.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 08:57 PM

Is it really a washroom for homeless people or for the general public? Call it what it is.

Anonymous

10/07/2025 09:03 PM

Where would it be located ?

Anonymous

10/07/2025 09:15 PM

I have a disability that requires washrooms when I am out in public. I have been stuck with no where to go and no choice but to rush home. This is an accessibility issue

Anonymous

10/07/2025 10:24 PM

I do not agree this is a good idea to add to our town.

Anonymous

Na

10/08/2025 04:21 AM

Anonymous

Long overdue

10/08/2025 04:28 AM

Anonymous

I feel there's a need..however not sure if this would be a deciding factor in spending more time in RD

10/08/2025 05:14 AM

Anonymous

Constant cleaning and supervision of space would be required to make it safe for patrons.

10/08/2025 05:24 AM

Anonymous

Must be fully accessible

10/08/2025 05:43 AM

Anonymous

If the River district businesses want washrooms, they should pay for them and maintain them at no cost to the city or taxpayers.

10/08/2025 05:45 AM

Anonymous

I couldn't find the links for the self cleaning washrooms but did a quick search on the internet and these seem very practical. But I am guessing very expensive. Also having the self cleaning means a potential job removed for someone. So I am torn between the cost and less work and the potential for vandalism and misuse with washrooms such as at Harrison Park for example. I tried to place a pin on the map but with no luck...I am computer literate but for some reason it didn't work. Anyway my thought would be over by the Scotia Bank on the Main Street or on 3rd Avenue behind Scotia bank. Not really sure on that one. Tough decision

10/08/2025 05:45 AM

Anonymous

I attend the Presbyterian church on 1st Ave and we have found homeless people from gazebo using our bushes and flower beds as washroom

10/08/2025 05:59 AM



10/08/2025 07:45 AM

This is ridiculous that once again the public is being asked for input on something you have heard time and time again is a desperate need for the town. People deserve to use the washroom in privacy and dignity and it is unacceptable to have HUMAN WASTE on the sidewalks of downtown. Yes it's going to cost money but can we really afford to dither about this? Get it done for goodness sake. It is quite appalling the attitude public officials have towards this NEED, and while I know it is easier and more pleasant to ignore the problem, you cannot any longer. It is a human function, and there are humans requiring help.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 06:15 AM

If you do it , charge 1\$ or 2\$ like they do in Toronto. Pay per use would keep the people out that don't need to be in there

Anonymous

10/08/2025 06:22 AM

it has to happen! People using the riverbanks and public spaces for these essential services is totally barbaric and a blot on all of us.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 06:26 AM

Please ask the Parks and Open Space Manager and their staff what it takes to keep the current public washrooms at our ball diamonds and Harrison Park in acceptable operating condition, the operators of the East & West boat launches and the Manager of the Farmer's Market and even (to get the full context) the staff inside City Hall, at the Library, the arenas (public buildings) - what kind of resources this takes and what these people experience in doing this thankless work/as a result of open public washroom availability. IF this proceeds at any location, it needs to be done very thoughtfully, considering the best case scenario for the community as a whole, not just a marginalized minority. If the County is the level of government that receives all the funding to address the social issues, why aren't they part of this solution? Better yet, if Public Health is such a concern, where are they with their solutions? This should not be the burden of the City of Owen Sound.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 06:34 AM

Just Do It!

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:01 AM

There is a need but it would have to be clean and ope. 24/7

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:12 AM

Unless you can provide 24/7/365 security when its open AND regular cleaning of the washrooms so they don't get disgustingly dirty and give our visitors a stellar first impression of Owen Sound, I VOTE NOOOOO!!! However I've been in health care and served on various Boards long enough to know that EVERY board decision made is based on MAKING or SAVING MONEY.....RARELY is it for "THE GREATER GOOD".....Just saying!!

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:23 AM

Self Cleaning Washroom!

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:24 AM

Get out into the community, knock on doors and listen to people who pay taxes here.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:31 AM

I see it as a place to inject drugs.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:36 AM

Being inclusive of all people, making sure everyone has the right to use the washroom.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:42 AM

They should be simple, and easy to clean (ie hose out) and cleaned properly every day. No mirrors, no glass, nothing breakable. They should contain safe needle disposal on the outside by the door. Garbage can, emptied daily. Well lit, both inside and out, with protection over lights to prevent breakage. There will be vandalism so we need to plan for it with design and location. They should be small, and not terribly comfortable. Efficiency only. My vision is for the unhoused...I think most tourists can access business/existing toilets. In Orillia, last summer, I saw a long row of portapotties in their municipal parking lot. (May have been temporary for an event).

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:45 AM

I think the City should look to better spending the funds on something more productive than a stand alone washroom.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:48 AM

I think this kind of survey is difficult without cost. It's just fantasy dreaming. ie "Do you want a 24 hour clean bathroom?" --> SURE! vs "Do you want a 24 hour clean bathroom that will cost \$XX which means we will need to take money away from ?" --> Oh wait... maybe not.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:51 AM

I am an employee at a business in the River District. I have observed people going to the bathroom outside my office window in the parking lot and near mine and my coworkers vehicles. It would be nice if people had somewhere to go to improve their situation and so they do not have to resort to going in a parking lot and so other people who are not equip/qualified do not have to clean up human waste to access their place of work.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:56 AM

I do think a washroom is a good idea for people who like to walk and fish

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:08 AM

I would not use a porta-potty personally. I don't think this is a viable option.

Anonymous

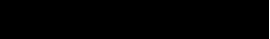
10/08/2025 08:29 AM

need change table for when I walk my grandchildren and many stalls.
When little's need to use the washroom, it is often in a hurry

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:31 AM

Please provide a "panic button" inside each washroom/stall that connects to emergency services. Please have staff that will check the washrooms for misuse or possible overdoses. Please have an area outside the washroom that has booklets with information about crisis services, mental health services and intervention services in the area. A map that shows some of the wonderful spaces and businesses in Owen Sound for visitors would be great too!

 10/08/2025 10:45 AM

After hours and Sundays are lack of services to downtown. In Europe these facilities are put to good use. Personally I think a couple of portapotty units would suffice for the times needed.

 10/08/2025 10:45 AM

Some sort of an alarm system connected to a motion sensor for night time use to prevent people from sleeping in it

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:41 AM

Public washrooms are very much needed in downtown Owen Sound. I took my grandma out a few weeks ago for an evening stroll, and due to her age she wet herself before we could find an open bathroom.

 10/08/2025 10:45 AM

make sure they are cleaned daily

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:44 AM

In looking at solutions from other cities, the Urban Blu team provide a Canadian-made design that addresses some of my concerns. <https://urbanblu.com/en/faq/> How can Urban Blu restrooms help people with drug addiction or homelessness? Our restrooms are designed to improve living conditions for everyone who uses them, whether in a park, a city center or a train station, and whatever their personal situation (drug problems, homelessness, etc.). To prevent abuse and ensure fair use, we've integrated a warning system. If a person exceeds the allotted time, the door opens automatically, accompanied by a voice message inviting them to leave the restroom. An e-mail alert can also be configured to inform the city's designated officials, enabling them to react quickly and appropriately. When choosing a location, it's essential to take into account the principles recommended by CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design), including : Visibility and natural surveillance: Good lighting and optimized landscaping improve visibility and deter undesirable behavior, as criminals prefer to avoid being observed.

