



Parks
Canada

Parcs
Canada

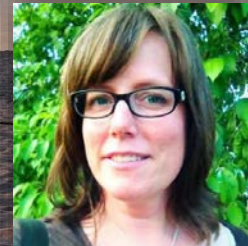
Canada

Best Practices for Inclusive Washrooms – a conversation

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National Outdoor Recreation Conference
Rapid City, South Dakota

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Storyline

1. A Little Bit of History
2. Parks Canada at a Glance
3. Why are We Talking about Inclusive Washrooms?
4. Meeting the Needs of Visitors
5. Washroom Planning and Design
6. Best Practices for Inclusive Design
7. Next Steps: Towards a Directive on Inclusive Washroom Design
8. The Last Word...
9. Discussion and Questions





A little bit of history...

- 1885: First National Park established (Banff)
- 1911: Birth of “Parks Canada” – World’s first national park service





47
NATIONAL
PARKS



1
NATIONAL
URBAN PARK



171

NATIONAL
HISTORIC
SITES

4 NATIONAL
MARINE
CONSERVATION AREAS



PARKS CANADA

at a
GLANCE

Our largest park is
bigger than
Switzerland



The world's **largest**
beaver
dam



*(It can be seen from **SPACE!**)*



PARKS CANADA

at a
GLANCE

25
million
person-visits
per year



12,000
campsites



\$ 25

billion of
assets

5,000
dedicated
employees



850,000
occupied nights
per year

\$ 1.65
billion
budget



an unlimited number of
experiential opportunities...



Places we manage

Canada's National Parks System

Western Mountains

1. Pacific Coast Mountains
2. Strait of Georgia Lowlands
3. Interior Dry Plateau
4. Columbia Mountains
5. Rocky Mountains
6. Northern Coast Mountains
7. Northern Interior Plateaux and Mountains
8. Mackenzie Mountains
9. Northern Yukon

Interior Plains

10. Mackenzie Delta
11. Northern Boreal Plains
12. Southern Boreal Plains and Plateaux
13. Prairie Grasslands
14. Manitoba Lowlands

Canadian Shield

15. Tundra Hills
16. Central Tundra
17. Northwestern Boreal Uplands
18. Central Boreal Uplands
- 19a. West Great Lakes – St. Lawrence Precambrian Region
- 19b. Central Great Lakes – St. Lawrence Precambrian Region
- 19c. East Great Lakes – St. Lawrence Precambrian Region
20. Laurentian Boreal Highlands

Hudson Bay Lowlands

21. East Coast Boreal Region
22. Boreal Lake Plateau
23. Whale River
24. Northern Labrador Mountains
25. Ungava Tundra Plateau
26. Northern Davis Region

