

DOWNTOWN PUBLIC RESTROOMS

STAFF REPORT

April 30, 2014

SUMMARY

During the process of creating the 2014 Capital Budget, staff from several City agencies were directed to prepare a report regarding the provision of restroom facilities available for use by visitors to the Downtown 24 hours a day. This report includes background information on that request, outlines some of the issues to be considered, and possible next steps.

REPORT STAFF TEAM

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PART 1: BACKGROUND

Budget Amount and Language

As part of the 2014 Adopted Capital Budget – Facilities Management Project No. 17 includes \$300,000 for the planning and construction of at least one permanent full time publicly accessible toilet. The exact language in the budget reads:

“This project provides funding for planning and construction of at least one permanent full time publicly accessible toilet to be located in the core downtown area. A public toilet would be an amenity to all downtown visitors, residents and businesses and will reduce ongoing maintenance and public safety resource needs. Planning and public discussions will determine the best location, maintenance costs, management plan, and configuration.”

Resolution

In addition, the Common Council also adopted a resolution on November 19, 2013 – Legistar file #32078. This resolution calls for staff from various agencies to assemble a report on potential locations including new and existing facilities for public restrooms that would be available 24/7. The exact language reads:

WHEREAS, during consideration of the 2014 Capital Budget, the Common Council added \$300,000 to fund one or more public restrooms in the downtown area; and,

WHEREAS, in order to reach this goal, additional information from City agencies is needed,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Common Council requests that staff members from the Parks Division, Parking Utility, Madison Police Department, Madison-Dane County Public Health Department and Engineering Division assemble a report on the potential locations, including new and existing facilities, for public restrooms in the downtown area that can be operated 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and that the **report be provided to the Common Council by its February 25, 2014 meeting.**

As a result of these actions staff from Parks Division, Parking Utility, Madison Police Department, Madison-Dane County Public Health, Engineering, Planning, and the Mayor's office met several times to put together information for Members of the Common Council to consider as they decide on next steps to with regard to this issue.

Because of the extreme winter weather, public toilets in the downtown area have additional maintenance issues that will need to be addressed through the construction and operation of the facility. Providing adequate heat in winter months may also impact management issues. Finally, this report does not suggest locations for public restrooms as the staff team felt that more public input needs to be gathered before determining the locations for these facilities.

PART 2: CURRENT SITUATION

Existing Facilities

The staff team began by taking an inventory of existing facilities in a more defined area of the downtown that would be the most convenient to the greatest number of people. The attached maps show this primary focus area that roughly parallels State Street (approx. one block to the south of State Street and a half block to the north) and a two-block radius around Capitol Square. This area is believed to have the highest number of visitors and includes many primary office, retail, cultural, eating/drinking, and entertainment destinations, as well as the major downtown parking structures.

The map "Downtown Public Restrooms – Limited Available Hours" shows several public buildings that have restrooms available during regular business hours. Staff mapped a three-block (approx. a 5-minute walk) around the existing facilities to help understand the "service area" of these facilities. As the map shows, the existing facilities provide good coverage of the focus area during the hours that they are open and available.

The map "Downtown Public Restrooms Available 24/7" shows locations of portable toilets in the Capitol North, State Street Campus, and Dane County parking garages that are available 24 hours a

day, seven days a week. The Downtown Visitor’s Center is included in this analysis and its “service area” is shown to indicate its coverage if it were to become available 24 hours a day.

Portable Toilets in Public Parking Facilities

County Owned Facility

Dane County installed a portable toilet over a year ago at the request of the County Board to address concerns about providing an overnight bathroom facility for the homeless. It is located in a corner (intersection of Main St. and Fairchild St.) on floor 3 within the Capitol Square South garage (113 S. Henry St.). County staff has reported that so far it has worked well and has helped reduce human waste being deposited within the garage. The Country Plumber, Inc., which is the current portable toilet rental and servicing provider for both the City and County has informed City staff that this location is difficult for them to service.



Portable toilet at the Capitol Square South garage.

City Owned Facilities

In late February, the City installed portable toilets in two public parking garages operated by the Parking Utility to address a budget request for funding to support access to portable restrooms by homeless persons and others. This funding is in the Community Development Block Grant Adopted Operating Budget.



Portable toilet on Hawthorne Court under a bridge connecting the Lake and Frances portions of the State Street Campus garage.



Portable toilet located off N. Butler St. within the Capitol Square North garage.

PART 3: ISSUES

Public Health

Ensuring that domestic waste is handled in a sanitary manner is critical to protect public health. In Madison's downtown area, government buildings, food stores, restaurants, and other types of businesses do make public restrooms available. However, these facilities are only available when the business is open and, in some cases, businesses will attempt to restrict the use of their restrooms to paying customers. This creates a situation outside of normal business hours where a person with an immediate need to urinate or defecate may be left with no option but to use the ground, trash cans, entrances/stoops, parking ramps, or other unsuitable locations. Anyone can find themselves in such a predicament but certain groups such as late-night revelers and homeless individuals are most likely to find themselves in this situation.

