

Access to Public Washrooms in Guelph Project

Map Report August 2023

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Introduction

Public washrooms are important for everyone in Guelph, but washrooms aren't always available and not everyone has access to washrooms when they need them. Sometimes people are forced to go outside, especially in the downtown area. Other people may be forced to stay at home if public washrooms are closed or not accessible to them.

Many people rely on businesses for washroom access, but this creates a problem when they are closed, or when they refuse access. For this project, we define "public washrooms" as washrooms owned by the City, which would be understood by most people to be public (for example, not in a school or specialized sports club).


The goal of this project is to understand Guelph residents' experiences with public washrooms. We're trying to understand if there are enough public washrooms in the city. We also want to hear from residents how they are affected when they can't access a public washroom.

The maps in this report are the results of phase 1 of the project. We visited all 24 public washrooms in Guelph and combined the information we gathered with City of Guelph data about opening hours.



The maps show what types of washrooms are available (permanent or portable, accessible or not) and when washrooms are available at different times of year (Winter and Summer), different times of day (overnight and during the day) and different days of the week (weekdays and Saturday, and Sunday).

Summary of results

- There are 24 permanent public washrooms currently operating in Guelph, plus 51 portable washrooms in summer and 25 in winter (portable washrooms are often known as porta-potties).
 - Most permanent washroom locations are “universal” – they include an accessible option and a gender inclusive/gender-neutral option.
 - 2 of the 24 permanent public washrooms do not include an accessible washroom though, and 7 of 24 do not have a gender-neutral washroom.
 - For example, the washroom at Silvercreek Park does not have either an accessible or gender-neutral option and the washrooms at Norm Jary Park do not have a gender-neutral option.
 - There are no permanent washrooms open overnight anywhere in the city.
 - All washrooms are closed by approximately 11pm and reopen in the morning (opening and closing times do vary slightly).
 - There are limited washroom options in the Downtown area
 - The Market Square washroom is the only permanent washroom available for the whole of downtown on Sunday afternoons in Summer and Winter. This washroom is closed when the ice rink or splash pad is not in use (e.g., September to December, and March to June).
 - The portable washrooms in the MacDonnell Street parking lot are only available in the summer (e.g., April/May to October). There are two portable washrooms located here, one of which is accessible.
 - Some parks, trail networks and splashpads have limited access to washrooms
 - All permanent washrooms in parks are closed in Winter, and there are fewer porta-potties available.
 - Areas of Preservation Park and trails around it do not have a washroom (this includes the area of park south of Kortright Road, and the trails in and around Preservation Field).
 - The splashpads at Waverly Dr. Park and Jubilee Park do not have washrooms.
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About this project