St. Lawrence Lowlands

27. Hudson-James Lowlands
28. Southampton Plain

Appalachian Region

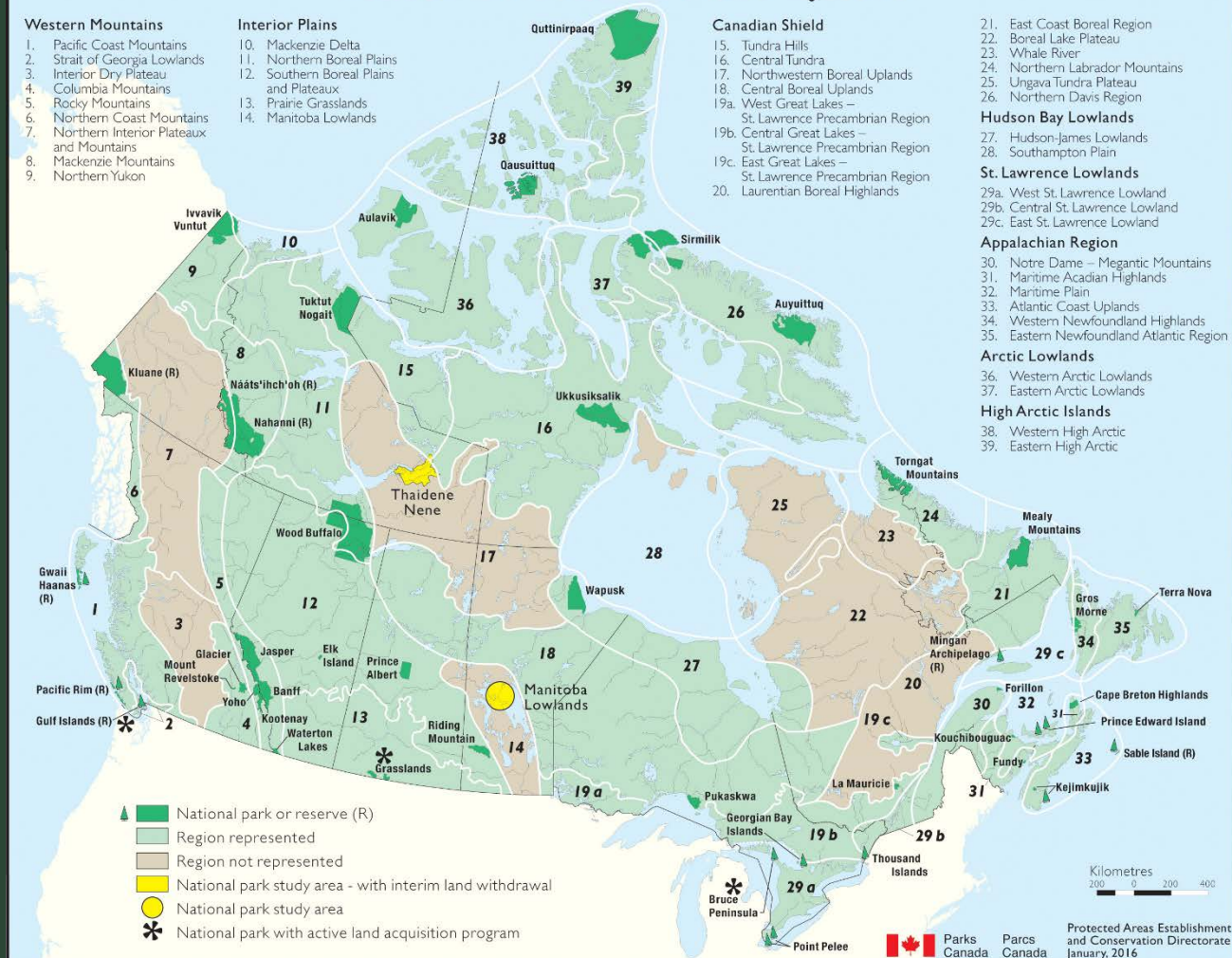
30. Notre Dame – Megantic Mountains
31. Maritime Acadian Highlands
32. Maritime Plain
33. Atlantic Coast Uplands
34. Western Newfoundland Highlands
35. Eastern Newfoundland Atlantic Region