Natural access control: Directing the flow of people and clearly separating public and private areas discourages unauthorized access to sensitive areas. Territorial reinforcement: Elements such as signage, fencing and artwork reinforce a sense of community and encourage social control. Good housekeeping practices: A clean, well-maintained environment reduces the perception of crime and inspires greater respect for the premises. Thanks to these measures, our washrooms combine safety, accessibility and harmonious integration into their surroundings.



10/08/2025 08:46 AM

people have been calling for this a long time. Time to implement.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:49 AM

It would prevent folks from having to smell or see urine and feces in the river district

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:51 AM

I do believe that it would be beneficial to have a public washroom, as having access to a washroom is the bare minimum for basic human rights and dignity. I just think it could be incredibly flawed if it is not fully planned out and thought through given the population of the River district.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:58 AM

Self-cleaning bathrooms like Toyko or France that whenever someone is done, it cleans itself. Set a timer for how long someone can be in the bathroom.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 09:11 AM

This is needed. I work in the River District and every day people are asking to use our washroom or looking for a washroom to use.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 09:38 AM

Good on you for consulting the public!

Anonymous

10/08/2025 09:41 AM

If it will be open 24/7 how will cleanliness be maintained and vandalism prevented. What security is planned for it? Is it intended for tourists at 2:00 a.m.? Not sure this is logical or, is this washroom being installed specifically for a certain segment of the population?

Anonymous

10/08/2025 09:54 AM

Just get one or two of these. <https://urbanblu.com/en/smart-and-self-cleaning-public-restrooms/>

Anonymous

10/08/2025 09:54 AM

If going forward, there must be measures put in place to discourage misuse. Could include music constantly being played, self cleaning, well lit, etc.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 10:04 AM

Access to clean, safe public washrooms is a fundamental public service — not a luxury. It's an essential part of building inclusive, livable communities and supporting the dignity of everyone who lives, works, or visits here. Washrooms are part of basic public infrastructure, just like sidewalks, transit stops, and streetlights. They allow parents with young children, older adults, tourists, workers, and people without stable housing to participate fully in public life. This is a service that rightly belongs in the public realm. Governments have a responsibility to ensure equitable access to essential facilities; it should not be left to businesses or the private sector to fill that gap. When we provide public washrooms, we're not just addressing a practical need — we're affirming a community value: that everyone deserves dignity, safety, and a place to be.

[REDACTED]

10/08/2025 10:45 AM

This is something that the community has been discussing and asking for for a long time now. This would be an addition to the River District that would be of benefit to so many groups within our community. It's understandable that it comes with cost and challenges, but it would provide dignity and relief for so many.

[REDACTED]

10/08/2025 10:24 AM

It seems to me that the general fear is adding a public washroom may invite misuse or make the downtown more suitable for a certain type of person. I think we need to recognize that imbedded in that sentiment is the acknowledgment this would make the downtown more inviting. The times when the downtown feels the "safest" (if we choose to use that language) is when it's busy. Anything to invite more people should in my opinion have the types of effects the community is looking for. Having an easily accessed public washroom on the east side of the street would be so helpful during the Santa Claus parade, pride, etc. Having a public washroom anywhere would make that space more attractive for event organizers as well.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 10:24 AM

Is it possible to make the existing washrooms, ie at the boat launch, farmers market sites accessible 24/7?

Anonymous

10/08/2025 10:31 AM

Owen Sound is one of the cities highest paying taxes in Ontario. Let's try to think how to keep costs down instead of installing washrooms which will cause more work for city workers and our tax dollars.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 10:37 AM

For many, many years I have been frustrated many times about the lack of a public bathroom downtown. What are we supposed to do, pee in an alley? I think this is a very, very good idea.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 11:02 AM

this will cost local tax payers more money with no added benefit

Anonymous

10/08/2025 11:19 AM

"Build it, and they will come." No thanks.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 11:31 AM

I'm very disappointed that the voice of one person has led to time and money being wasted on this idea. Not all ideas need to be carried out.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 11:56 AM

Just a thought, but perhaps they could be " pay to go", to discourage vandalism.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 12:09 PM

I think it needs to be part of a bigger plan of a pedestrian wrote around the River district you have done great work but things aren't clearly marked and the one New walkway is not visible or hard to get to. Things need to be clearly marked and have a safe path for pedestrians with safe crosswalks etc. I went down to walk my baby around and it honestly made me feel a bit uncomfortable. Seeing just homeless people hanging out at the gazebo and all over. I didn't see too many visitors or tourists. I know this is of concern for every municipality. I envision public washrooms as well as a clear pedestrian path connecting the harbor front from the downtown.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 12:37 PM

I generally support this concept. Self cleaning? Not sure if they are more susceptible to damage. Might some of those structure portable ones be another (cheaper?) alternative? Like the kind sauble beach had a few years ago. Not sure I have a specific preference but would hope appropriate analysis accompanies the end result.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 12:41 PM

In Guelph they have a glass walled washroom to reduce misuse which I think worked well.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 12:55 PM

Waste of our money

Anonymous

Security cameras likely needed. Should be placed in a well lit area.

10/08/2025 01:41 PM

Anonymous

10/08/2025 01:44 PM

Put one the town hall

Anonymous

10/08/2025 02:13 PM

Clean up the people there that don't bring any value to the space. Then you will see an increase in people using the space for a good benefit.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 02:27 PM

As someone who lives downtown, I am lucky to always be able to have access to a private bathroom. This is not true for everyone living in or visiting the river district, and while I wouldn't have much use for the facility, I would be happy to see my tax dollars go to this service to support dignity and accessibility for people who would need it, just as I am happy to support transit even though I have a car, parks even though I have a yard, etc. Tax dollars should go towards the common good regardless of my personal benefit, and I would be happy for the City to invest in this.



10/08/2025 04:45 PM

We just returned from visiting Canada's east coast provinces. Most cities and towns visited had public washrooms available near their core areas and tourist areas. It's really unbelievable that at this point in time there's no public accessible toilet facility along the whole length of the river front. Portable toilets are sometimes installed for fishing derbys but nothing brick and mortar.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 02:58 PM

When you need a bathroom, the easier to find one the better for all - but it's not just as simple as plopping one down then shutting it down a year later because it's been abused/vandalized.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 03:07 PM

Keep locked after hours? Constant camera surveillance for homeless and drug use



10/08/2025 04:45 PM

There should probably be a couple.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 03:34 PM

Perhaps put a cheap one in so you can use it as a future example when it gets destroyed

Anonymous

10/08/2025 03:38 PM

Visited Elora Ontario for the weekend recently and they had a standalone washroom downtown, that was self cleaning. It was super

clean and I noticed it was used quite often. I used it a few times w my family, and was really impressed by the cleanliness of it and we felt safe using it.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 03:39 PM

I would highly suggest we first improve the safety of our downtown core to encourage our community to come back and support local businesses therefore being able to use washroom facilities being a customer. So many families avoid the downtown core completely (as we do) because of the many situations we have encountered and lack of safety.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 03:45 PM

Sharps disposal bin inside the public washroom to reduce chances of sharps in garbage bins/improperly disposed.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 03:55 PM

Other than the folks sleeping on the bank, who will use it after midnight? The folks that are urinating or dedicating are going to go right where there are at that moment

Anonymous

10/08/2025 04:02 PM

No

Anonymous

10/08/2025 04:05 PM

I fully support an standalone bathroom. If a plan and system is in place for misuse and possible medical emergencies.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 05:11 PM

Please make this a priority!

