

# City of Olympia

## Community Planning and Development

Working Draft

Downtown Sanitation Master Plan

30 November 2017



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Mark,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide architectural consulting services for the Downtown Sanitation Master Plan in the City of Olympia downtown business district. We are very interested in this project, and feel that we have discovered and developed valuable information and expertise that will assist with your endeavors to improve downtown.

Our research began by walking the downtown of the City of Olympia and analyzing the area and surrounding context to appreciate the city's assets, virtues, issues, and opportunities.

Our efforts expanded to interviews with stakeholders that included city staff, the PBIA, the ODA, business owners and people we encountered on the streets.

The issue of clean and safe sanitation is not limited to the City of Olympia. Our research efforts discovered that urban centers across America are struggling with this issue. The proactive steps that have been initiated have placed Olympia on the forefront of public sanitation.

The following report describes that process, shows options for public restrooms, makes recommendations for locations, type of facility, and hours of operation, provides a rough order of magnitude costs, and schedule for implementation.

We have enjoyed working with the City of Olympia on this project and have met people who are passionate about the city and have invested their heart and soul into making it a better place. Our recommendations dovetail into the Downtown Strategy and will help to further those goals by serving all of the citizens of Olympia.

Sincerely,



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## INTRODUCTION

The City of Olympia is taking proactive steps toward understanding and addressing a public sanitation need that is currently affecting urban centers across America. The Downtown Sanitation Master Plan will assist the city in locating and selecting restroom facilities to meet the needs for the downtown population.

The project goal is to develop a plan that helps to provide sanitary facilities for all citizens and visitors to Olympia and reduce the amount of the human waste on the streets and alleys in the downtown area. Our research effort will review other cities that have planned or implemented similar projects and their results. We will provide recommendations and best practices for public restroom site locations, facility types, hours of operation, and key criteria for safety and achieving positive results.

Our research and discovery started in June and continued through September of 2017. Our strategy identified initial stakeholders, jurisdictions, facilities, and the downtown target area. The initial meeting with city staff identified contacts for the PBIA (Parking Business Improvement Area) and the ODA (Olympia Downtown Association), discussed past and recent issues, and the Downtown Strategy<sup>1</sup> that led to the portable restroom pilot project. We discussed how to determine if the project was successful. The general understanding was that we must acknowledge the larger social issues of street dependence and health challenges of which the human waste problem is a symptom. Public restrooms may help, but will not solve the problem alone.

Furthermore, the consensus is that the City may or may not have the capacity to improve metrics through this project alone, but we should seek to improve public sanitation and with that the public perception of downtown Olympia. Providing safe, clean public restrooms for all users of downtown will contribute to the greater goal of revitalizing of the downtown.

- **Investigate** the existing assets, issues, and opportunities;
- **Evaluate** the current plan, availability of restrooms, and perceptions of sanitary conditions;
- **Recommendations** for identified locations, types of facilities, and hours of operation.


<sup>1</sup> Olympia Downtown Strategy, Connecting people, places, & spaces, by Makers Architecture, Planning, Urban Design



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# **Executive Summary**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



### Need for Public Restrooms

Access to water and sanitation are human rights. The Olympia Municipal Code<sup>1</sup> states that it is unlawful for any person to urinate or defecate in a public place. By installing public restrooms the City of Olympia is striving to meet the needs of the street dependent population, and investing in the infrastructure of downtown for all citizens and visitors. Olympia takes social justice and equity issues seriously, and public sanitation is a critical component. However, underlying the current sanitation challenge is a larger public health crisis connected to opioid abuse leading to misbehavior. Therefore, interventions to public sanitation may not yield significant improvements alone. Nonetheless, improving public sanitation has been made a priority, for reasons of human rights and dignity, and to improve the image of Olympia and the downtown experience for visitors and citizens.

Our research, interviews and site investigations have confirmed that there is a need for safe, clean, and available public sanitation. Olympia has begun to address the situation with the Portable Restroom Pilot project, however, this is not a permanent solution.

Olympia is not the only city facing the need to provide public restrooms. Annapolis, Juneau, and Santé Fe, similarly sized capital cities, have each faced similar problems with human waste on the streets. Nearby on the west coast, Portland, Vancouver, and Victoria, have all installed Portland Loo's, and in Seattle two more are planned for the Ballard and University District neighborhoods. This is an ongoing process across the nation, and conclusive results are difficult to ascertain. Jurisdictions, including Olympia, recognize the lack of public facilities and seek to provide for their communities.

### Requirements for Successful Implementation

The installation of the physical structure is only part of the solution. The location is critical and must be well-researched, and a loo cannot be simply dropped into a problem area and forgotten as happened in San Diego. Public facilities need to be maintained, cleaned, and be part of the community, aesthetically and functionally. The first impression of the exterior of the structure provides a clue as to what to expect inside. Cleanliness results in more widespread use which results in more publicly accepted and safer, public restrooms.

