

Date: 2023-11-01

Subject: **Options for Dedicated Breastfeeding Spaces in City Facilities (RM 40/2023)**

Contact: Peter Gabor, Manager, Project Planning and Validation, Building Design and Construction

Report Number: Public Works & Engineering-2023-956

Recommendations:

1. That the report from Peter Gabor, Manager, Project Planning and Validation, Building Design and Construction to the Committee of Council Meeting of November 15, 2023, re: **Options for Dedicated Breastfeeding Spaces in City Facilities (RM 40/2023)**, be received; and
2. That Council direct staff to develop an implementation plan that includes funding requirements to provide dedicated breastfeeding spaces for staff and public use within all City facilities, and report back to Council in Q2 2024.

Overview:

- **The City of Brampton is a breastfeeding friendly organization and welcomes all breastfeeding mothers and children.**
- **The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code obligates employers to accommodate the needs of breastfeeding employees.**
- **The City does not provide dedicated spaces in City facilities for breastfeeding or bottle feeding. However, mothers or caregivers are welcome to use public spaces in City facilities.**
- **Staff seek Council's direction to develop a program of policies, design criteria, and locations for dedicated breastfeeding spaces in City facilities and report back to Council in Q2 2024 with funding requirements and a work plan for implementation.**

Background:

On May 17th, 2023, Council directed staff to develop options for the implementation of breastfeeding spaces in all City facilities. Some mothers or caregivers may require a quiet or private space for breastfeeding or bottle feeding.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and Health Canada recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months followed by the introduction of appropriate complementary foods and continued breastfeeding for two years and beyond. Studies also show that supporting the needs of breastfeeding employees decreases parental employee absenteeism, lowers health care costs to extended health plans, and results in higher productivity.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects the right to breastfeed anytime, anywhere, and the Ontario Human Rights Commission's "Policy on Discrimination Because of Pregnancy and Breastfeeding", requires an employer to accommodate the needs of breastfeeding employees.

Current Situation:

The City of Brampton is a breastfeeding friendly organization and welcomes all breastfeeding mothers and children. The City does not prevent mothers or caregivers from breastfeeding in public spaces, or in City facilities. However, there are no dedicated private breastfeeding rooms in City facilities for staff or the public to use.

A strategy will be developed to guide the implementation of private breastfeeding spaces and avoid confusion and the ambiguity that employees, leaders, or members of the public may have about the use of City facilities. The strategy will consider the large variety of facility types, ages, and conditions of buildings in the City's portfolio and detail options that are appropriate to functional and operational limitations of the buildings while achieving the stated objectives of the program.

Options to provide dedicated, private breastfeeding spaces within City facilities for staff and/or the public are listed below and may be combined.

Option 1 – Convert Existing Rooms

Identify existing underutilized and appropriate rooms or spaces within City facilities that may be converted and made suitable as dedicated private breastfeeding suites.

Required next steps include surveying the buildings to determine what spaces may be available and what upgrades may be needed to create a suitable space for breastfeeding, such as the availability of private space that is of a secure and lockable; has adequate

ventilation and lighting; has an accessible electrical outlet; has access to water and has required furnishing among other attributes. Based on the assessments, a scope of work, implementation schedule and budget will be prepared for each facility.

Option 2 – Install Nursing Suites or Pods

Where City facilities have no underutilized rooms to convert, identify suitable freestanding nursing suites or pods that may be purchased and placed in building lobbies or similar spaces. An analysis and inventory of potential locations in existing facilities will establish product specifications and confirm the size and style of freestanding suites or pods that may be accommodated. Pre-manufactured nursing suites that are readily available on the market have specific floor area and infrastructure requirements depending on the features selected.

Required next steps include site visits to confirm the size and style of the freestanding nursing suite or pod that can be accommodated. This will ensure suites or pods can support mothers and caregivers that need them by locating them, for example, close to running water, an electrical connection, or other requirements. A scope of work and budget will be established based on the cost of the selected freestanding suite or pod and any other site-specific requirements for each facility.

Option 3 – Alternative Solutions

Some specialized City facilities that are fully programmed, with no underutilized spaces to convert into dedicated breastfeeding, or that cannot accommodate the nursing pods will require alternative solutions or may be exempted from the program, such as some fire stations, field houses or smaller or older recreation centres.

The alternative solutions in these cases may be to add necessary additional features to an existing space, such as a boardroom. Depending on the availability of spaces at each facility, the selected room may be the quiet room or first aid room. The room must be able to be private, have a lockable door, be bookable, have an accessible electrical outlet, proper lighting, and ventilation.

Phased Implementation

Due to the large number of City facilities, implementation will occur in phases over several years. Staff will prioritize the implementation of breastfeeding rooms or pods or suites in City facilities that are frequently accessed by the public including recreation centres. Staff will explore the feasibility of options, and report back to Council in Q2 2024 with a work plan that will include costs for consideration.

Staff will also develop standards and specifications appropriate for the above options.

Corporate Implications:

Financial Implications:

Following Council's directive, staff will proceed to define the project scope, schedule, and budget. Subsequently, a future capital budget approval will be necessary once these elements are clearly outlined.

Communications Implications:

Internal and public promotion of the City's accommodations for private breastfeeding spaces will require a Communication Plan prior and during implementation.

Strategic Focus Area:

This report advances the City's Health & Well-being strategic focus area by further supporting breastfeeding mothers who may require dedicated breastfeeding spaces within all City facilities.

Conclusion:

Providing dedicated breastfeeding suites or pre-manufactured nursing suites or pods within City buildings will accommodate Brampton residents' and staff needs and promote an inclusive and respectful workplace.

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