Anonymous

10/08/2025 05:19 PM

Concerned for safety

Anonymous

10/08/2025 05:21 PM

If we have managed to survive this long without one, what is driving this now? Plenty of roads could use the funding.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 05:32 PM

I personally would never use them unless absolutely necessary so I don't really care either way

Anonymous

10/08/2025 05:38 PM

Just wondering if it would be accessible for patrons in wheelchairs or caregivers of someone in a wheelchair

[REDACTED]

10/08/2025 05:41 PM

Spend the money on eliminating the addicts and dealers, get a real police chief.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 05:42 PM

I am all for having washrooms that we can use, but with the people that use them for doing drugs etc. I am sure I won't be opening the door to be traumatized by what may be in there.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 05:56 PM

Creating more unsightly situations in the downtown / River District will actually discourage visitors / tourists.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 06:13 PM

It's another space for crime increase, drug use, kids/public being exposed to more drug use and drug paraphernalia. Safety issue for public.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 06:26 PM

If it wasn't for the people that would misuse the public washrooms, I think this would be a great addition to the River district.

[REDACTED]

10/08/2025 07:45 PM

Very much needed, especially in a time where local businesses will not allow people to use their washrooms unless they're purchasing something.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 06:37 PM

Don't do it! Stop wasting our tax dollars on crap, the river district is terrible already!

Anonymous

10/08/2025 06:47 PM

Consider attaching to a local business and having business hours. Speak with Southampton about the challenges they have had with their external washroom at the library.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 06:50 PM

needs some kind of security or will be used by people to shoot up

Anonymous

10/08/2025 06:56 PM

If deemed necessary for events/festivals, perhaps porta potties could be brought in. Also, are there not public washrooms in City Hall?

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:03 PM

I am pleased to see this conversation happening and hope that it moves forward.

Anonymous

It seems there are many public bathrooms available already, as listed

10/08/2025 07:26 PM

on the Owen Sound website, plus a 24 hour washroom available at the police station. This is not a priority for Owen Sound tax payers.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:31 PM

As a business owner I have had to clean feces off my entrance many times. The reason I am given is that there isn't access to toilets when safe n sound is closed at night.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:40 PM

It is an absolute disgrace to think that someone on council, thought it was a good idea to waste tax payers dollars on a public washroom, when the downtown core is an absolute disaster.



10/08/2025 10:45 PM

This is too long overdue. If we want to attract people to the River District, we need to provide basic amenities for the people who live here, and the people who visit.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:43 PM

Our tax money!! Owen sound has one the highest paying taxes in most of Ontario. We can't afford things like this that will not help the downtown area. Just like spending however much money was spent on the side street that no one uses!

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:44 PM

While the idea is great, it can be foreseen as a draw for people wishing to misuse the facilities and may deter tourists even further.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:45 PM

Put the money into cleaning up the river district and making it safe and welcoming.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:52 PM

Its RIDICULOUS that we expect visitors to shop down town and enjoy iur waterfront without a washroom for use.

Anonymous

10/08/2025 07:54 PM

If you do it don't let it go to shambles like so many other things have downtown

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:00 PM

Don't lock it! Maintain it! Put the washroom near the Farmers Market building. Thank you! (& please open all of the other washrooms in the city).

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:13 PM

Waste of money

Anonymous

10/08/2025 08:21 PM

Not necessary ! Would you be putting public washrooms elsewhere in the city ?

Anonymous

10/08/2025 09:03 PM

I think having a public washroom would be beneficial but I also think the city needs to stop spending money on that area. There has been beautiful work done there but is unusable due to drug paraphernalia laying around. Homelessness and drug use needs to get under control before we spend more money on encouraging people to visit the area.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 12:37 AM

Its a good idea but not for owen sound and definetly not for downtown owen sound maybe if it was somewhere else in owen sound it might be okay but yea

Anonymous

10/09/2025 05:04 AM

There are washrooms in restaurants and stores if you are a customer which is what makes cities prosperous. We don't need more free public spots for people who do not help our businesses thrive.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 05:15 AM

I would support a portable toilet specifically for the homeless people. There already are plumbed washrooms available at city hall and the farmers market. Perhaps the city could extend the hours and increase the fairmont security patrol they already have going around the city. There are also facilities at the Tim Hortons and the library. There isn't much happening in the RD once things close, which is why I would support a portable toilet or even a pay-per-use self cleaning facility that has been seen in other locations such as Tokyo. Owen Sound should declare a state of emergency like Barrie did to help enforce these people to accept the help offered or relocate!

Anonymous

10/09/2025 06:52 AM

I don't think there will ever be a perfect solution given many struggles presently. I think if a washroom is placed in a public, well lighted and well travelled area that would help and police and businesses could monitor things better. I suspect some businesses do not want public use of their facilities at all. It would also be good to pay a good fee to a cleaner/maintenance person so it is kept clean. It may have to be locked at some point overnight for sure.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 06:56 AM

Don't waste money making one.

Anonymous

I congratulate you for considering this idea as public washroom

10/09/2025 07:04 AM

facilities are needed throughout Canada. It should not be the responsibility of business owners to accommodate everyone's toileting needs, visitors or otherwise. I have seen and used public toilet facilities in many countries, from state of the art to a hole in the ground and have always found Canada lacking. It is important that we accommodate this human need

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:08 AM

I have a 1 year old daughter and a lot of the downtown businesses dont provide a change table in their washrooms so I have to change my daighter at the library or tim hortons if its open or try and find a clean park bench or grass to change her on

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:09 AM

We need our public funds use to move the drugs and people off these streets. Not more tents, not more awareness. Get them out and somewhere else to be treated proper or in an institution.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:22 AM

It is a waste of money. Public washrooms in the river district exist already.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:23 AM

Many times I have driven Amish to visit Northern Lights a washroom would be a bonus and maybe close it at midnight.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:24 AM

The need for a bathroom is a basic biological necessity that is not divided by race, politics, finances, anything!. Please work on covering this basic universal need of human beings. Would you build a house without a bathroom? Do restaurants and businesses include a bathroom for their clients in their design plans? Provincial parks have bathrooms in their campgrounds. Instead of pissing (pun intended) so much money away on the art gallery that serves a very limited and narrow demographic. Put that money to a location where 100% of people can take a piss. Speaking of the art gallery, why is it never used as an after hours warming station during severe winter weather. Again a building sitting there empty, heated, with bathrooms, that cannot be accessed by those in need.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:26 AM

It is a much needed amenity in our city. Or will require regular supervision / monitoring to prevent mis use and vandalism. Foot patrols by police or volunteers?

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:44 AM

Not needed due to he misuse of them

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:47 AM

A good addition for the general downtown visitors. But management, policing would have to be consistent.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:51 AM

It would have to be a patrolled area.