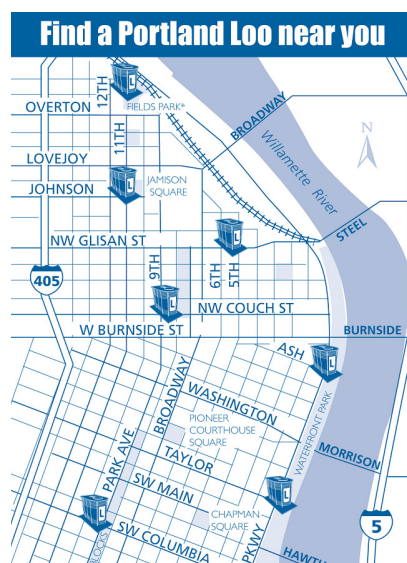
### Best Practices

Best practices for public restrooms begins with finding the right locations. Active places that are frequently traveled with pedestrians, businesses, shoppers, help to create natural surveillance which is a deterrent to crime. Good maintenance and frequent cleanings will keep facilities sanitary and appealing and also deter crime and negative behaviors that often occur at neglected facilities. Restrooms should have direct entry stalls from a public way, eliminating the problematic semi-private spaces. Stalls that are all-gender, and ADA accessible provide the greatest access. People need to know where these facilities are located, and what hours they are operational.

<sup>1</sup> Olympia Municipal Code



Similar challenges in Portland Oregon led the City to develop and build the Portland Loo, this is one of several located throughout downtown.



Locations of Loos in downtown Portland.

## Distance Matters

- Impact of a public restroom is limited to a small area
- Proximity and visibility matter
- People aren't going to walk a half mile to reach a restroom



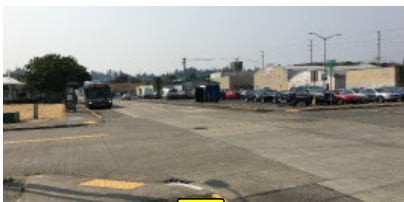
Intersection at 4th Ave & Washington St



Proposed Rendering of Portland Loo



Water play at Heritage Park Fountain



Portable near trans



Portable near Salvation Army

Coordinated graphics and wayfinding signage throughout downtown will make the greatest use of the fewest units.

## Findings, Research and Public Outreach

The analysis included mapping out the existing restroom locations, identifying those that were accessible for the public, and overlaying the human waste heat map<sup>2</sup>. This identified an underserved area of downtown that coincides with the both the majority of Olympia night life, and the hottest spots on the heat map. The public outreach events backed up this finding. People placed most of their dots along 4th Ave, Capitol Way, and at Sylvester Park.

## Facilities Recommendation

### Downtown at 4th Ave & Washington Street

The drawing (A-2 | Daytime Public Restrooms) showing the existing restroom locations and the heat map reveal a gap in service areas in this vicinity. The City of Olympia worked with our team and identified the owner who is receptive to a restroom in the ROW at the southwest corner of 4th Avenue and Washington St. This section of 4th Avenue is very close to the bar nightlife, and many businesses and shops nearby provide eyes on the street. The intersection is slated for road improvements, and there is an abandoned drinking fountain at the site, which make this a desirable site for a Portland Loo.

- **Portland Loo** - 24-hour facility

### Heritage Park Fountain

Health code requires that restrooms shall be located within 100 feet of the fountain, and the nearest facilities are 3-4 times that distance. There are possibilities for public restrooms to be built into future development of the site.

- **Comfort Station** - Open during fountain season and hours.

### Portable Restrooms near Intercity Transit

This unit has served its purpose for the pilot program, but the location lacks the activity for natural surveillance to support a safe permanent restroom. A new Loo located at 4th and Washington will help to provide service for the nearby social services. There is also an opportunity to add a restroom in this area as part of the transit center project that is currently beginning design. This would require an inter-agency agreement for construction and maintenance.

- **None** - remove portable unit. Continue pilot project with mobile toilet units for day use in this area.

### Portable Restroom at Salvation Army

The Salvation Army has expressed a keen interest in keeping a restroom at this location, and upgrading to a better, more sanitary unit like a Portland Loo. Because of the relatively poor natural surveillance at this location, a

<sup>2</sup> Human Waste Heat Map, City of Olympia

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

partnership with the Salvation Army would be needed to mitigate potential negative behavior. Also, this location has limited space and is primarily used by street dependent people, which would be contrary to the idea of siting a public, outdoor restroom to serve all users of downtown. However, as demonstrated by the heavy use during the pilot project, businesses and citizens alike benefit from sanitary facilities at this location.

