



June 7, 2018

Councilmember Jessica Bateman  
Olympia City Council  
PO Box 1967  
Olympia, WA 98507 -1967

Dear Councilmember Bateman:

**SUBJECT: Funding Future Placement of Public Toilets in Downtown Olympia**

At the May meeting, the members of the Utility Advisory Committee (UAC) received a presentation from Amy Buckler and Mark Rentfrow on the results from the pilot project to guide recommendations for future placement of public toilets in Downtown Olympia. Committee members understand the public value contributed from the placement of clean and safe public restrooms in the downtown core.

Now that the pilot has been completed and a set of best practices have been formulated, UAC members understand that once the requisite funding has been determined and sources identified this project will begin to move forward. Wastewater capital facility funds were used to help fund the placement of the Portland Loo at the Artesian Commons (part of the pilot) and \$365,000 (about 20% of the estimated average annual capital facilities expense for the Waste Water Utility) were included in the Capital Facility Plan (CFP) for the installation of a public restroom in 2018.

If it is the intention of the City Council to fund the acquisition and placement of additional public toilets from this fund source, UAC members think the committee should have a role, but are uncertain what the City Council expects from them.

The UAC takes very seriously the impact that utility rate increases have on members of the community, and have worked to stem annual rate increases. City utilities are well-managed and work to balance affordability with the high standard of service. Since projected capital facility needs during the next five years indicate expenditure growth, we will be asking citizens to accept sizeable rate increases.

As the City Council Liaison for the UAC, I am reaching out to you to better understand your expectations for the UAC regarding funding for this project, and to share with you pertinent thoughts from the UAC members for your consideration.

- If Utility funds are intended to be used for public restrooms, the due-diligence of the UAC requires a level of examination; therefore a request should be an item in the budget/rate setting process and compete for available funding or part of the rationale for a rate increase.

- All possible funding should be explored. Along with public value from the placement of public toilets, there are partnerships to be explored—the downtown business community, the State of Washington’s Enterprise Services Department, the Restaurant Association, etc. Another idea is for the Wastewater Utility to fund sewer connections for the toilets. The Utility would be contributing, but not paying the entire cost.
- From the results of the pilot it seems clear that the acquisition and placement of additional public toilets requires ample funding for frequent sanitation and maintenance.
- Fees collected for the Wastewater Utility are intended to pay for the construction, operation and maintenance of the wastewater collection system—supported by equitable and affordable fees, minimal rate increases and consistent levels of service.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and provide our thoughts about this subject. Please let me know how you would like to discuss your expectations for the UAC regarding funding for this project. I can be reached via email at [dhaffner@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:dhaffner@ci.olympia.wa.us)

Sincerely,



**Dever Haffner-Ratliffe**

Chair

Utility Advisory Committee

cc: UAC Members

Andy Haub, Water Resources Director