10/09/2025 10:45 AM

We treat our homeless terribly!! It is heartbreaking. The bare minimum would be to provide a bathroom.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 08:15 AM

I am not opposed to this project; however, it's important to be transparent about who will actually be using these spaces. Suggesting that this initiative is intended for tourists or to promote tourism is misleading. Ongoing monitoring, regular cleaning, and appropriate needle disposal measures will need to be part of the plan.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 08:23 AM

You can go into other places and use the bathrooms, a “public” bathroom in the middle of where our crisis is, is not the idea. Nobody will be using it other than the homeless, nobody else will want to go into the bathrooms due to the same reason so why put them there it's a waste of money and resources.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 08:25 AM

<https://mrcrec.com/smart-bathrooms>
<https://www.bing.com/videos/riverview/relatedvideo?q=popup+self-cleaning+washroom&mid=6D628F5B703B6E32CDCC6D628F5B703B6E32CDCC&mmscn=stvo&FORM=VIRE>

Anonymous

10/09/2025 09:01 AM

These seem vital to me, especially in a city with many older residents. The burden is currently on business owners and others (library, farmer's market) etc. and that is taxing for owners and staff at these spaces.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 09:13 AM

Washrooms could have a pay to use lock on the door as in many countries. Prevents most misuse of these facilities. Also helps keep the cost down for local residents.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 09:23 AM

Definitely needed for homeless people



Just keep it clean, and make it inclusive. Muslim visitors prefer bidets.

10/09/2025 10:45 AM

Others want a vault on the floor. As long as it can be washed down after every use, this is fine. In Paris I saw street stalls that hosed themselves down after each use. They were single use stalls that one person at a time went into, so everyone on the street was aware it was in use, and it was sanitized after each use. Very effective.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 10:13 AM

Although a good idea in theory, it will be misused and not cared for, resulting in high costs for maintenance and cleaning and non-use by individuals it was intended for who may support the river district. This was tried a few years ago with the addition of porta-potties in various places including the harbour wall, but the company eventually pulled them out due to the misuse and destruction of them. This will be no different unless staffed, which isn't practical.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 10:16 AM

It's good to see police on foot patrol in the area. I feel these facilities would be more helpful if regular check ups were conducted

Anonymous

10/09/2025 10:59 AM

At this time it's a mistake, if downtown was cleaned up it would be different as these concerns would not happen as often. Currently it would be a disaster. We need to take our downtown back. Invest in building facade improvement grants , attract businesses to downtown. Dining , entertainment , retail in that order. I have worked with Canada's largest shopping malls for over 20 years and that's how we build successful Retail hubs.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 11:09 AM

Perhaps the city should focus more on cleaning up the downtown/River district and making it a safer place for people to enjoy before adding a building thats going to end up being another misused eye sore.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 11:42 AM

I can't support the plan at this point without knowing how my concerns will be addressed.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 12:06 PM

People should not have to pee or poop in the river or alley. Roam figured it out it's beyond a public health hazard and it makes downtown gross people don't want to come here anymore

Anonymous

10/09/2025 12:57 PM

-I would never feel safe walking into one and they will be used for drugs -I would never let my kids/elder walk into one

Anonymous

10/09/2025 01:50 PM

Safety to the citizens and visitors of Owen Sound should be #1 priority. Security needs to be a HUGE priority in the downtown core!

Anonymous

10/09/2025 02:41 PM

This is a poor use of money.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 03:18 PM

No

[REDACTED]

10/09/2025 04:45 PM

of course we need a public washroom downtown, to serve the unhoused members of our community. i don't understand why our council doesn't think these members of our community deserve these public services, but it's obviously necessary to any compassionate human.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 04:57 PM

Great idea and it's availability would give us greater freedom to wander downtown longer.

Anonymous

10/09/2025 07:25 PM

Making sure bathrooms are open during the weekday and on weekends however keeping it closed over night

Anonymous

10/09/2025 08:47 PM

Don't waste your money. You can't even open the Bathrooms at the ball diamond down town. Why add another one .

Anonymous

10/10/2025 05:38 AM

Maybe the City could give business/property owners a break in taxes, or a annual kick back, if their business provided and posted at the business door that public washroom access is available in their secure building.

[REDACTED]

10/10/2025 07:45 AM

It will help with the public urination and defecation currently going on downtown and if well maintained become a benefit to the RD. Especially with an aging population, having somewhere relieve ourselves is important.

[REDACTED]

10/10/2025 10:45 AM

My biggest concern would be misuse with the current clientele using the public areas of the RD.

[REDACTED]

10/10/2025 10:45 AM

I like the approach they use in many European tourist areas where they have someone that is employed to maintain the space. One that

stands out was a trailer port a potty set up with several stalls. The employee granted access to stall and inspected it to ensure clean before going in, adequately supplied, garbage maintained and sprayed with some kind disinfectant spray before you went in. They were the cleanest public washroom ever. Self maintained to me doesn't work and by having someone as an attendant it deters people from using space for things it they are not intended for. The cost proposed for the self clean option that I don't believe will make a difference could pay for a different option and maybe employ people (you would need to ensure it's the right people to manage as they would need to be responsible, respectful and attentive). I've also seen some of these spaces set up with showers on one side and washroom on other side. I would also hope that city takes inventory of potential vacant properties that could be converted to a solution if possible. I would love to see a small tourist centre that could provide washroom solutions, information to what's available in our fine town, even ability to sell tickets to community arts, sports and entertainment and highly visible as a "tourist centre". I'm not sure who owns the old nursing home on corner of 10th and 4th west but what a shame it sits empty. It's a central location, highly visible, parking wish someone would make better use of this space instead of seeing it empty for several years and not being cared for as before too long it will be in worst condition and an eyesore for community and visitors to look at as they travel through our city. We need to take inventory of what we have an maximize it for working solutions.

Anonymous

10/10/2025 12:56 PM

If the city is so determined to do this. Please make sure the design is the one from Japan. They are clear glass units, that frost over when in use. They are fully self cleaning when a person exits. They have a timer, with a call to police when it exceeds amount of time a person sits/uses by an individual.

Anonymous

10/10/2025 02:54 PM

Everyone who visits the downtown needs a clean, well maintained, and accessible washroom to use as needed. We have a very small bathroom in our back store. We do let anyone who asks use it, but it's not a great situation if we are alone staffing the store, which is often. Having a bathroom to direct people to would be great. Also, there are many people surviving homeless in and around our downtown area. They need a dignified and clean place to go to the washroom. Having a 24 hour well maintained and well lit bathroom will make the downtown cleaner and safer for all. The cleaner and safer our downtown is for all, the more foot traffic we will have in our stores and businesses. An accessible 24 hour washroom in the downtown would be fantastic.