Providing a public restroom 24 hours a day, 7 days a week is one way to give individuals an option to relieve themselves in an appropriate place. There are many options for providing these facilities but it is important that resources are included to maintain the facilities in a safe and sanitary manner. Failing to do so will create facilities that are a health hazard to the community. It is also important that any permanent restroom facility plan include adequate hand washing facilities to prevent the spread of bacteria and viruses.

Management

In the past, many cities did provide public restrooms however, because of limited funds to maintain the facilities many public restrooms were closed to save cleaning costs. These closings came at an unanticipated price. Cities have seen an increase in civil law violations and many businesses in the downtown area are impacted when their business entrance/stoop is used because people feel like they have no other option when they needed 'to go'. There are locations in the downtown that do have public toilet facilities available but people may not know where they are located and may not be available 24 hours per day 7 days per week.

Placement of a permanent structure should allow for maximum visibility and use by the community. In addition to placement considerations, the addition of closed-circuit television (CCTV) of the permanent structure will assist in around the clock monitoring of the site for illegal activity. Public parking structures may be appropriate locations as restroom facilities can be constructed in areas that are visible and there is staff and security already at the site. However, there are also times such as overnight when there are periods of inactivity. Information should be posted at all public restroom locations on how to contact the facilities maintenance staff for service. Additional signage to notice the public of CCTV usage should also be provided.

Estimated Operating/Maintenance Costs

A significant number of daily routine site visits will be required to ensure an appropriately clean and sanitary public restroom facility. Budgetary impact on Parks for operations of a 24/7 restroom facility

would likely be between \$70,000 and \$80,000 per year. A detailed operational plan can be developed by Parks when a design is determined.

Staffing Needs (annual estimate: \$60,978)

The Parks Division estimates that the incremental staffing needs for this facility would entail additional hours of work by classification, as follows:

Parks Maintenance Worker – 4.0 hours per day – 1,460 hours (.70 FTE)

These hours would be divided through 4-5 check points during the day and would include a significant deep cleaning period each day to provide a clean facility to the public. Total Cost (includes benefits): \$42,134.

Park Ranger – Daily checks at end of regular day shift. – 500 hours per year. Total Cost (includes benefits): \$14,401. This would provide some oversight of the facility during the night time hours.

Plumber – 60-80 hours per year of work.

Budgeted as 60 hours of overtime as no additional plumbing work capacity is available in the Parks Facilities group (1 plumber on staff).

Total Cost (includes benefits): \$3,068

Electrician / Maintenance Mechanics – 25-50 hours per year.

Budgeted as 25 hours of overtime.

Total Cost (includes benefits): \$1,375

Services and Supplies (annual estimate: \$8,300-\$18,000)

Utilities required for a standalone facility would included natural gas, electricity, water, sanitary sewer, storm water and other ancillary municipal services bill items. This bill could have a great deal of range depending on size, use and design. The Parks Division estimates that these costs would be between \$4,500 and \$12,000 per year. The higher side of this recognizes the potential for significant energy costs from a 24/7 operation. Supply costs would likely range between \$3,800 and \$6,000.

Supplies required to operate the facility would include:

- Toilet paper (lots)
- Paper towel
- Cleaning supplies
- Safety supplies
- Basic equipment/hardware supplies
- Items for set-up, such as, trash can, soap dispenser, etc.

PART 4: NEW CONSTRUCTION

The staff team has identified four basic options for developing 24/7 public toilet rooms for the public.

- A. Build a stand-alone building
- B. Purchase Automated Public Toilet and build site
- C. Purchase a Public Toilet such as the Portland Loo and build site
- D. Purchase and place port-a-potties in various areas around the downtown

Each option has positives and negatives such as how they work in extreme cold temperatures, how they are maintained and managed.

Location is also an issue that needs to be addressed. Some groups, such as the Madison Police Department, may suggest they should be located in places where there is a lot of pedestrian traffic so that there are more eyes on the facilities and so more people know about them and can use them. Others may suggest that they should be located away from public sidewalks or locations with a lot of foot traffic is better because of the lack of space and competition for other elements on the sidewalk like outdoor seating, bike racks, etc. Some businesses are also likely to have concerns about locating a public toilet close to their place of business.