- **Portland Loo** - 24-hour facility

### Sylvester Park

A Portland Loo could be located in the ROW on a curb bulb at one of the corners of the intersection of Legion Way SE and Washington Street SE, which are identified in the Downtown Strategy for street and sidewalk improvements. A loo at this location could replace the 24-hour portable unit at the Heritage Park Bathhouse, and the saved funds could be used for cleaning and maintenance for the new loo.

- **Portland Loo** - 24-hour facility



Possible Portland Loo at Washington Street & Legion Way

### Welcome Center

As identified in the Downtown Strategy, a Welcome Center needs to have public restrooms which will improve the image of downtown Olympia. A facility at Capitol Way and State would need to be paired with the Welcome Center to provide eyes on the street.

- **Comfort Station** - hours same as Welcome Center

## Conclusion



Olympia is on the forefront of addressing a challenge faced by revitalizing downtowns everywhere - safe, clean, and well-designed public restrooms. Great initiative was taken with the portable restroom pilot project which has gathered strong data and **provided functional short-term solutions**. This data has been useful in identifying needed locations, but portable restrooms are not permanent solutions to the problem of public sanitation.

Implementing the recommended actions and facilities will help to meet the city's social justice imperatives of all users of downtown, and specifically the needs of the street dependent population. Public restrooms are one component of an investment in the revitalization of downtown.

If a phased approach to implementation of this plan occurs, the recommendations should be re-evaluated based on new information and the changing urban fabric, prior to each subsequent public sanitation decision. The principles of CPTED and natural surveillance should be considered throughout the process.

# Findings

- **Discovery Process**
- **Findings From Interviews, Site Observations, Research, and Outreach**




## FINDINGS

### Approach

Our approach to this project was to observe and analyze the current conditions, research other cities and urban centers, engage the community, and seek the input of all project stakeholders, including city officials, business and property owners, street dependent people, visitors, shoppers, and users of downtown.

We combined the collective data, and applied our team knowledge from past projects, research, and public outreach. The comfort station renovation at Volunteer Park in Seattle, demonstrated the effectiveness of providing better accommodations and achieving better results. The All Gender Restroom Study for Seattle Parks, entailed extensive research and interviews including several universities, seven states, over a dozen cities, in the United States as well as abroad. Our findings in that study revealed that the LGBTQ community is the most vulnerable in public restrooms, and we identified key criteria to meet primary needs of safety, privacy, and inclusivity.

During the process of this the Olympia Downtown Sanitation Master Plan, we have had significant interaction with city, property owners, and business representatives. We have also engaged street dependent people through multiple walks with Downtown Ambassadors, and gleaned information about needs and opportunities of those who rely heavily on public space for daily activities.

Further outreach was focused on visitors, shoppers, and less-frequent users of downtown, through events such as the Summer Concert Series at Sylvester Park and the Olympia Farmers Market. This group, in addition to being critical to the vitality and improvement of downtown, is also critical to the success of public restrooms. How can visitors of the popular farmers market be encouraged to spend more time downtown? What would make an infrequent visitor want to go shopping downtown? How would public restrooms affect your experience downtown? These are the questions that we asked to better understand what would create public restrooms that are used by everyone, and contribute to a thriving downtown. 

### History of Public Restrooms<sup>1</sup>

In thinking about the need and the location for public restrooms, it is helpful to understand their role in our cities in different historical contexts. Public restrooms emerged in the late 19th century as industrial cities grew and became increasingly overcrowded and unsanitary. These “comfort stations” addressed larger public health issues. They often included baths and served individuals who didn’t have access to private facilities. As our economy moved away from industrialization, the role of public restrooms changed as well.

By the mid-20th century, more people gained access to private facilities and the restrooms served primarily shoppers, commuters, merchants and travelers. They become fixtures in more recreational settings and often had

### Findings

- Clear need identified by downtown strategy, surveys, outreach
- Business depressed
- Poor downtown perception
- Ambassadors / clean team needed and appreciated by businesses, police, community, street dependent
- Heat map, outreach identify locations
- Other cities also have similar issues

<sup>1</sup> Going Public! Strategies for Meeting Public Restroom Need in Portland’s Central City, by Relief Works.

an attendant selling products or shining shoes. However by the 1970s and 1980s, codes had evolved to require restrooms for employees and in certain businesses for customers. Less investment was paid into public restrooms by cities. With aging infrastructure and no staffing, public restrooms became viewed as a negative experience and even unsafe.

Recently, a revival of these public amenities can be seen in cities around the globe. Through revitalization efforts, downtowns have become 24-hour spaces, tourism destinations, and the sites of farmer markets and festivals. All of these activities benefit from public restrooms well-sited and maintained.