Anonymous 10/11/2025 05:41 AM	They will only be another draw for an increase in the number of unhoused to congregate and stay. Another opportunity for uncontrolled drug trafficking and use. More residential tax money going the wrong way. Owen Sound tax payers deserve better.
Anonymous 10/11/2025 06:08 AM	no
Anonymous 10/11/2025 12:54 PM	Public safety
Anonymous 10/11/2025 01:07 PM	Blue light restrooms are used in UK to prevent some misuse by drug users. While they need a safe space, the public restrooms should not be that place. A maintenance schedule will be needed to keep facilities in acceptable condition; failure to do this could result in a crippling backlash that would make this investment a case study in what NOT to do in a community. You can imagine that even a few social media posts picturing filthy, unsafe facilities would be really really unfortunate for the City.
Anonymous 10/11/2025 05:52 PM	When out with my mother (80 yrs old), a bathroom is a frequent and often urgent need. Accessible, free, easy to find bathrooms are highly valued in her experience of the world.
Anonymous 10/11/2025 06:13 PM	No
Anonymous 10/12/2025 06:56 AM	If you spend time at the farmer's market, you will see that many people use that washroom location. It's a public service that should be expected and provided.
Anonymous 10/12/2025 07:53 AM	I understand the point of it but it will lead to another spot like the pavilion by the library, just another homeless hang out spot
Anonymous 10/13/2025 05:06 AM	It would be far better to move safe and saying and the share to an area outside of the river district to allow residents and tourists to feel comfortable to return.
Anonymous 10/13/2025 05:41 AM	Cons outweigh the pros!

Anonymous

10/13/2025 06:36 AM

very expensive to maintain and operate if kept to high standards
which should be a goal

Anonymous

10/13/2025 07:04 AM

- if you are looking at home to the river district could we make a point
where you need to purchase something to access the facilities such
as a scan of a receipt ect. - have it such as big malls in order to
access the family areas you need to buzz in and there is a camera
and a staff letting in reach person - should only be open during the
river district stores hours / events

Anonymous

10/13/2025 07:48 AM

Hourly inspection and sanitation

Anonymous

10/13/2025 08:36 AM

I think you need to clean up the downtown so people enjoy visiting
the downtown without fear.



10/13/2025 10:45 AM

Maybe put it in the police station.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 09:48 AM

No

Anonymous

10/13/2025 10:00 AM

Too little, too late. Anything is better than having unhoused people
defecating in storefronts.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 10:07 AM

.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 10:38 AM

This will further enable the continuing of their chosen lifestyle and
expand the population of this demographic in this city.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 11:01 AM

Having the washrooms close at a certain time so people aren't using
it as a place to sleep. Also having regular maintenance and cleaning
would be extremely important. A lot of stores have washrooms for
customers only so a public washroom would be helpful in that aspect.
Also for events, people with small kids it's not ideal bringing them in
to outhouses...who sits on those seats eeeek

Anonymous

10/13/2025 11:13 AM

We should think of taking care of our infrastructure here in the city
due to the age of some of it before we think of public washrooms.

Maybe we don't need to get some new equipment / pickup trucks etc just to see workers drive around all day not really doing anything and put that money where really needed. Let's get our city like brand new again.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 11:26 AM

It might be better to invest in upgrading current public washrooms, increase support in cleaning them, and awareness (signage) of the locations. It doesn't help the 24/7 idea, but it would be helpful to the average River District visitor.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 11:54 AM

If it gets installed I would suggest daily cleaning and make it available during specific hours with frequent checks

Anonymous

10/13/2025 01:29 PM

EMS using homeless and drug addicts to boost there hours and rate of pay, please Ian Boddy fix this problem.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 01:30 PM

I thi k youre wasting taxpayer money slapping "lipstick on a pig" this town is disgusting. Riddled with tents, clothing and random stolen resources (carts etc.) You guys are pouring money into things that arent CURRENT issues. Clean up this PIT of a town before you build more.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 01:42 PM

Loitering laws need to be enforced. Why aren't they?

Anonymous

10/13/2025 04:14 PM

I know you want everyone in the river district but it is actually a scary place. When I go to my hair dressers there are always people sleeping on the benches around City Hall. That's not a good impression and nothing will make the river district desirable not even a washroom facility. Majority of people go there to do their business then leave.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 05:04 PM

Please strongly reconsider this and don't do it.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 07:11 PM

Perhaps begin with a trial of Porta Potties with handwashing station and see if they get used without being vandalized rather than spending a significant amount of money on permanent stand alone washrooms.

Anonymous

10/13/2025 08:58 PM

If anything, portable would be a good start. Could assess issues with an easy opt out (getting rid of them) if it is a bust

Anonymous

10/13/2025 11:25 PM

Where is the money coming from to pay for this ? How well will it be maintained ? Will it be closed due to misuse and vandalism more than it is openn?

Anonymous

10/14/2025 06:06 AM

It would need 24 hr security before seniors would use that space.

Anonymous

10/14/2025 06:17 AM

No public washroom is needed. Store owners should not allow public access to their washroom facilities unless you are a customer. The unhoused have access to a washroom 24 7 by visiting the police station. There are enough public washrooms open during the day for visitors/others to use. The downtown core is fading away due to the open drug use, the unhoused roaming and sleeping on the streets. Garbage and dog feces on the sidewalks. No variety of shops. Take the money and spend it on another sidewalk snowplough, everyone will benefit from this.



10/14/2025 07:45 AM

I recently travelled to Quebec City. In Old Quebec City, on the main business district there was a building renovated into a public washroom. It was accessible, with 10 separate stalls. It was very clean and always well stocked. And it was well used and in the center of the business district and not hidden behind a building or in an alley but in plain site. Granted there was no visible homeless issue as they were likely kept to a different part of the city I imagine.

Anonymous

10/14/2025 09:59 AM

I think that if washroom facilities are going to be integrated, I think consideration of showers and an outdoor fitness facility. I do believe these facilities should have closing hours, and not be open all night to prevent misuse. Additionally, traditional washrooms with someone cleaning them manually, would help to note whether there are concerns with plumbing, damage or other concerns.

Anonymous

10/14/2025 10:04 AM

I think this is a ridiculous idea. No one wants to catch diseases or see needles in it if they had to use it.

Anonymous

10/14/2025 11:26 AM

thanks for looking into this

[REDACTED]

10/14/2025 01:45 PM

I have many times peed in the bushes by the river because there were no open washrooms to use. This was before I had a River District business myself to go use the washroom at. I am a regular person who goes to fewer events and does less shopping downtown because of lack of facilities. No one, business owner, customer, homeless, or anything else should be forced to expose themselves outdoors and risk ticketing because we are too worried about possible issues to provide proper and humane facilities.

Anonymous

10/14/2025 12:28 PM

Is it possible to have one or two outside the River District as well?

Anonymous

10/14/2025 12:40 PM

-is there not already a public washroom at the police station?

Anonymous

10/14/2025 01:06 PM

Signage! Public awareness! Residents and visitors don't know where public washrooms are or when they're open.

Anonymous

10/14/2025 01:06 PM

no.

[REDACTED]

10/14/2025 02:13 PM

Do it! Super common in good cities.

Anonymous

10/14/2025 03:23 PM

Yeah one is badly needed near Rexal. I live in the apartment building beside Rexal and everytime I go outside all I smell is human pee and sometimes poop. It is nasty. The homeless need bathrooms too.

[REDACTED]

10/14/2025 07:45 PM

We need multiple washroom that are fully accessible and open 24 hours per day 365 days per year

[REDACTED]

10/14/2025 07:45 PM

Essential for dignity for all people. Would reduce the incidents of folks using public spaces as washrooms.