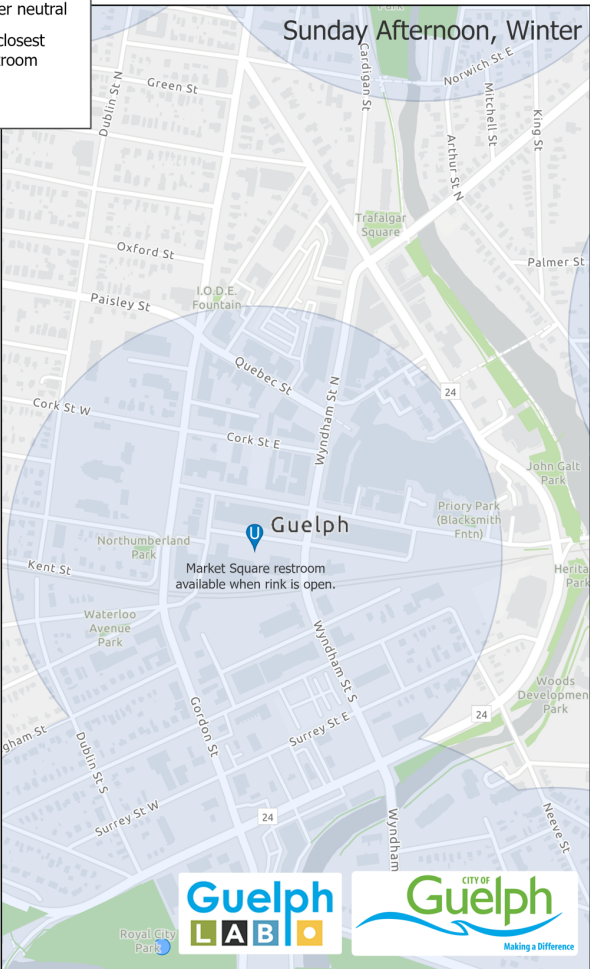
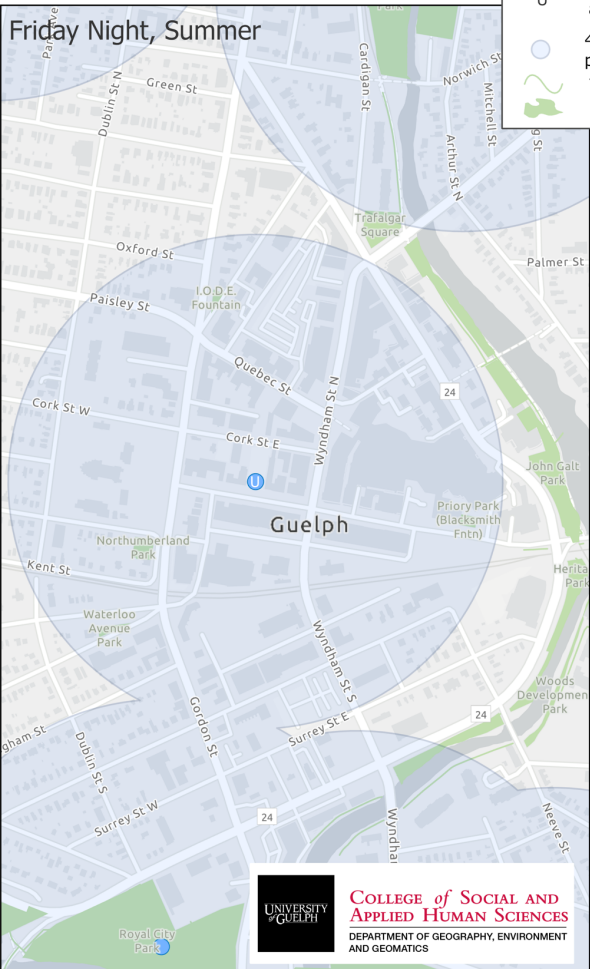
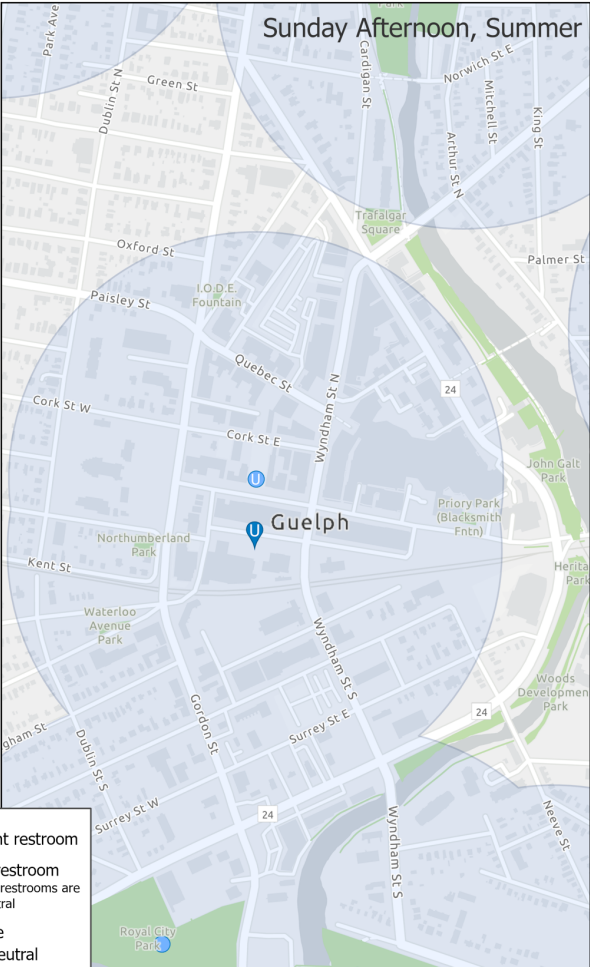
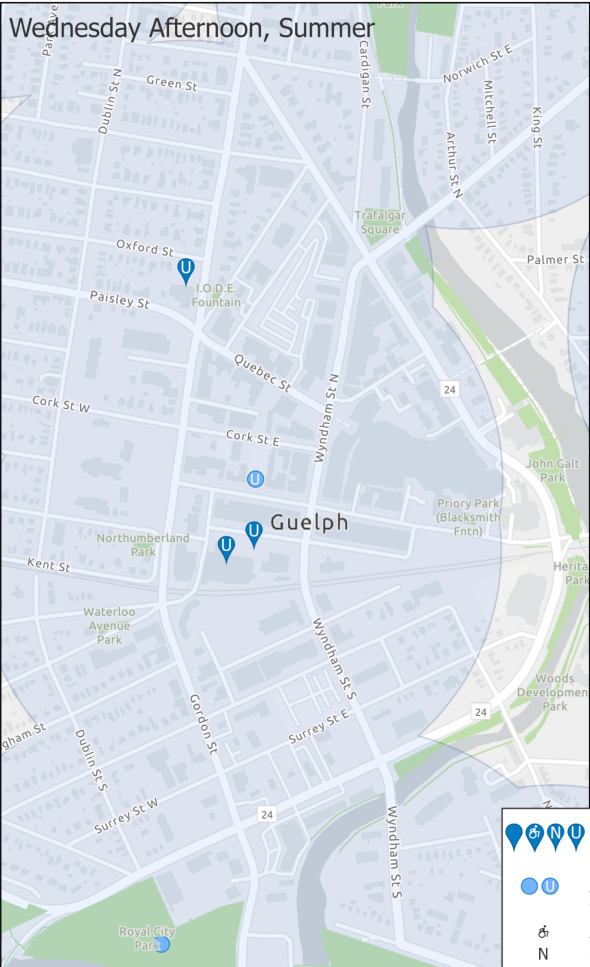
This project is a collaboration between the City of Guelph, the Department of Geography, Environment and Geomatics (U of Guelph) and the Guelph Lab. The Guelph Lab is a collaboration between the City of Guelph and the University of Guelph. It links the City with researchers and the community to support and improve new policies, programs and services.