Arctic Lowlands

36. Western Arctic Lowlands
37. Eastern Arctic Lowlands

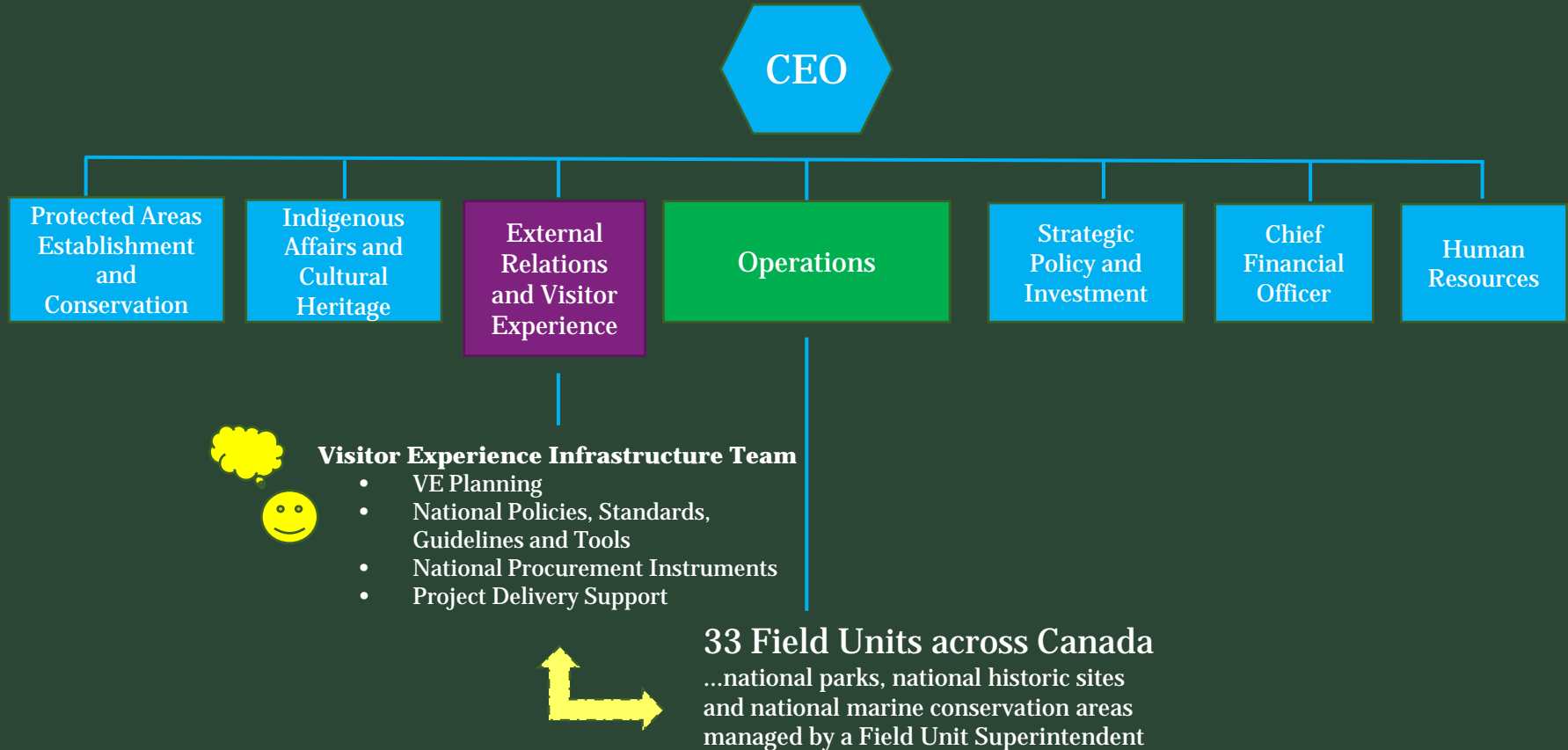
High Arctic Islands

38. Western High Arctic
39. Eastern High Arctic





How we are Organised





Our Mandate

On behalf of the people of Canada, we protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure their ecological and commemorative integrity for present and future generations.



Introduction

Why are we talking about inclusive washrooms?

Two Main Drivers:

1. Overarching Government of Canada legislative and policy implementation
2. Parks Canada's identity and purpose as a Government of Canada Agency: Who We Are and What We Do





Introduction

1. Overarching Legislation and Policy Implementation:

The Canadian Human Rights Act, updated in 2017:

- *“For all purposes of this Act, the prohibited grounds of discrimination are race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, **gender identity or expression**, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics, **disability** and conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted or in respect of which a record suspension has been ordered.”*

Bill C-81: An Act to ensure a barrier-free Canada:

- *“The purpose of the Accessible Canada Act is to benefit all persons, especially persons with disabilities, through the progressive realization of a barrier-free Canada”*





Introduction

1. Overarching Legislation and Policy Implementation:

- Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+): A Government of Canada - wide policy analysis tool :
 - GBA+ uses intersectional analysis “*to assess how diverse groups of women, men and non-binary people may experience policies, programs and initiatives.*”
- Parks Canada’s 2018 Centre for Values and Ethics Report recommended that “*the Agency be mindful of the importance of gender neutral bathrooms, as Field and Business units renovate and build new structures...*”





Introduction

2. Parks Canada: Who We Are and What We Do

- Parks Canada is unusual as a Government department because we measure a large part of our success in terms of visitor satisfaction.
- We are the largest single tourism provider in the country.
- Our story is Canada's story - our mandate and charter all speak to our commitment to welcome and serve all Canadians, protect what matters to them and to help them find their place in Canada's story.





Introduction

Why are we talking about inclusive washrooms?

