

Date: 2021-05-05

Subject: **Provision of Free Menstrual Products in all Public Washrooms at City of Brampton Facilities**

Contact: Alyssa Fiorini, Supervisor, Facilities Services

Report Number: Public Works & Engineering-2021-571

Recommendations:

Based on the following report, it is recommended:

1. That the report from Alyssa Fiorini, Supervisor, Facilities Services to the Committee of Council meeting of May 12, 2021, for Provision of Free Menstrual Products in all Public Washrooms at City of Brampton Facilities be received, and
2. That staff be authorized to procure and install menstrual product dispensers and provide free menstrual products in all public women's and gender-inclusive washrooms and change rooms at City of Brampton facilities funded through operational cost centers within various departments or through sponsorship programs/partnerships, and
3. That this report be forwarded to the Region of Peel, Town of Caledon and City of Mississauga for similar consideration.

Overview:

On April 28th, 2021, a delegation from Keyna Sarkar, Brampton resident presented to the Committee of Council meeting regarding the provision of free menstrual products in all public washrooms at City of Brampton facilities and to encourage other businesses to provide the same.

The delegation request and proposal were referred to the staff for consideration and directed to report back to the May 12, 2021 Committee of Council meeting.

Background:

The City at one time did provide dispensers for menstrual products at most of their facilities. About 10 years ago, the dispensers were removed due to vandalism and lack of use. A nominal payment was required to access the products.

There are currently no menstrual product dispensers at any of the City of Brampton facilities except for the Rose Theatre. The four (4) menstrual product dispensers in public washrooms at the Rose Theatre is a paid service and reportedly have low usage.

In the past, there has been reluctance to discuss period poverty and the difficulties it presents for menstruating women in all aspects of life. Recent studies on period poverty reveal the following issues:

- Plan International Canada's 2019 Gender Study showed that 24% of all Canadian women and 33% of Canadian women under 25 have struggled to afford period products for themselves and/or their dependents.
- That the average women menstruates for approximately 2,535 days in her lifetime, the equivalent of 7 years.
- That many women are not able to afford menstrual products and as such 'make do' with other materials that are uncomfortable and unhygienic.
- Many women of low income routinely have to choose between the basics of food and shelter over period products.
- Many women report missing school, work and social activities while menstruating.
- Many women report hiding their menstrual products at school and work.
- Many women are uncomfortable discussing these issues even with those who are closest to them

All of these issues are more prevalent in our young women. Sanjay Wijesekera, former UNICEF Chief of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene said "Meeting the hygiene needs of all adolescent girls is a fundamental issue of human rights, dignity, and public health,"

Several institutions have already moved ahead with providing free menstrual products to women.

- In April 2019, British Columbia mandated all public schools to provide free menstrual products in their washrooms.
- In August 2019, Toronto District School Board announced the provision of free period products in all Toronto public schools.
- In January 2021, the City of London rolled out free menstrual products in all their public washrooms after a pilot project.
- In February 2021, the City of Ottawa started a pilot project by providing free menstrual products in public washrooms at four community centers.

- In April 2021, the City of Edmonton announced that they will provide free period products in all women's and gender-inclusive public washrooms.

Current Situation:

The City of Brampton is committed to a supportive work place and community that promotes diversity and equity that is essential for **everyone's** success. The availability of free menstrual products will demonstrate the City's support for women in our community by supplying proper access to menstrual products in our facilities.

Staff have reviewed and estimated the installation and annual operating costs for installing menstrual product dispensers in public women's and gender-inclusive washrooms and change rooms across citywide facilities as per the table below. The approximate installation cost is \$52400 for 135 dispensers across 49 facilities. The annual operating cost for 135 dispensers across 49 facilities is \$73913 based on the consumption of 5 units/dispenser/day for 365 days.

While a pilot project might be appropriate, given the situation with current pandemic, any results would not be representative of the impacts of a full program. As such, given the comparatively nominal cost and the importance of this initiative in demonstrating our values, full city wide implementation is recommended.

Installation of Menstrual Products Dispensers in Public Wash Rooms/Change Rooms						
Dept-Division	No of Facilities	No of Public Women's Washrooms (Universal washrooms included)	No of Public Women's Change rooms	Total Number of Dispensers Required	Installation Cost for Dispensers (Estimated at \$400/unit)	Annual Operating Cost for all dispensers (5 units x \$0.3/day x365 days)
Community Services - Recreation	26	46	22	68	\$27,200	\$37,230
Public Works- FOM - Corp Facilities & Libraries	19	53	0	53	\$21,200	\$29,018
Transit	3	4	0	4	\$1,600	\$2,190
Culture	1	7	3	10	\$2,400	\$5,475
Total	49	110	25	135	\$52,400	\$73,913
Installation Cost : \$52,400.00						
Annual Operating Cost : \$73,913.00 (based on consumption)						

Installation and annual operating costs will be funded through operational cost centers within various departments. In partnership with Sponsorship and Corporate Development, staff will also review sponsorship opportunities with various businesses. A communication strategy will be developed, in collaboration with Strategic Communications, to encourage our local businesses to do the same utilizing our newsletters, local publications, social media platforms and partnerships with the Brampton Board of Trade (BBOT) and Downtown Brampton BIA (DBBIA).

The Region of Peel and Peel Public Health has confirmed that this initiative is in alignment with both the Regions vision of Community for Life and Peel Public Health strategic plan priorities. Future delegation to Council would be welcome.

Project Benefits:

This initiative helps fight period poverty in our community by providing increased access to menstrual products, making Brampton a better place to call home and ensure equity in opportunities for the growth and success of women in our community.

Corporate Implications:

Purchasing Comments

The dispensers and products will be procured at competitive price in accordance with the Purchasing By-law. Purchasing in consultation with staff will assess and determine any safety and security requirements to be included in such procurements.

Financial Implications:

Funding of this initiative is available under capital projects (Installation of the Dispensers projects) and operational cost centres (annual operating costs) within various departments.

Other Implications:

There are no other implications resulting from the approval of the recommendations of this report.

Term of Council Priorities: This report aligns with the priority of Brampton is a Mosaic where our City provides support, opportunity and champions the success of all of our residents.

Conclusion:

This report recommends that staff be authorized to commence procurement and installation of menstrual product dispensers in all women's and gender-inclusive washrooms and change rooms across Citywide facilities. Installation and annual operating costs can be funded through operational cost centers within various departments or through sponsorship/partnership opportunities.

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Attachments: None