

# Late Night Urinal Pilot Project

City of Victoria - May, 2014

## Objective

The goal of this pilot project was to determine if a unique approach for providing public urinals would provide a feasible and effective option for reducing the open urination in the downtown. If viable, the program could perform a role in enhancing the vitality of the downtown late night economy by minimizing the unsanitary impact of late night urination on city streets, alleys and business entrances.



## Background

In 2009, the Mayor's Late Night Task Force report recommended measures to advance the development of night time economy and to address persistent problems. Although the City had undertaken an awareness campaign and a portable (KROS) urinal program to begin to address it, public urination had been a longstanding issue.

The urinal program was successful, but operationally cost-prohibitive. It was discontinued in favour of a fixed public urinal (Pandora and Government

Streets) and a sidewalk washroom (Langley Street). These facilities have provided 24 hour service and operational costs have been very low. Yet, while they were well-received by the public and assisted to

reduce open urination, the fixed washrooms lacked the distribution and flexibility to fully address the problem.

In 2013, the City was approached by a bar owner who was interested in reducing public urination adjacent to his premises. Recognizing that the issue remained a downtown concern, staff developed terms for the pilot project in collaboration with bar owners.

## Method

The pilot project involves the distribution of small, portable urinals designed for the urban construction sites. The urinals are easily loaded onto the Downtown Victoria Business Association's (DVBA) bicycle trailer and delivered to various locations close to bars and clubs. Each urinal was secured to a sign post or other suitable infrastructure in the late evening.

Attention was paid to selecting locations which would not be considered offensive by downtown patrons, but would be close enough to venues that they would be convenient and intercept individuals who may otherwise urinate openly. The urinals were then picked up early in the morning before business owners opened shop. They were transported to Centennial Square parkade and emptied into the public urinals at the, near where they were stored.

The pilot project was supported by three way partnership between the City of Victoria, the DVBA and several bar owners. The City coordinated the project and provided the portable Polycan

urinals (\$250 each). A DVBA Clean and Safe staff person performed all operational duties and the bar owners provided the funding for the DVBA staff person (\$25 per urinal each night).

Each party's specific responsibilities



were as follows:

**City**

- provided the urinals (5), the materials for securing them, cleaning products and a storage site for the units
- invoiced and collected payment from the sponsoring VBCA members and subsequently reimbursed the DVBA for staff costs

- provided supervision and guidance for the DVBA staff member facilitating the program
- was responsible for developing signage and promoting use of the urinals

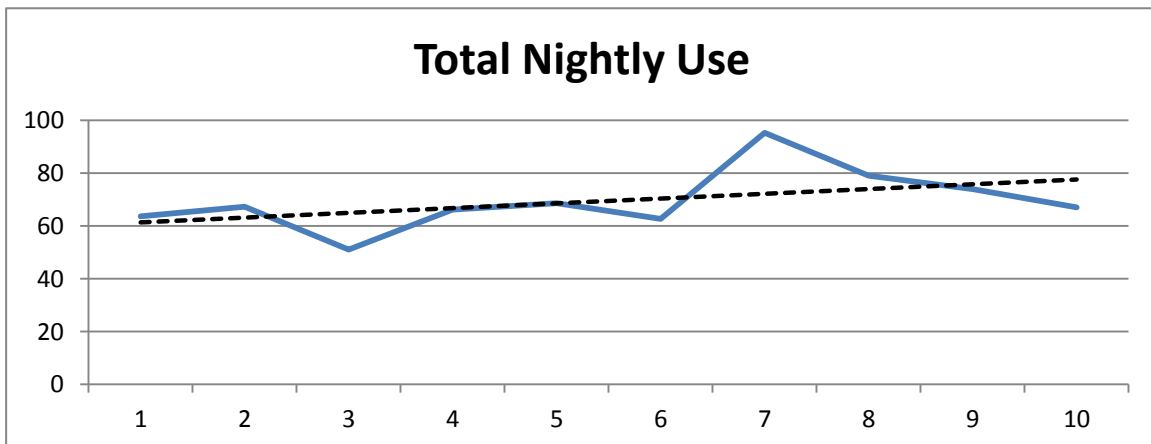
**DVBA**

- provided a staff member to facilitate the program
- staff member transported the urinals to sites and locked them in place at dusk on Friday and Saturday nights and collected them before 7:00am the following mornings
- provided the bicycle and cart for transportation
- staff was responsible for emptying, cleaning and sterilizing the urinals after use
- staff measured the volume of use for each urinal on each night based on weight