- Reflecting on the idea of inclusion and receiving questions from the field: what should we be doing to improve accessibility?
- Differing views and past-dated Parks Canada guidance = need for consistency
- New federal accessibility legislation and updated codes are coming, but we can start doing better work now





Introduction

Why are we talking about inclusive washrooms?

- Most importantly: In our storyline, the first thing that we tell our visitors is that they are welcome at our places.
- Boring but true: washrooms have to come first.
 - No one can feel truly welcome if they can't find a washroom that works for them.
 - No one can hear a site's story or feel part of that story if their most basic needs have not been met.





Introduction

Diversity, Welcome and Inclusion

How can we plan, design and build our facilities so that more people feel welcome at our Parks Canada places?

- Given the diversity of the population, not all washroom needs are the same
- Washroom facilities that are more flexible and inclusive of a wide range of users benefit *everyone*





Introduction

Results of our research: *Best practices for inclusive washrooms*

- A tool that identifies and promotes best practices for planning and designing inclusive washroom facilities
- Developed by Visitor Experience Infrastructure, VE Branch with input from Assets, Architects, Designers and others, including internal LGBTQ2 community
- Developed for the VE Community and others involved in washroom facility planning
- Will be updated as best practices continue to evolve





Meeting the needs of visitors

Visitors have different requirements in washroom facilities - these may be related to the visitor's ability, gender, faith, culture and age.

Inclusive washroom facilities are welcoming and accommodating to the broadest group of users possible.





Meeting the needs of visitors



A father whose 4 year old daughter needs to go RIGHT NOW



A female caregiver taking a man in a wheelchair on an outing



A gender-questioning teenager who must choose which “side” is safer



A person whose culture has rules around personal hygiene when using the toilet



A person with irritable bowel disease or a person who needs to change an ostomy bag or a continence pad



A 12-year old boy who has special needs and is accompanied by his mother



Meeting the needs of visitors

People with disabilities

People with health issues

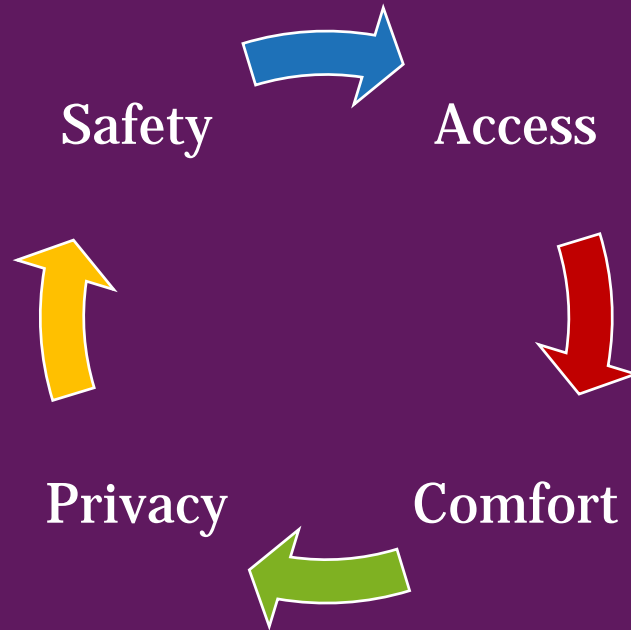
The aging population

Families

The LGBTQ2 community

People from diverse cultural
and religious backgrounds

All of us





Washroom planning and design



Providing inclusive washroom facilities is an opportunity to make all visitors feel welcome and offer them positive experiences.





Washroom planning and design

What is inclusive design?

Inclusive design:

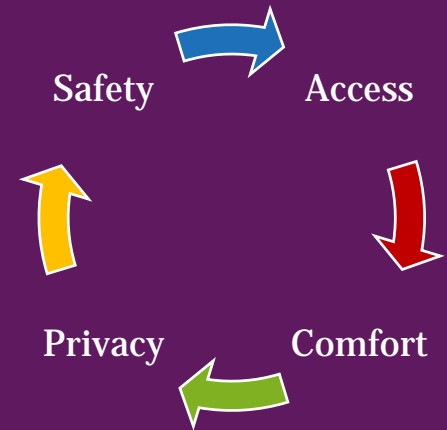
- Places people at the heart of the design process
- Acknowledges diversity and difference
- Offers choice where a single design solution cannot accommodate all users
- Provides for flexibility in use
- Provides buildings and environments that are convenient and enjoyable to use for everyone



Benefits of inclusively designed washrooms

Applying the principles of inclusive design helps create washroom facilities that:

- are comfortable
- are safe
- protect the privacy and dignity of every person
- meet the diverse needs of all visitors regardless of age, gender, culture, faith and ability





Washroom design strategies

Careful planning and consideration of design strategies will help ensure washroom facilities meet the needs of visitors.