## Age Friendly

Our population is also changing, and cities are preparing themselves for the aging of the baby boomer generation. This generation contributes greatly to the dramatic increase in the population of older people in America; this population will double by 2050 to 80 million people according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Cities and urban areas are adding public restroom facilities to become more inclusive as recommended by the World Health Organization's Global Age Friendly Cities Guide. Clean, safe, accessible public restrooms thoughtfully located provide reassurance and confidence to a population who is prone to incontinence and other health issues. These facilities helps older people to participate more in the community and enjoy their city instead of remaining isolated in their homes. As more cities strive to become socially inclusive and mindful of aging, disabled, underserved, and vulnerable populations, public restrooms downtown have become increasingly more important to achieve those objectives.



Olympia is on the cutting edge having already initiated a pilot project that led to the installation of the Portland Loo and planning for the future with a Sanitation Master Plan. Nearly all urban centers in major cities are wrestling with similar issues right now. We take a look at similar capital cities such as Sante Fe, Juneau, and Annapolis as well as west coast cities, including Seattle, Portland, Victoria, Denver, and San Diego.

## Downtown Strategy

- Holistic: actions directed towards full range of public objectives.
- Equitable: ensure that all people using downtown benefit.

## Olympia Downtown Strategy

The Sanitation Master Plan is a direct recommendation from the recently completed Downtown Strategy, that calls for the location of public restrooms downtown to improve public spaces. The City of Olympia is following through on the direction and guidance that was developed through a public process in the creation of the Comprehensive Plan.



The intent of the Downtown Strategy is:


- Holistic: Actions are directed toward the full range of public objectives and City functions.
- Integrated and results oriented: What makes this a strategy rather than a plan is that it focuses on specific near-term actions that build on and complement one another.
- Equitable: Special care was taken to ensure that all people using Downtown will benefit and to avoid displacement of less advantaged people.



## FINDINGS

- **Forward thinking:** Participants in the planning process recognized that change will happen, but also developed measures to retain the valued characteristics that distinguish Downtown as a special place to live, work, play and shop.
- **Timely:** The recommended actions in this Strategy are intended to occur over the next six years to take advantage of the momentum generated, previous work, current market opportunities, and new development projects.

The concept of the Downtown Strategy is connecting people, places and spaces. This is accomplished both physically and functionally. The strategy highlights street and pathway improvements that will help people to access downtown resources. The downtown is a place for all people including businesses, visitors, residents, and the street dependent. Physical places, structures, and character areas are identified within the downtown, such as the Waterfront, Capitol to Market, Artisan/Tech, Entertainment, and the SE Neighborhood.

Key elements that directly relate to the Sanitation Master Plan from the strategy include, **locating the elevation of new restrooms above projected sea levels, transportation upgrades that include street and sidewalk improvements, representing opportunities for new public restrooms to be located in the city owned right of way, and promoting tourism** 

Olympia attracts tourists, as the state Capital. It also serves as downtown for all of the south sound region including neighboring cities Lacey and Tumwater, as well as for Thurston, Pierce, and Mason counties. Visitors from these areas would likely be spending a minimum of an hour or two in downtown Olympia. Those coming from further destinations such as Seattle would be spending even longer 4-6 hours during which time it will be likely for one to need a restroom. John Owen of Makers Architecture and Urban Design offers a good rule of thumb: “People will want to spend about four times as long at a place as it took to get there.” Knowing that there is clean, safe, available sanitation helps all visitors be confident that if they make the trip their basic human needs will be met.

### Welcome Center

The Downtown Strategy identifies a Welcome/Information center as an important feature of any visitor-centric destination. The existing Downtown Welcome Center is currently open, Thursday through Sunday, and offers a variety of valuable services, but does not have a public restroom. Welcome desk volunteers provide visitors with maps, brochures, and other information about Downtown activities, lodging, local retail businesses, public venues, local events, and transportation. A more accessible location than the current facility has been discussed with the City and downtown stakeholders. The new facility should be more visible to pedestrians, bicyclists, bus riders, and drivers; include historical or environmental education features; public restrooms; souvenirs for purchase; and more open hours. Such improvements would be in keeping with the community’s vision for Downtown as a welcoming, visitor oriented destination.

### Strategic Needs

- Welcome Center
- Transportation Upgrades
- Public Restrooms
- Promote Tourism

**“People will want to spend about four times as long at a place as it took to get there.” John Owen, Makers.**





Example of signage to direct people to public restrooms, with hours of operation. Olympia needs a coordinated way finding system so that people know where to go.



Walking with the Ambassadors Katherine and Teal pointing out key points of interest to the study.



Survey handout, front. See blank form in appendix.



Survey handout, back.

## Wayfinding and Coordinated Graphics

Part of the Downtown Strategy involves wayfinding and coordinated graphics to direct visitors to parking and places of interest. This critical element needs to include public restrooms as part of the coordinated graphics package. Public restrooms are no use if people can't find them, and a cost-effective way of providing services is to direct people to the facilities that already exist. Directional street signs, pamphlets with maps showing locations, hours, and available functions (ADA, changing table, number of stalls), and signs in business storefronts are ways to inform the public.