**Bar Owners**

- were responsible for sponsoring the full staffing cost of the program (\$25 night)
- identified a preferred appropriate location for the urinal in the vicinity of their establishment(s)
- promoted use of the urinals to their patrons

The City ran the pilot program for a period of twelve weeks, from December



28<sup>th</sup>, 2013 through to March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014.

## Observations

During the three months of the trial, no significant issues were encountered. There were no logistical problems and no complaints or concerns were received by the City or the DVBA operator. The operator noted that *“the smell factor in the chosen locations has improved (and), in general, the public opinion is positive”*.

Using the formula that one urination from an average male was equal to 500 millilitres; the *Total Nightly Use* chart shows collective patronage of the urinals each night of the trial. The trend line shows that use increases over the trial period.

The table below provides the number of uses at each specific site. Locations received a similar level of patronage, averaging from 13-15 uses a night and with a high of 34 uses on a Friday night by Sugar Nightclub. Overall, 347 litres of urine were collected over the span of 10 evenings, equalling a total of 694 individual uses.

Portable Urinal Pilot Project Number of Uses						1 use = 500ml
	Comm Alley	Bast Squar	Strath	Sugar	View Street	Tot.
Jan 31	15	18	13	0	18	64
Feb 1	18	22	8	10	9	67
Feb 7	8	13	8	13	9	51
Feb 8	16	17	11	16	6	66
Feb 14	13	11	12	16	17	69
Feb 15	13	12	16	13	10	63
Feb 21	14	17	14	34	17	95
Feb 22	27	11	20	13	8	79
Feb 28	12	14	20	14	15	74
Mar 1	16	13	10	15	14	67
	<b>151</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>694</b>

There were no unexpected costs for the program during the trial period. The cost of \$25 per urinal was found acceptable to the sponsoring businesses. The amount per urinal provided an adequate incentive for the DVBA operator to undertake the program, which required unusual working hours and handling used urinals.

## Discussion

Based on the increase of use throughout the trial period opportunities for greater promotion of the program, it is predicted that the number of total uses would increase in the future. Higher summer temperatures also cause the smell of urine to be more pronounced, which negatively affects the experience of the downtown for visitors and frustrates residents, shoppers and downtown workers.

Overall costs of the program are modest in relation to returns. The cost for monthly operation of each urinal in the future would be \$200, all of which would be provided by the sponsoring businesses. The urinals and signage may require replacement from time to time, though these costs are relatively minor and can be covered by the Downtown Programs operational budget.

Five urinals were used for the pilot project. To most effectively manage the issue, there should be wider sponsorship and more urinals deployed in the downtown. Ten to twelve urinals (two trailer trips) would likely provide optimal impact.

The availability of persons to undertake the operation of the program is critical to its success. The DVBA operator has expressed an interest in continuing to provide his services and the DVBA has offered to continue in its supportive role.

Similarly, bar owners who supported the pilot project have indicated that they would like to continue to support the program.

## Conclusions

The pilot project has demonstrated that the urinal program is a cost effective means of addressing the public urination problem downtown. It has been well received by the public and project partners have expressed an interest in continuing to support the program. The costs to the City are nominal, while the potential impact of the program in

reducing public urination through moderate expansion is likely to be significant.

## Recommendation

It is recommended that the Late Night Urinal Program continue on the same basis that it has operated during the trial period.

An expansion of sponsorship should be sought to provide broader coverage of the entertainment district.