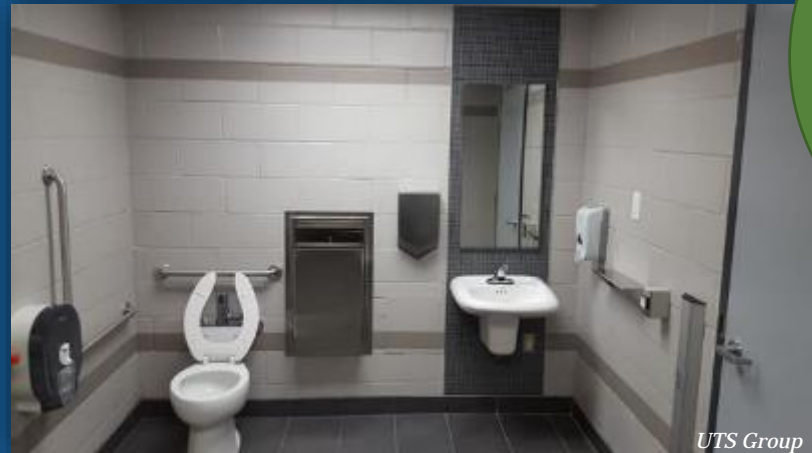
A combination of facilities will offer visitors greater choice and flexibility.

Washroom facilities should provide options that are suitable to all, although not every washroom unit will meet every individual need.



What is an inclusive washroom?

A barrier-free, enclosed, private space that is available to everyone, regardless of ability, gender, faith, culture and age.



UTS Group

*Also known as:
Unisex accessible;
All inclusive;
Universal*



What is a gender-neutral washroom?

A washroom that is designed to be used by people of any gender, gender identity or gender expression.



Royal Ontario Museum, photo credit CBC

*Also known as:
All gender;
Gender-free;
Gender inclusive;
Mixed gender;
Multi-gender;
Shared;
Unisex*



Design strategies

There are 2 common approaches to designing inclusive facilities:



Art Gallery of Ontario

Self-contained facilities

a single toilet, sink and/or shower in a fully enclosed space



Elizabeth Felicella/Esto

Facilities with shared common areas

individual, enclosed toilet or shower units and an open common area with sinks and mirrors



Self-contained facilities

- Fully enclosed unit that offers a high degree of privacy for all
- Direct access without a shared space
- Sink, mirror and accessories located within each unit
- Easily adapted from existing self-contained Male or Female designated spaces to gender-neutral with appropriate signage





Self-contained facilities

- Access may be from the interior or the exterior of a building
- Can be provided individually, side-by-side or in combination with a gender-designated facility





Facilities with shared common areas



- Enclosed units with full walls and doors or full ceiling-height partitions
- Open common areas provide a shared space for sinks, hand dryers and mirrors



Facilities with shared common areas

- Units can be configured in linear or circular configurations
- Accessories such as waste bins and hooks provided in each unit



Bishop of Llandaff High School in Wales





Facilities with shared common areas



- Sinks and mirrors can be designed as accessible to people who use wheelchairs or other mobility aids and people of all heights, including young children
- Seating and other amenities can be provided for those waiting
- Exterior amenities should be protected by adequate roof overhang



Safety and privacy

- In multi-use facilities, access points with no door
- Multiple access points adjacent to main circulation areas
- Washroom units out of the line of sight





Safety and privacy

- Fully enclosed units
- Door lock fixtures that clearly indicate when a unit is occupied
- Locking mechanisms that enable the lock to be released from the outside in case of emergency





Renovation strategies

When we renovate existing infrastructure, there are often constraints.

But rather than replacing ‘like with like’ – it’s important to find ways to incorporate the principles of inclusion as much as possible.