Infrastructure costs for more “permanent” facilities (A-C above) will be a consideration, and this report estimates those costs to total (but are not limited to) approximately \$23,000 per site as follows:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| \$ 7,600 | for 75 feet of 1” water lateral installed |
| \$ 4,000 | for 75 feet of 4” sanitary lateral installed |
| \$ 6,300 | for 75 feet of 12” Storm lateral installed |
| \$ 1,000 | for 75 feet of trench backfill, asphalt patching, etc |
| <u>\$ 4,000</u> | <u>for electrical and gas service</u> |
| \$ 22,900 | TOTAL |

A. Build a stand-alone building (estimate: \$75,000 - \$100,000 + infrastructure costs)

Stand alone structures would be fully customizable for the location and anticipated usage. A State Street facility could be made larger than a facility in a different location based on estimated usage. Like the Automated Facilities a constructed facility could be made of materials and finishes that are vandal resistant and many of the added options could also be incorporated into the re-usable design. Automated doors and cleaning devices would likely not be an option on a constructed facility.

An estimated cost of constructing a standalone structure consisting of a one stall Women’s Room and a one stall Men’s Room would be approximately \$75,000 - \$100,000.

A stand-alone building would need to be designed to reduce the risk of pipes freezing in the winter. If the building is heated there would most likely need to be back-up systems in place to keep water pipes from freezing if the building were to lose heat. Management issues include making sure the facility is

not used for illegal activities or activities not intended to happen at this type of facility. Significant staffing would be needed to make sure the facility is safe and clean for the public 24/7.

B. Purchase Automated Public Toilet and build site (estimate: \$100,000 - \$100,000 + infrastructure costs)

The information gathered below is from a manufacturer called “exeloo” at <http://www.exeloo.com/> . Exeloo are one of several different manufacturers worldwide, most of which are Europe-based. All have a variety of exterior and interior finishes and amenities for various models.

Automated Public Toilets are very similar to the Portland Loo. The primary difference however is they are a completely enclosed structure. Most are coin or card operated and can have automated cleaning systems or they can be manually cleaned. The structures come in one, two, and three unit models. Each unit is a single, handicap accessible, uni-sex toilet room.

Interior and exterior finishes come in a variety of possibilities and are customizable. A wide variety of optional features are possible depending on the various models. Some options include, no touch product dispensing, baby change stations, emergency lighting, motion detectors, automated doors, automated and level of cleaning options, solar panels, and web based monitoring of the facility. Information gathered suggests options for heating and ventilation.



Exterior options



Pictures of interior

The City of New York charges 25 cents, the door closes and locks behind you and the facility timer is set for a 15 minute time limit. After 12 minutes there is a 3 minute warning period before the door automatically reopens. Upon exiting the door again closes for a 90 second sanitizing cycle.

Self cleaning toilet room models (this type cleans and sanitizes the inside structure as well as the toilet range from \$100,000 to \$500,000 per unit. Self cleaning units have a lockout timer type function for the cleaning cycle to work between users.)

Similar issues will remain regarding management as a stand-alone building including the need to design the facility to reduce the risk of pipes freezing in the winter. If the building is heated there would most likely need to be back-up systems in place to keep water pipes from freezing if the building were to lose heat. Management issues include making sure the facility is not used for illegal activities or activities not intended to happen at this type of facility. Significant staffing would be needed to make sure the facility is safe and clean for the public 24/7.

C. Purchase a Public Toilet such as the Portland Loo and build site (estimate: \$110,000 + infrastructure costs)

Information gathered below is from Portland Environmental Services which is Portland’s Public Utilities <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/59293>. Staff also spoke with Anne Peterson with the City of Portland that works on placing Portland Loo’s in Portland.

The “Portland Loo” is a single toilet facility constructed primarily out of stainless steel. Each unit appears to be of sufficient size to be handicap accessible. The structure is very open and airy. Privacy is maintained by louvers that allow air flow and natural light into the structure.



Pictures of the Portland Loo – exterior and interior

The mechanicals and piping are located on the back side of the unit. The screen shot below shows minimal insulation around water piping. Heat tape would be installed on all piping to prevent freezing which would add to the operational cost of the facility. Heat tapes are prone to failure and would not be effective in the event of a power failure. The hand wash is an external push button actuator with a splash pad by an open grate. This feature would most likely need to be disabled during the winter to prevent exterior icing.



Picture of insulation around water pipe and of exterior hand wash area

Cleaning stainless steel is fairly easy. However the openness of the structure would prohibit the use of any detergents or chemicals. Cleaning a structure of this nature would only allow for the cleaning solution to soak into the earth or drain to a storm sewer. You could not install the outside floor drain under Wisconsin code and this would need to be modified.

The Portland Loo is \$90,000 for the standard model is \$90,000 FOB (freight on board). Delivery, site work, sewer, water, and electricity, etc is not covered in that price. Options are available and listed on the form also. Anne Peterson from the City of Portland indicated that the Portland Loo would need to be modified to meet Wisconsin codes and extreme weather and suggested that we increase the \$90,000 standard model price by 20% or another \$18,000.

