



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

Community Development Division

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Child Care
Community Resources
Community Development Block Grant
Madison Senior Center

TO: Ad Hoc Downtown Public Restroom Committee
FROM: Sue Wallinger, CDD
DATE: 01/26/2015
RE: Survey of Homeless Persons Regarding Need and Location for Public Restroom

On Tuesday, January 1/26, I surveyed persons at the Bethel Homeless Ministries Day Center regarding their opinion of the need and potential location for a 24/7 public restroom facility. The majority of respondents were single males, however a small number of single women and women with children were included. A total of 42 surveys were completed.

Of those who responded, 38 individuals answered yes there is a need for a downtown/State Street public restroom; 2 individuals answered don't know; and the balance did not answer the question.

Respondents were asked where they frequently sleep. Emergency Shelter and On the Street were the two highest responses:

- emergency shelter – 27
- street – 15
- with friends – 5
- own place – 3
- vehicle – 2
- motel – 1
- campsite – 1

The time of day that the 36 respondents indicated having difficulty finding a bathroom varied, however, a significant number indicated that they had difficulty during the time that many public buildings and food/retail establishments are open. Some individuals said that Saturday and Sunday were more difficult than weekdays:

- 8am -5pm – 17
- 5pm-10pm – 8
- 10pm-2am – 18
- 2am-8am – 18

Respondents were asked where they most often use bathroom facilities; the majority indicated they used restrooms in public buildings followed by retail/food establishments:

- public buildings (Public Safety Building, Capitol, Central Library, UW Union) – 17
- stores/restaurants/fast food (Walgreens, Wendy's, Starbucks, Nick's, hotel, stores) – 12
- Bethel Day Center – 4
- outdoors – 4
- porta-potties – 3
- Overture Center - 2

When asked what they do if they can't find a bathroom, the majority said they used the streets or bushes:

- use the streets/bushes – 22
- wait – 5

- carry a container – 3

Many of the respondents indicated that they had used (or continue to use) the porta-potties paid for and located by the city and county:

- outside the City County Building – 21
- outside the parking ramp near lower State Street – 11
- County parking ramp on Fairchild Street – 10

Respondents were asked where they believe would be a good place for a 24/7 public restroom facility; the location most mentioned was the State/Mifflin Streets area:

- State/Mifflin Streets area – 9
- anywhere/all over – 6
- Peace Park – 2
- bottom of State Street – 2
- parking lot near MATC – 1
- open all public buildings 24/7 – 1
- around the Square – 1
- place near camera(s) for safety - 1

The City of Madison is discussing whether to build a new public restroom in the downtown/State Street area and we would like your input. All responses are confidential.

Where do you frequently sleep? (check all that apply)

Emergency Shelter Street Vehicle With Friends My Own Place Other (describe) _____

Have you ever had difficulty finding a bathroom in the downtown/State Street area?

Yes No

If yes, what time of the day do you have difficulty finding bathroom facilities?

8 am – 5 pm 5 pm – 10 pm 10 pm – 2 am 2 am – 8 am

While in the downtown/State Street area, where do you most often use the bathroom facilities? _____

If you are unable to locate a bathroom, what do you do? _____

Have you ever used the porta-potty located: out-side the parking ramp near lower State Street

in the County parking ramp on Fairchild Street outside the City County building on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd

Is there a need for a public bathroom in the downtown/State Street area that is available 24 hours a day /7 days a week?

Yes No Don't know

If yes, where should it be located? _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INPUT

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