In some cases, converting open toilet stalls to individual rooms with a shared bank of sinks can improve privacy, though remember:

- Barrier-free requirements must still be taken into consideration.
- Floor-to-ceiling, fully enclosed units may require their own lighting, ventilation, structural support and fire safety measures.





Renovation strategies

Special consideration for heritage buildings

- Parks Canada has [Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada](#)
- Work with built heritage professionals and conservation architects to discuss ideas and technical solutions to preserve the character defining elements of the asset





Signage & wayfinding

- Promote easy wayfinding
- Indicate what types of facilities are available and where they are upon entering a space
- Apply symbols of the service being provided rather than who is permitted to use it

We label things, not people



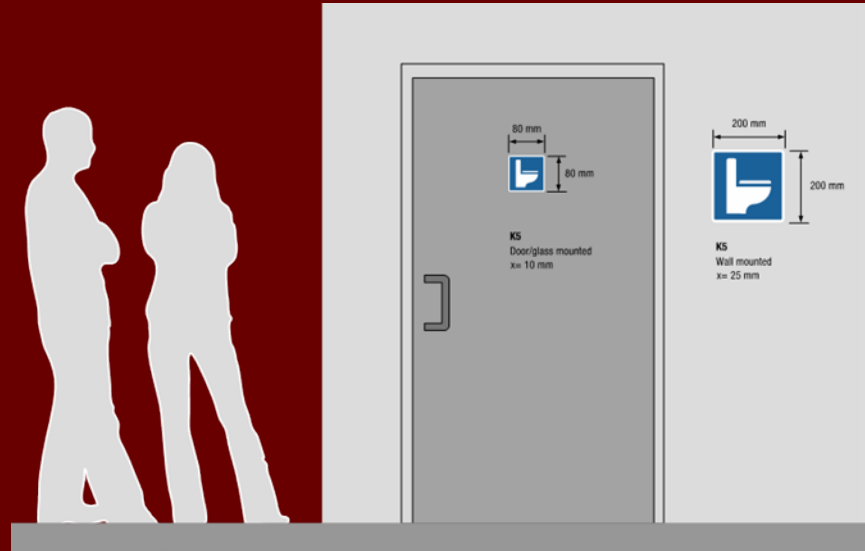
Parks Canada



Signage & wayfinding



Examples of new symbols



Parks Canada



Inclusive Washroom Design: Best Practices

Myth: Inclusive design means everyone must share the same space when conducting very personal business.

Fact: Optimal inclusive design offers increased choice, safety, and privacy through:

- self-contained toilet/sink or shower units;
- some units sized for accessibility and to allow multiple users;
- open common areas that allow passive and active supervision;
- labelling the facility or service provided rather than who may use it.