## Downtown Ambassador Walks

On several occasions our team went out on the streets of Olympia with the Downtown Ambassadors, Katherine and Teal. We walked along their route as they described their job, role in the community and the challenges and rewards.

The Ambassadors are visible on downtown streets from Tuesday through Saturday from 10am to 6pm. The Clean Team works seven days a week. The Ambassadors serve as a liaison between visitors, businesses, services, and street dependent population. The Ambassadors have received training on mental health concerns to better communicate and assist those who have illnesses and special needs, and the entire team has been immunized and trained to work in pairs to manage any situation that may arise.

The Ambassadors have formed a good relationship with street dependent people, who don't see them as an authority like the police, and are willing to communicate and cooperate with them. Teal stated she has been thanked by those she has helped in a moment of crisis, instead of calling the Police. The Police are also very happy to have the Ambassador program to be the liaison and handle certain situations without involving the Police.

We were introduced to Dana, aka the General, at an alley intersection. We briefed him on our project, and Dana offered his opinions and experience about restroom locations. He stated that restrooms are needed at the Union Gospel Mission, Bay View, Coffee Shop Area, the Library, and Department of Corrections. The Mission has restrooms but they are not open all hours.

We were introduced to Anthony and his wife and 14-month-old son, at the Artesian Commons. Anthony used to depend on the street to survive but now has an apartment. He still comes back and visits with his friends. He truly appreciated the portable restrooms that are installed in downtown and found they make a difference.

Anthony and his family sometimes use the clean bathroom at Starbucks because they let anyone in. Anthony and his wife see a need for clean, private baby changing tables in the public restrooms. There are no places where he can care for their baby. He stated that a restroom near Sally's (Salvation Army) is needed. They are excited to have a permanent restroom (Portland Loo) installed at the Artesian Commons, even though it doesn't have a changing table.

## FINDINGS

When asked about a sharps disposal he stated that won't really help with a portable restroom as it could be vandalized. However, he thought that a brick and mortar facility with a drop slot, could help. As a former drug user, he shared that having a place to dispose of the needle would be appreciated and better than trying to flush them down the toilet.

Emily, Starbucks barista (acting manager at the time), shared that company policy is that anybody can use the restroom even without making a purchase. Street dependent people appreciate a clean private restroom and prefer theirs to the public facilities. The bathroom requests seem to come in waves, right now it's occasional, but a few months ago it was more frequent. There is a sharps kit, but it is not located in the restroom, because of public perception.

It can be frustrating at times for staff, who are not equipped to deal with the various circumstances that arise. Among the problems of an open bathroom are messes, needles left behind, and long stays, which can also be frustrating to customers who then can't use it. There is a code for the restroom, and it is changed daily, sometimes more frequently. Starbucks can refuse to give the bathroom code if someone is causing a problem.

### Clean Team

We met up with the Clean Team at 7am on Saturday morning July 1st, 2017 at the Welcome Center, where a wagon is prepared with tools, equipment, cleaning solutions, sharps container, and 5 gallon bucket for waste. We followed the route through downtown Olympia where Christina and Josh searched alleyways, behind shops, and dumpsters. Mostly the clean team works on public property, streets, and alleys, but will also check and clean on private property such as the food truck lot on the corner of State and Plum. The alley, parking area, and truck dock adjacent to Courtyard Antiques are another area that is heavily used and thoroughly attended to by the Clean Team. The proximity to food kitchens and lack of restrooms exacerbates the issue. The recent installation of the Salvation Army portable restroom has helped the situation. The alleys between Cherry and Adams and State and 4th are known as "poop alley" by the cleaning team. These alleys are close to the hub of activity stemming from Fourth Avenue and provide quiet seclusion with little activity nearby in the way of businesses, shops, restaurants, or residences.

When human waste is found, the Clean Team removes it while wearing a Tyvek suit, with equipment that is covered in plastic bags that can be disposed of as hazardous waste. The street, or alley, location is then sprayed down with chlorinated water to sanitize the area. The Clean Team provides this service every morning starting at 7 am, and will also respond to calls regarding human waste or needles that are found. While this is an important service, it is not a sustainable practice or a solution.

### PBIA Survey Results

Our team and the City of Olympia developed survey questions that were available on-line via the PBIA. The Downtown Sanitation Master Plan - Business and Property Owner Questionnaire through SurveyMonkey was



The daily clean team route



Sanitizing a site with chlorinated water. Supply wagon in the background.

### PBIA Survey Comments

"...build a well maintained safe bathroom for all the public to use 24-hrs per day."

"Sanitation downtown is critical to the retailers whose customers are offended and therefore reluctant to shop downtown

"There need to be strict consequences for soiling our city."

"I feel public restrooms should be available for people shopping and visiting downtown."



Sylvester Park Outreach at the Summer Concert Series.