Anonymous

10/14/2025 06:56 PM

Who will monitor and keep them clean and safe for use

Anonymous

10/14/2025 09:07 PM

The amount of money that would be spent would be better used elsewhere. Owen Sounds downtown is the most poorly lit downtown I have ever seen. Put better brighter street lights in instead of a washroom, that would serve the community at large much better than

a washroom that will be taken over by the criminal element lurking in the dark downtown



10/15/2025 07:45 AM

Will it be open in winter? Heated?

Anonymous

10/15/2025 07:14 AM

I think it's absurd that a survey like this might be given weight. As a matter of public policy, washrooms improve public health, economic activity, inclusivity and community well-being. Input shouldn't be sought on "whether" to have them, but where to site them.

Anonymous

10/15/2025 08:16 AM

I work in the River District and it is incredible how many tourists are discouraged by the lack of public washrooms available after 5pm or when most stores / city hall are closed.



10/15/2025 10:45 AM

Wouldn't using the washroom we already have be a better option?



10/15/2025 10:45 AM

No.



10/15/2025 10:45 AM

N/A

Anonymous

10/15/2025 09:26 AM

It's simply asking for trouble.



10/15/2025 10:45 AM

Often the biggest complainers about public washrooms are the ones that have no need for it so in fact, it might not even concern them

Anonymous

10/15/2025 12:30 PM

Like any city infrastructure, washrooms are critical. The question should be WHERE do we want this so that I can be kept safe and clean and offer value to the entire River District.

Anonymous

10/15/2025 01:49 PM

Public washrooms are available at the library, market and city hall. Not sure why more are needed. If i had to go outside of these hours I would buy a coffee at Tims and go there. If washrooms are put in the river district, they should consider having patrons pay like they do in Europe. Would help with the cost of operating and perhaps cut down on vandalism and mis-use.

Anonymous

10/15/2025 01:59 PM

There are pros and cons to a standalone washroom. Misuse is a con, but the pro would be that people would have a publicly available washroom to use 24/7 and they wouldn't have to defecate on the sidewalk or green space if there's no washroom available to use. That would certainly help to beautify the area.

Anonymous

10/15/2025 05:36 PM

Find out what is best practice in other towns. What's working? What isn't? You don't have to reinvent the wheel. Get something like the Portland Loo

Anonymous

10/15/2025 06:40 PM

Enforcement nor people defecating or loitering downtown. Adequate housing for those under housed. Maybe put some porta potties near Safe and Sound or OShare away from downtown.

Anonymous

10/15/2025 07:36 PM

Theres bigger fish to fry down town before you go worrying about additional washrooms

Anonymous

10/16/2025 04:11 AM

Cleaning.....hr of operations1

Anonymous

10/16/2025 06:53 AM

The river district is slowly becoming a homeless camp / shelter and it's making community members less likely to shop downtown due to safety concerns. Also seeing inappropriate stuff for children downtown.

Anonymous

10/16/2025 09:03 AM

With self-cleaning washrooms that are in a well-lit area, possibly with music, most issues can be avoided. For those issues that can't be avoided, I imagine our staff is quite capable of being trained as well as in any other city to deal with them.

Anonymous

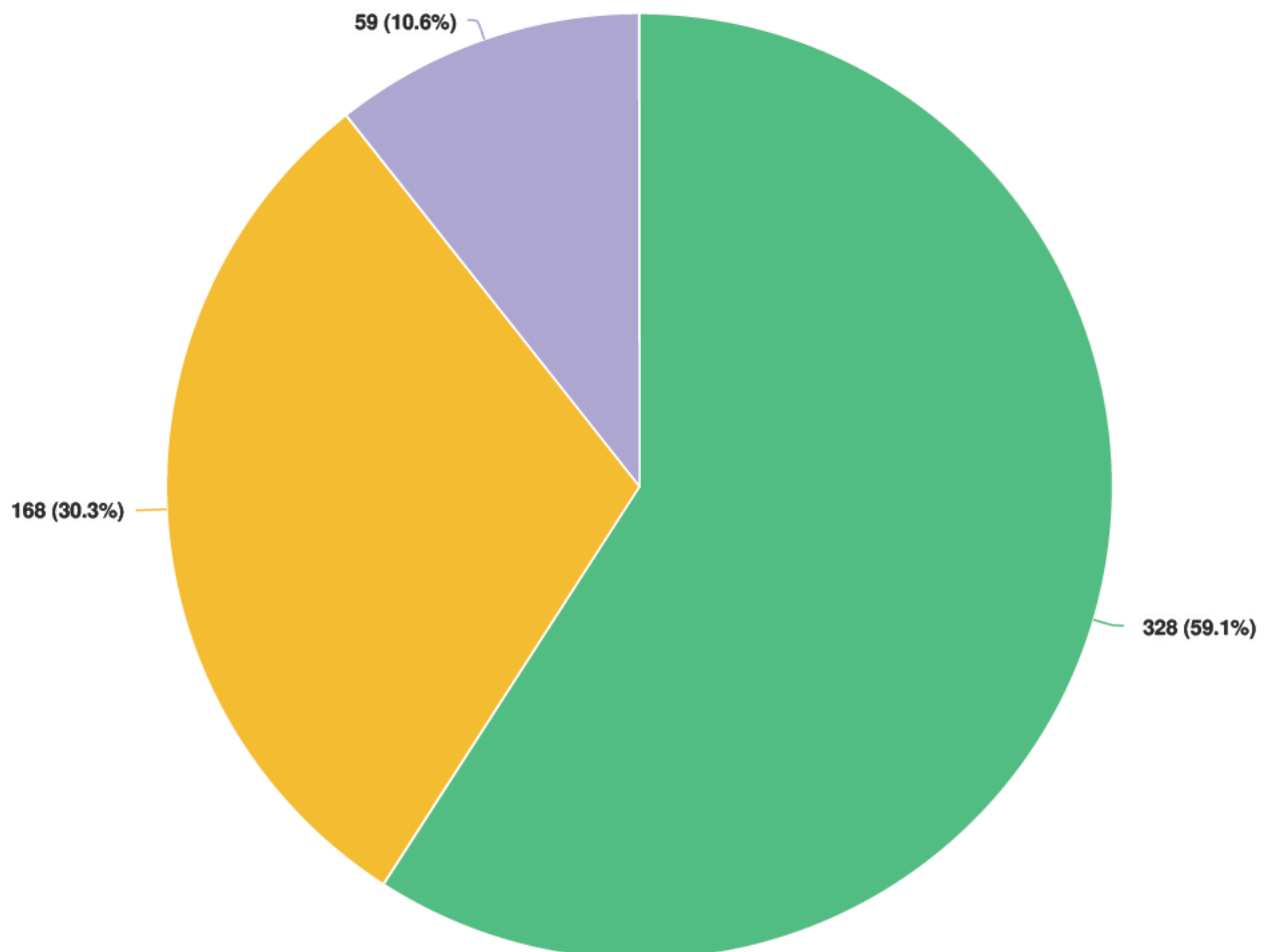
10/16/2025 11:39 AM

We have to try something

Optional question (301 response(s), 254 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Q16 | Do you support the concept of adding a standalone public washroom in the River District?