The second phase of the project will include interviews with Guelph residents about their experiences using public facilities. We are interested in the perspectives of all Guelph residents but especially people who may be most affected by a lack of washrooms. This includes elderly people, people with physical disabilities, people who experience urgent washroom needs (e.g., those with Crohn's and Colitis), people experiencing homelessness, and people who work outside or drive for their job (e.g., Canada Post workers, taxi drivers).


About the maps


- Blue pins represent permanent washrooms. Blue dots indicate a “porta-potty.”
- Coloured circles around each point on the map show a catchment area of 400m. This distance is equivalent to a 5 to 10 minute walk or roll, and is commonly used in municipal planning to determine how far people are likely to travel in order to access services like bus stops.
- An “U” indicates the washroom is universal – including a gender-neutral and an accessible option. An accessible symbol (wheelchair symbol) shows washrooms that are accessible but don’t include a gender-neutral option. In the one case, an “N” means the washrooms are gender-neutral, but not accessible. Accessibility is determined by City designation, and do not represent an independent assessment by this research team.
- The washrooms at Goldie Mills and the Riverside Park amphitheatre are not included in the maps. The Riverside Park amphitheatre washrooms are currently being renovated and will reopen in 2024. The Goldie Mills washroom has been closed for a number of years, and there is no date set for them to reopen.


