

## ATTACHMENT #1 Business Leaders Letter on Public Restrooms

October 14, 2015 – Emailed Letter

Dear Honorable Mayor Buxbaum and City Councilmembers,

I am forwarding you this letter on behalf of PBIA Chair, Mrs. Mary Corso, regarding the results of monthly meetings between the ODA and PBIA leadership.

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In May and July 2015 the PBIA Clean and Safe Committee hosted meetings to discuss the most identified public health issues negatively impacting businesses in Downtown Olympia . The issue:

### **Lack of access to evening public bathrooms and human waste clean-up.**

Downtown stakeholders and allied partners were invited to assist with the identification of solutions, funding, and staffing. This group consisted of but was not limited to: City of Olympia staff, LOTT, Interfaith Works, Intercity Transit, Department of Enterprise Services and the Thurston County Health Department. From these meetings we identified the following recommendations:

1. **Provide access to one or more 24 hour on-call hazardous waste removal teams with appropriate training and protective equipment to clean up human waste in landscaping, alcoves, doorways and alley ways in Downtown Olympia.**
2. **Work with already existing public restrooms in the downtown to extend the hours for public use.**
3. **Not Recommended or mentioned: Adding temporary porta-potties to be placed around the downtown area as they are often a source of vandalism, unsafe behaviors and crime.**

We feel this is a significantly important issue to be addressed as on October 4th LOTT closed their public restroom facilities for the winter. Sate and Parks departments will shift to fall/winter hours with earlier closing times. Intercity Transit is unable to provide any extended bathroom hours. The Thurston County Health Department was able to offer funding to support a staffed facility and while they faced recent cuts they are still interested in proposals to partner with an existing facility.

The issue is getting more critical as many businesses are posting, "Bathrooms for customers only" and "No public bathrooms available" signage. While understandable, it is not welcoming and bathroom access has become a cumbersome piece of owning a business in downtown Olympia.

We thank all who continue to be a part of this conversation and who have been forthright in what your agency can provide. The business community remains hopeful that public restrooms will be made available for more hours to accommodate downtown Olympia's public restroom needs and night time entertainment businesses after hours needs.

As a result of monthly meetings between the ODA and PBIA leadership, we have identified this issue as one of the major issues affecting the Downtown. Between the PBIA and the ODA we represent the over 435 downtown businesses who identified this as a major issue in our most recent survey.

We look forward to working with the Council, the City and our allied partners to find short and long term solutions. Your assistance and support in this effort is important.

Let's make downtown Olympia an economically viable and pleasant place to stay and grow a business in a clean and safe way.

Mary L Corso  
Chair PBIA

Vida Zvizdys- Farler  
Executive Director ODA

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