Parks Canada washroom project examples

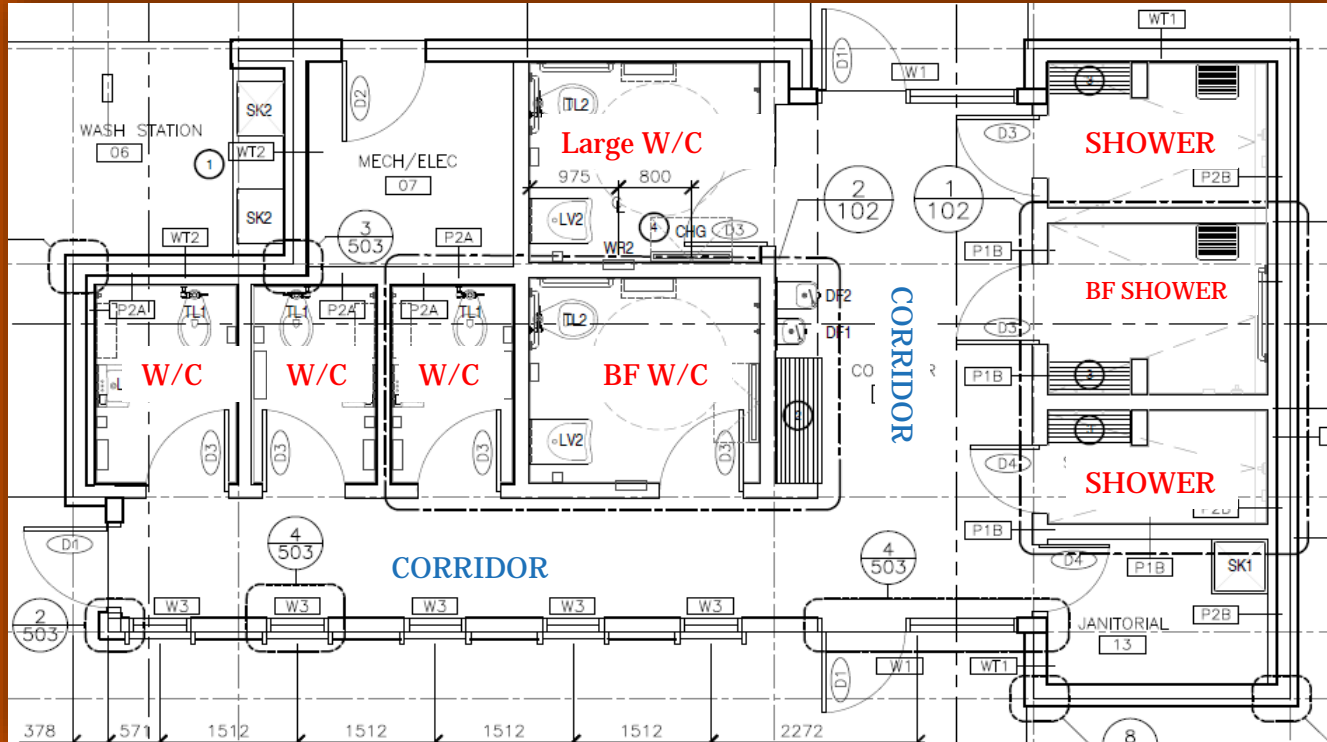
Projects completed or underway at places such as:

- Kejimikujik National Park
- Glacier National Park
- Grasslands National Park
- Point Pelee National Park
- Forillon National Park
- Waterton Lakes National Park





Parks Canada washroom project examples





Parks Canada washroom project examples





Overall benefits

Increased comfort, safety and privacy for all visitors

Inclusivity for all, as opposed to exclusivity for particular groups

Operational efficiencies

Infrastructure efficiencies



Supratech



Parks Canada



ROM, photo credit Globe and Mail



Office Care Inc.



Next Steps: Towards a Directive on Inclusive Washroom Design

- In February 2019, our team received a mandate from Parks Canada's Executive Management Committee to create a new national Directive on Inclusive Washroom Design
 - Have launched a cross-functional working group to draft the Directive - experts from Visitor Experience, Asset Management and Project Delivery, Operational Asset and Site Managers
 - Will embody new mandatory direction and requirements for Inclusive Washroom Design for the entire Agency



Next Steps: Towards a Directive on Inclusive Washroom Design

Proposed Scope for the Directive:

Inclusive design principles will be applied to washroom facilities in Parks Canada-owned buildings as follows:

- Visitor and staff washrooms
- Contemporary and Heritage buildings
- All new washroom designs and construction as well as renovation of existing washrooms
- Any stand-alone washroom/shower building, including privies and alternative toilets, and any washroom within a larger building or complex



Five Principles to Guide the Directive:

1. Inclusive Design: Washroom designs account for the full range of ability, age, gender identity and expression, cultures, faith and family needs.



2. Inclusion rather than segregation: Washrooms and common spaces are optimised for all users instead of being specialised for any specific user group.

3. Safety, Security and Privacy: Washroom designs optimise safety, security and privacy so each and every user is comfortable using them.



Five Principles to Guide the Directive:

4. We label things, not people: Washroom signage labels what equipment is behind each door rather than by labelling or designating who can use each space.



5. Flexibility and Adaptability: Parks Canada's approach to washroom design is adaptable to the various environments found within the Parks Canada network and allows for flexibility to meet unknown future needs.



Last Word...

- **Safe, dignified access to public washrooms is a basic human necessity.**
- A true welcome starts with facilities and infrastructure that remove barriers and include everyone.
- Embracing inclusive design gives us the opportunity to welcome all visitors with increased comfort, safety and privacy.



Diversity is a fact. Inclusion is a choice.
Parks Canada has made that choice and is now taking action.



Questions & Discussion