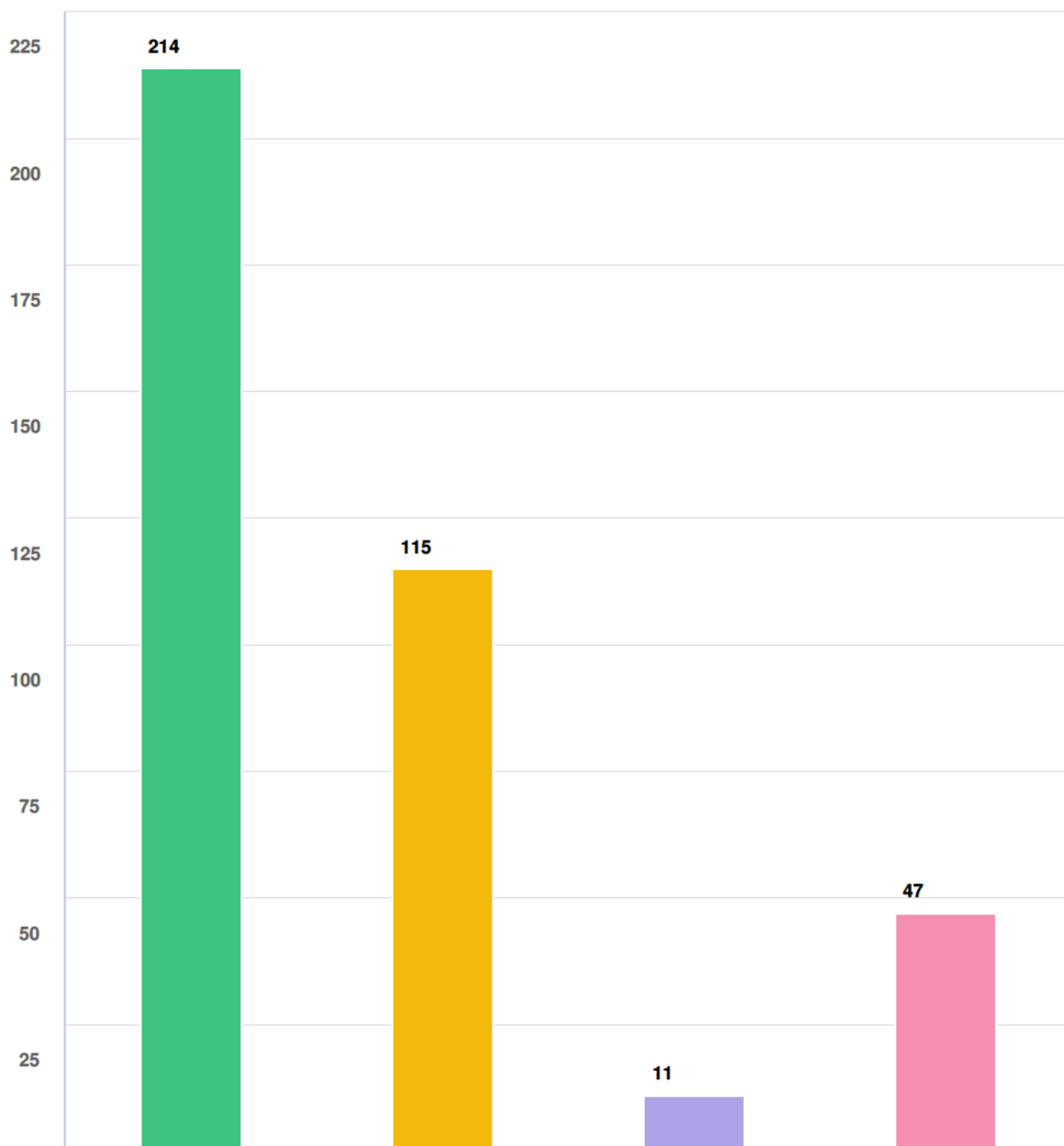
Question options

● Yes ● No ● Maybe

Mandatory Question (555 response(s))

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q17 What type of standalone public washroom would you prefer?

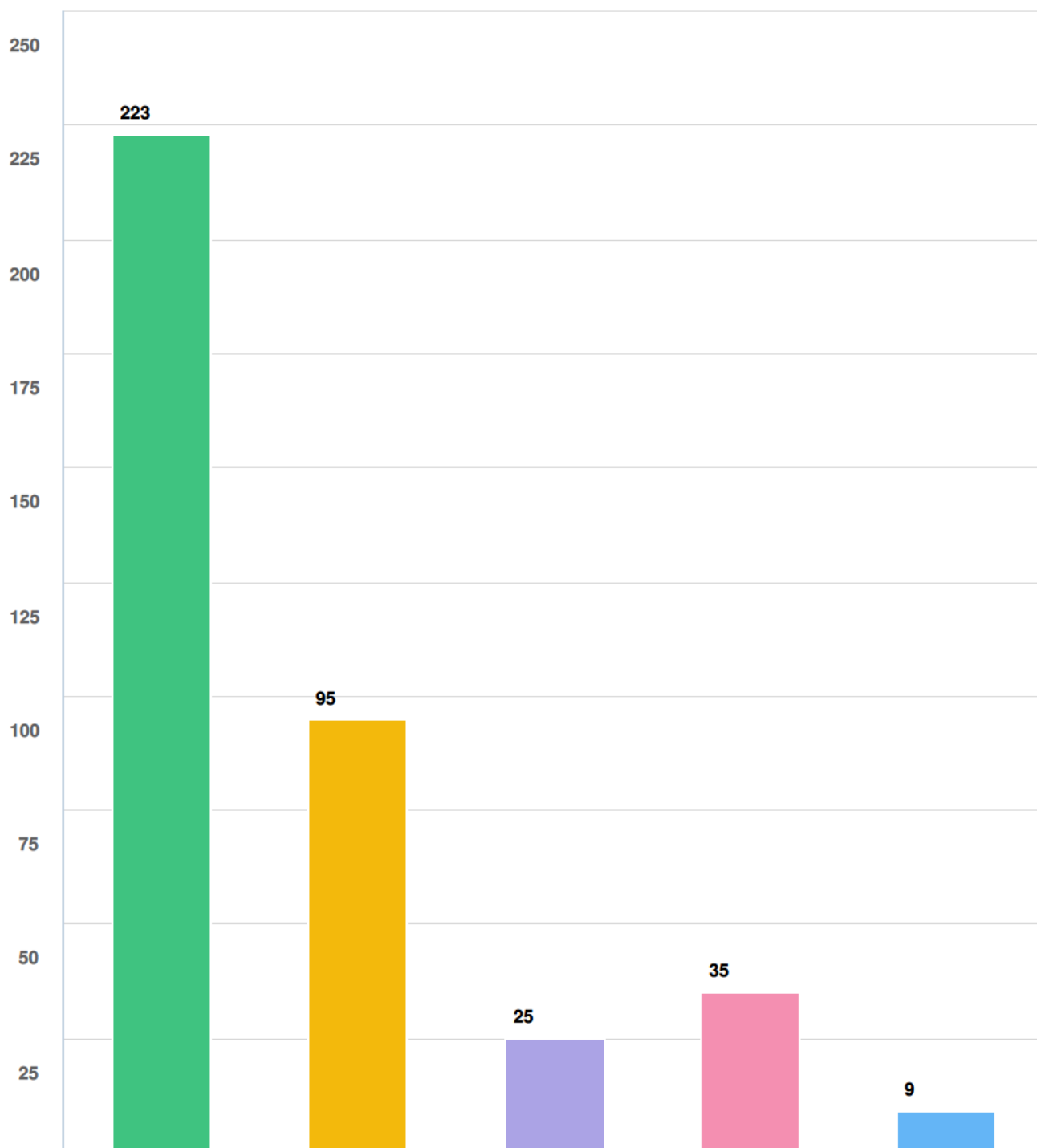


Question options

- Self-cleaning automated unit (see examples in links on project page if unfamiliar with this idea)
- Traditional facility (like washroom buildings in Harrison Park)
- Portable unit (porta-potty or trailer mobile unit style)
- No preference

Mandatory Question (387 response(s))
Question type: Checkbox Question

Q18 What hours of operation would you support for a public washroom?