### “where is the restroom?”

The 2005 Denver restroom master plan outlines the following criteria for locating park restrooms:

- Where 150 or more people gather per day in a four to six hour period at a particular location at least three times per week during the summer months.
- Areas frequently permitted for private use.
- Areas with frequent athletic events.
- Locations with a dense congregation of uses.
- Areas with dense informal use (without a permit).
- Key junctions at trails, paths, parkways.
- Well established uses and numbers of visitors.
- Employ a public process to determine if new restrooms will create social problems for the surrounding area

live during the month of August during which time 48 businesses responded to the survey. The respondents identified the human waste in downtown as a real problem, that it was largely due to the lack of public restrooms in downtown, and that their businesses suffered as a result. There was no interest in making private bathrooms more accessible to non-customers, due to the added expense, management, and maintenance. Businesses would be willing to direct people to public facilities provided that the facility was clean, safe, accessible, and plumbed with running water and flushing toilet.

### Sylvester Park Outreach

On August 16th, 2017 our team set up a booth during the Summer Concert Series featuring free music by Too Many Cooks (Classic Rock) at Sylvester Park. The purpose was to inform the public about the project, and ask for feedback. Specifically we sought their feelings about downtown, needs for public restrooms, and locations where public restrooms are needed. The display featured maps showing the Clean Team route.

Sylvester Park has no restrooms, and portable restrooms are not provided for the music event. The nearest restrooms are at Starbucks, however, they close at 7pm, which is the same time that the event begins. Many people were very interested in our booth only to ask “where are the restrooms?” We were able to provide options and maps. Those who did stay and engage in conversation and participate in identifying preferred locations around downtown heavily favored Sylvester Park as needing public restrooms.

We contacted DES, who is interested in our study and welcomed coordinating with the City on future plans for Sylvester Park. Marygrace Jennings, Cultural Resources Manager, stated “The State has no plans to add public restrooms to the park. The improvements envisioned were primarily for soils, drainage, and revisions to sidewalks. The funding that was available for the work in 2015-17 was, unfortunately, redirected to critical projects to repair active leaks on the capitol campus during this last winter.” DES plans to request funding in the next biennium.





## FINDINGS

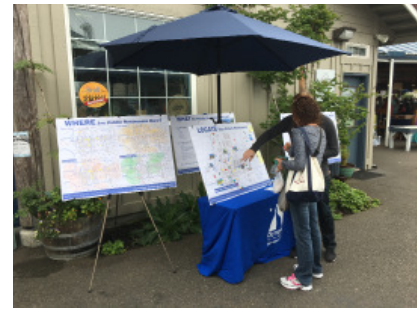
### Farmers Market Outreach

On Saturday, September 9th, 2017 our team setup a booth at the farmers market to continue to inform people about our study, obtain further feedback, and invite people to attend the upcoming Public Open House and City Hall.

The diversity of people we spoke with included locals, downtown residents, market vendors, and travelers from out side of Olympia, who came from nearby places like Lacey and Mukilteo to further destinations such as Montana, Arizona, and Chicago.

Here again, Sylvester Park was the most popular location identified for public restrooms, followed by the Transit Center. There were people who we interviewed who came via transit and spent time both at the Market and in downtown. Parks and transit centers are both natural locations for someone to look for a public restroom.

Another leading candidate is 4th Ave, primarily the stretch between Capitol Way and Jefferson. Locations were not as specific but people clearly identified the busiest stretch of 4th Ave with the most active night life as an area with clear needs for public restrooms.



Farmers Market Booth

### Market Visitors

- Mukilteo
- Arizona
- Montana
- Chicago





Public open house



Presentation



Workshop ideas



Workshop

## Public Open House / Workshop

On September 13th, 2017 our team hosted a public open house. During the open house we reviewed the Master Plan process, and progress to date, and facilitated a workshop, where attendees were able to share ideas and discuss with one another their ideas, observations, concerns, and hopes.

The most beneficial part of the evening was the workshop where direct conversation revealed unique perspectives. The feedback very heavily favored the siting of one or more public restrooms along 4th Ave, Washington St., and/or along Capitol Way near 5th. This coincides with the most frequent locations of human waste, the proximity of liquor sales, and nightlife venues.

Facility type and needs were also discussed. There are many varied opinions on what is the right solution, but there is very little argument that public restrooms need to be safe, clean, accessible, and plumbed with a flushing toilet.

The Harbor House at Percival Landing is one of the favorites as an example of public restrooms. Its architecture echoes the character area identified by the Downtown Strategy. However, it is no longer open 24-hours, as negative behavior taking place overnight forced the operations to change and now the doors are locked at night.

The Portland Loo, now operational at the Artesian Commons Park, was frequently a topic of conversation. People liked the CPTED qualities, and features of running water and flushing toilet, but not everyone likes the aesthetic. Ideas were discussed about how the Loo could be made more colorful, less boxy, and better fit into the character areas of Olympia. Conversely, the coated stainless steel panels are highly durable, and graffiti is easily removed. Other than occasionally clogging, and the need for feminine hygiene disposal, the simple steel toilet kiosk is performing well so far. A need for a nearby garbage/recycle bin was also raised.