Downtown Guelph





 Permanent restroom


 Portable restroom
All portable restrooms are gender neutral


 Accessible

 Gender neutral

 Universal: Accessible and gender neutral

 400 m to closest public restroom

 Trails

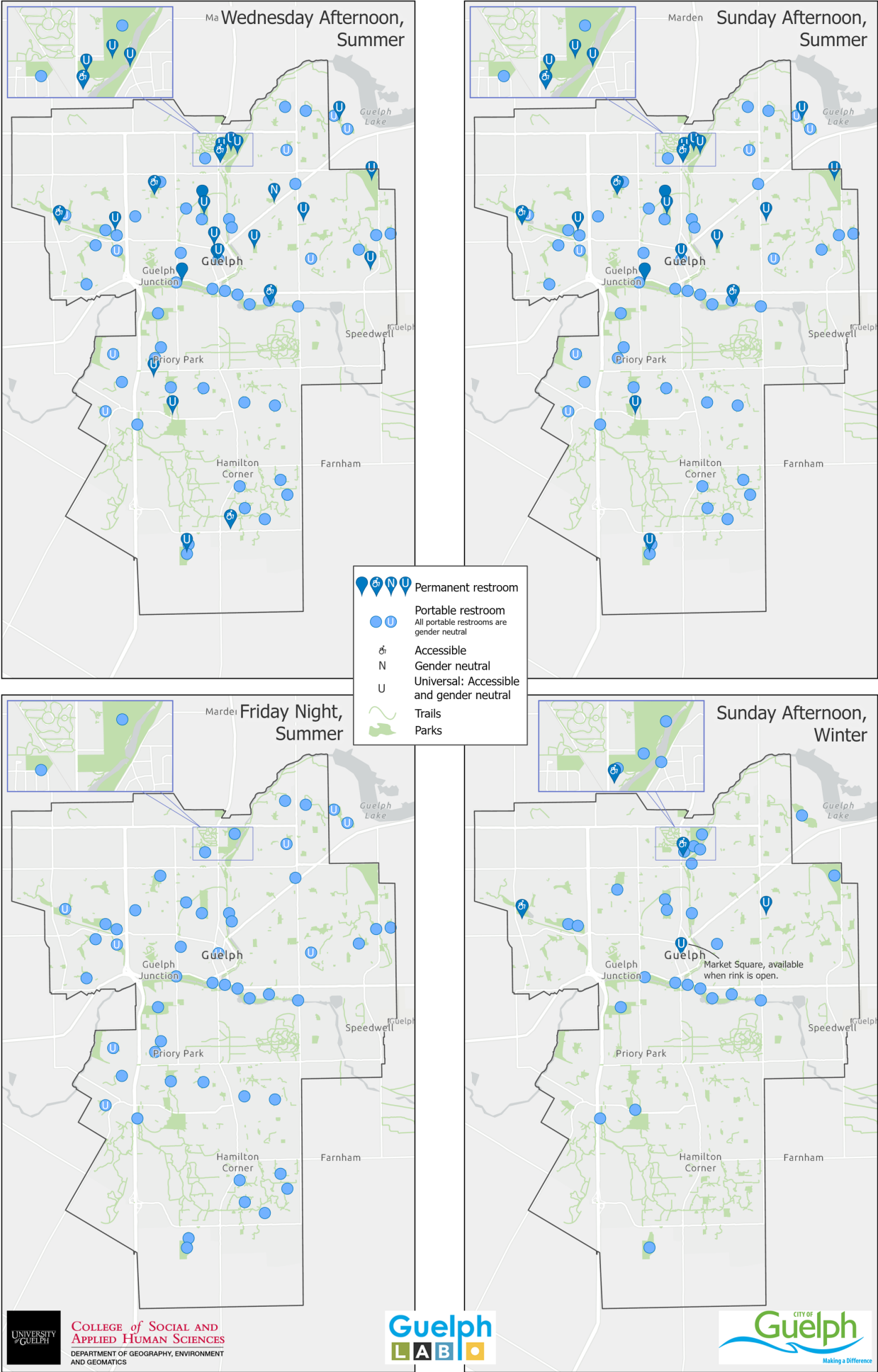
 Parks



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AND GEOMATICS



City of Guelph





Appendix: Map descriptions

Downtown

Wednesday afternoon, summer

There are 3 permanent washrooms, all of which are universal. There are 2 portable washrooms, one of which is accessible and one that is not.

Sunday afternoon, summer

There is only 1 permanent washroom, which is universal. There are 2 portable washrooms, one accessible and one not.

Friday night, summer

There are no permanent washrooms available. There are 2 portable restrooms, one accessible and one not.

Sunday afternoon, winter

There is 1 permanent washroom at the Market Square that is only open when the ice rink is open. There is only 1 non-accessible portable washroom.

City-wide

Wednesday afternoon, summer

There are 24 permanent washrooms, 16 of which are universal, 5 of which are accessible-only, and one which is gender-neutral but not accessible. There are 51 portable washrooms, 8 of which are accessible.

Sunday afternoon, summer

There are 18 permanent washrooms, 12 of which are universal, and 4 of which are accessible only. There are 51 portable washrooms, 8 of which are accessible.

Friday night, summer

There are no permanent washrooms. There are 51 portable washrooms, 8 of which are accessible.

Sunday afternoon, winter

There are 4 permanent washrooms, 2 that are universal, and 2 that are accessible only. There are 25 portable washrooms, none of which are accessible.