If this facility option will be seriously considered, more research needs to be done regarding how the Portland Loo will function in Wisconsin climate as the toilet structure is relatively open with louvers heating the structure it is not an option. The standard unit comes with pipe heating equipment to keep pipes from freezing but the average low for Portland in December is 36 degrees. Blowing snow, frozen ice (and other things) in Wisconsin would also create issues inside and problems for cleaning.

ADDITIONAL CHARGE OPTIONS:

Please contact us for pricing information.

- 110-volt AC electrical system in lieu of solar power system
- Exterior handwash grate
- Toilet paper shroud for added weather resistance
- Custom mounts for art or advertising
- Outside trelliswork
- Additional wind and weather protection for louvres
- Materials upgrade from 304L stainless steel to 316L stainless steel for increased resistance to weather and saline environments
- Post upgrade from A 500 GRB Tube steel to 304L stainless steel for increased resistance to weather and saline environments
- Additional custom features. *(please describe below)*

Options available for additional cost.



Portland average monthly temperatures.

Similar issues will remain regarding management including the need to design the facility to reduce the risk of pipes freezing in the winter. Management issues include making sure the facility is not used for illegal activities or activities not intended to happen at this type of facility. Significant staffing would be needed to make sure the facility is safe and clean for the public 24/7.

D. Purchase and place port-a-potties in various areas around the downtown (estimated Traditional Port-a-Potty serviced three times per week is \$160 per month)

There are two possibilities in this category, the traditional portable blue-hut and the restroom trailer. Both models are rented from a supplier for short term events.

Restroom Trailer: A restroom trailer is a lot more luxurious as it is intended for short term events such as an outdoor wedding reception, company picnic, etc. The trailer provides a 500 gallon holding tank, hot water heater, porcelain fixtures and is separated into a 3 unit Men’s Room and a 3 unit Women’s Room. One drawback to this facility type is that most trailers would not be ADA compatible for wheel chair access.



Restroom trailer examples

Traditional Port-a-Potty: Is a portable fiberglass structure with a waste holding tank. Typically all models are uni-sex with a toilet and urinal. Handicap models do not have the urinal feature. Units are lockable, have no running water, lights and hand sanitizer are available options to some units.

Hand washing stations are additional units available for rent in the service agreement. These units hold about 45 gallons of water which is dispensed by the use of a foot pump and have a paper towel and hand sanitizer dispensers.

LARGE
HANDICAPPED UNIT
7' 2" H x 5' 1" W x 5' 1" L
(Inside height is 6' 8")



THE
UNITED UNIT
7' 6" H x 43" W x 48" L
(Inside height is 6' 8")



2-STATION
SINK
4' 9" H x 22 1/2" W



Traditional port-a-potty examples.

Port-a-Potties are not heated. The sanitizing solution in the holding tank has an anti-freeze additive in it to prevent freezing for cold weather servicing. Units are cleaned and serviced as part of the rental agreement on a regular basis. Heavy use of a single unit could potentially fill the holding tank and exhaust the paper product supplies before the next scheduled service.

PART 5: POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS

Continue with Port-a-Potties

One approach would be to continue to deploy Port-a-Potties at various locations through the Capitol Square and State Street area. These should be closely monitored for usage to the extent possible and provide oversight/management where needed to maintain a clean, safe environment.

Peace Park Visitor Center – Possible Pilot Project

One possible option to pilot a more permanent public toilet room is to consider opening up the Peace Park Visitor Center for 24 hour 7 day a week. This approach has many merits including:

- Centrally located on State Street
- Equipped with male and female bathrooms
- Equipped with exterior CCTV on State street side and Gillman street side.
- Has supervision during portion of the time frame currently

The additional resources to be considered for this site would be:

- Additional staff to supervise
- Additional cleaning cycles
- Additional CCTV in the lobby
- Increase in maintenance cost due to increased usage

Parks estimates this may be approximately 100 hours per week on average for staffing/cleaning at about \$34/hour. For more periodic check-ins, the cost would go down.

The pilot project would create an opportunity for the City to evaluate the costs and needs of this type of permanent facility downtown prior to embarking on the construction of additional permanent sites.

Madison Police would respond to incidents at this location and has the ability to retrieve video for used in criminal related cases. MPD also has use of a small office in the building so a built in presence is periodically at this site already.

Information would need to be posted in the lobby on how to contact the facilities maintenance for service. Additional signage to notice the public of CCTV usage would need to be considered.

Additional Information

Whether or not the pilot project is undertaken, additional information and input will be valuable in developing a long term solution, including:

Data on the current usage of both Peace Park Visitor Center and Port-a-Potties

- number of people that use Peace Park location
- change in cleanliness of ramps
- report out findings of pilot to policymakers

Public and Stakeholder input on location of future permanent facilities

- broad input from the public, various stakeholders groups, and policy bodies