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### Research – Questions to Explore

In looking to the experience of other cities, we sought to develop a set of questions and experiences to inform what we recommend to the City of Olympia. We had questions around issues of success, location, public involvement, and design – namely the following:

- What have they built and how have they performed?
- Did they solve the intended problem?
- What did these entities do to make them successful, or not?
- What led them to their final product (master plan or intervention) and how did they involve the community?
- How have the cities communicated to the public their vision and rolled out their solutions?

### Seattle

Gary Johnson, from the Office of Planning and Community Development for the City of Seattle, discussed the Pioneer Square community group who identified a need and requested that the City of Seattle install public restrooms in Occidental Square. The design required for the restroom to be safe without staffing. The Portland Loo was identified as the best option. Early design studies discovered that connecting to 100 year old utilities was going to be cost prohibitive. That project has since been tabled, but will likely be revisited again.

As a result, the City is allocating the budget for Pioneer Square towards Portland Loo's in Ballard and the University District. Community groups in both neighborhoods have requested public restrooms. One of the challenges to overcome, is that both neighborhoods are located outside of downtown and the MID (Metropolitan Improvement District), where the Downtown Seattle Association employs downtown ambassadors who are on the streets of downtown every day, ensuring an inviting, safe and clean urban experience for everyone.

The budget is approximately \$18,000 per year for maintenance and cleaning 2-3 times per day. The community groups have requested cleaning 4 times per day. A proposal from Clean Scapes is approximately \$40,000 per year for Ballard at four daily cleanings, roughly \$40 per visit.

### Juneau

Juneau, Alaska is the home to about 31,000 people during the year but over the summer it hosts thousands of tourists due to its position as a major cruise boat harbor. The influx of tourists forces the city to repeatedly consider the issue of suitable downtown public restrooms and the best approach to siting them and maintaining them.

A study commissioned by the Docks and Harbor department in 2010 suggested that a shortage of downtown restrooms was a perception and not a reality. The firm Jesen Yorba Lott recommended better crowd management to keep waiting tourists away from the restroom entrances, and avoid the

**Community Groups have requested cleaning 4 times per day.**



Juneau downtown.



**Community Groups have requested cleaning 4 times per day.**

appearance that there was a wait, better way finding and visibility of the restrooms, and longer, more consistent hours.

A 2017 master plan of the Upland harbor area of Juneau reported that public restrooms were the top priority from public feedback; comments from the public tied restrooms to the over arching goal of becoming a world class harbor. The Uplands harbor area is stretch of waterfront used by the maritime industry, commercial businesses, and the public. Based on their observations and feedback from the public, the firm included restrooms as stand alone structures in busy areas such as harbor gateways as well as incorporated restrooms into redeveloped, centralized facilities such as the Harbor Master's building.

Despite previous studies and actions, it is only recently that the city also looked at this question from the perspective of their street dependent people. In July 2017 the City and Borough Assembly Task Force on Homelessness discussed the concern that there are no 24-hour restrooms available downtown and just one free to use after dark. While the Docks and Harbors staff placed a portable toilet in the downtown area for use after dark, the task force found it problematic because of no communications about its hours or permanency. Ultimately their concerns revolved around access and communication with the public about available facilities. While it was clear that the downtown needed restrooms, the task force found themselves unsure of the best solution – portable toilets or a permanent facility.

## Market Visitors

- Clear communication of the location and hours of restrooms is critical to their success
- Consistency of hours is important
- Public restrooms are key to creating a successful tourist destination.
- Poor maintenance could lead to little use and the misuse of the restroom

## Santa Fe

The city of Santa Fe, New Mexico has committed resources to revitalizing and drawing people to its downtown. It hosts festivals and has built infrastructure to serve tourists including a city-operated Welcome Center in the downtown mall and a tourism booth run by the Chamber of Commerce. Despite these improvements and this vision for downtown, it still struggles with providing adequate public restrooms.

The issue of public restrooms became a point of contention in the summer of 2015 when the city closed restrooms prior to the largest annual festival to use downtown. Indian Market draws 100,000 people to enjoy and purchase \$18 million worth of artwork from artists and craftsmen. Maintenance is the largest issue. There are public facilities available at a city-run downtown parking garages, however the staff intentionally make it difficult for the public to use the facilities. They felt burdened by the responsibility of monitoring and maintaining the restrooms especially when they are misused by people. However, this reluctance led to parking garage staff deliberately creating hurdles to using the restrooms and thinking of them as only for downtown tourists. Restrooms appeared locked and small, partially obscured signs indicated access was only granted by keys held by staff. In one news report, the staff is quoted as saying “we’re trying to discriminate (sic) the homeless from using the bathroom.” Instead of seeking out solutions the parking division decided to give the impression of locked restrooms.