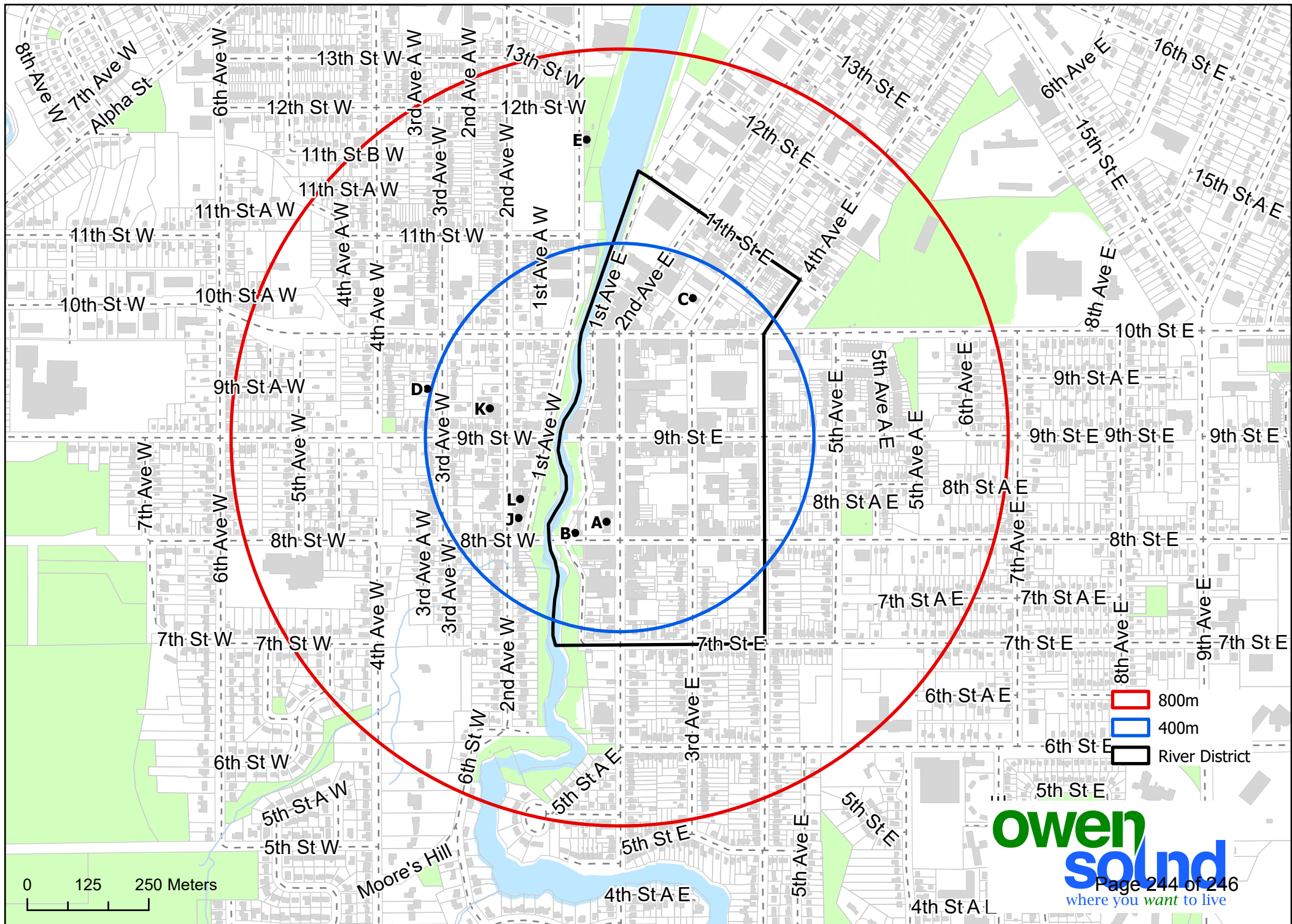
Question options

- 24 hours per day/ 7 days per week/ 365 days per year
 ● 6 AM to 10 PM
 ● Traditional business hours 9 AM - 5 PM
- Seasonal hours - may vary depending on season
 ● Other (please specify)

Mandatory Question (387 response(s))

Question type: Checkbox Question

River District





**Branch 6
Owen Sound**

**The Royal Canadian Legion
Memorial Branch #6**

P.O. Box 186 1450 2nd Ave. West
Owen Sound, ON N4K 5P3

Phone: 519-376-7784

Fax: 519-376-5751

Email: branch6owensound@gmail.com

Dear Friend of the Legion

The annual distribution of poppies and wreaths is the Canadian Legion's only national appeal for funds which are held in trust in a separate account.

Branch Poppy trust funds are reservoirs from which emergency assistance can be given to needy veterans, their dependants and the widows and children of deceased ex-servicemen and women.

The poppy fund is the Canadian Legion's way of remembering the debt which all of us owe to those who sacrificed so much. It is the Legion's sincere belief that Canadians appreciate the opportunity of contributing in a small way to the payment of this debt.

In addition to the act of remembrance, contributions to the poppy fund are tangible expressions of thanks to the men and women who died and to those who have been left behind.

As you may have so kindly done in past years, we anticipate your support of our pre-laid wreath initiative again this year as a way of participating in the Remembrance Service of November 11th. Please consider this letter as your invoice for \$60.00. Please fill out the form on the second page of this letter and make cheques payable to **RCL Br. #6, Poppy Fund**.

On behalf of Branch #6, Royal Canadian Legion, thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Lynda Belanger
Poppy Chair 2025
Royal Canadian Legion
Branch 6 Owen Sound



**Branch 6
Owen Sound**

**The Royal Canadian Legion
Memorial Branch #6**

P.O. Box 186 1450 2nd Ave. West
Owen Sound, ON N4K 5P3

Phone: 519-376-7784

Fax: 519-376-5751

Email: branch6owensound@gmail.com

Cost to purchase a Wreath: \$60.00

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If for any reason we need to contact you regarding your wreath, please provide the following:

Contact Name: _____

Contact Phone No. / Email Address: _____

Questions: Lynda 519-376-7784, poppycampaign@owensoundlegion.ca and copy
branch6owensound@gmail.com and lbelanger052@gmail.com