In Santa Fe, even public buildings have issues with providing public restrooms. The New Mexico Museum of History opened in 2009 and offered



Sante Fe Capitol

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its facilities to the public but eventually choose to limit its use to visitors. They cited tightening budgets. Hotels and small businesses offset the impact of no restrooms by letting tourists and others use their facilities. According to news reports, in September 2016, Counsellor Peter Ives put forward a resolution requesting the city manager or 60 days to analyze the problem and share solutions; however, the city archive doesn't show evidence of a resolution of this nature.

### Annapolis

Home to 38,000 people, Annapolis, Maryland has a thriving downtown with shops, restaurants, and a rich history of national significance which drives much of its tourism industry. The downtown is adjacent to the U.S. Naval Academy which serves a student population of 4,500 students as well as St. John College, a liberal arts college serving about 500 students.

A 2010 final report by the Citizen's Committee on Alcoholic Beverage Laws honed in on an issue of human waste in the downtown area with "urinating in public" as the most cited crime downtown. They committee recommended more access to facilities downtown would help situation since existing facilities in city-owned buildings were only available during normal business hours. The committee concluded that by not addressing the difficult issue of 24-hour or at least late night hours, the city placed the burden squarely on the shoulders of property and business owners. It emphasized that if the city wanted to attract visitors and encourage economic development, convenient, clean, and safe public restrooms are essential. The committee recommended increasing the hours of the existing facilities to 3:00 am and mandating at least one public restroom in any plan for the development or redevelopment of the city's parking garage facilities.

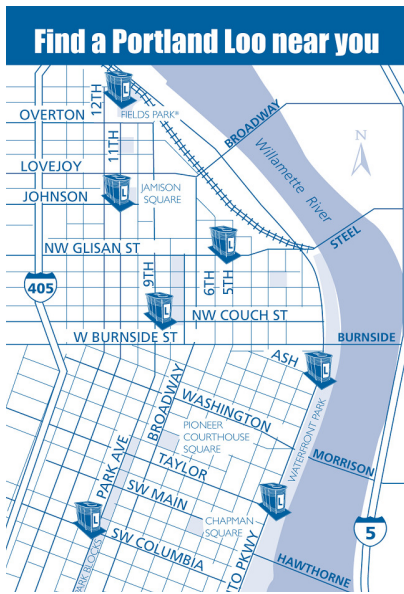
By 2013, the city had partnered with a parking management company to manage the city owned parking assets. As part of their contract, SP+ manages free, 24-hour restrooms in three city owned parking garages, and their model demonstrates an interesting solution for having an attendant on site. The parking garages are automated so there is not an attendant constantly on site, however the management company employs roving ambassadors to check on the parking garages and restrooms during the day. The restrooms are single, direct entry rooms with a locking mechanism; patrons don't need a key to enter the restrooms. They are cleaned daily by a member of the management company and one, which is more frequently used, is cleaned twice a day. Additionally, all staff members are charged with addressing an issue if they encounter one while visiting the parking garages. Throughout the night the city insists on having someone check on the facilities. This individual can call for first responders if there is an emergency issue or lock down a restroom in need of cleaning or maintenance.

In general, the city and the management company do not live in fear of messes or abuse of the restrooms and when it happens, they take care of it. These well-used restrooms are positively perceived by the community. They are viewed as available to everyone and even though they aren't everyone's number one choice, they are safe, accessible, and clean and contribute to the experience of residents and visitors alike.



Annapolis downtown.





## Portland

Portland, Oregon, home of the Portland Loo. There are currently seven Loo's located throughout downtown for the 640,000 people who call it home, and their visitors. Since 2008 when the first Loo was installed the city has been steadily adding new locations listed on the <http://theloo.biz/> :

- South Park Blocks, 899 SW Columbia Street
- Tom McCall Waterfront Park, 898 SW Naito Parkway
- Khunamokwst Park, 4998 NE 52nd Avenue
- Union Station, 543 NW Glisan Street
- Jamison Square, 1099 NW Johnson Street
- Tom McCall Waterfront Park, 66 SW Naito Parkway
- Field's Park, 1099 NW Overton Street
- North Park Blocks, 129 NW 8th Avenue
- Parklane Park, SE 155th Ave & Main St.
- St.. Francis Park, 398 SE 11th Ave

## San Diego

The city of San Diego has install two Portland Loos and one of them has been removed because of crime and maintenance problems associated with it. This is the only Portland Loo to be taken out of service after installation and provides a unique perspective about the importance of location.

According to news articles<sup>2</sup>, the Portland Loo, located at 14th Street and L Street, attracted crime and spurred a 130 percent increase in calls to the police. The location at the intersection of 14th and L has poor CPTED with limited natural surveillance.

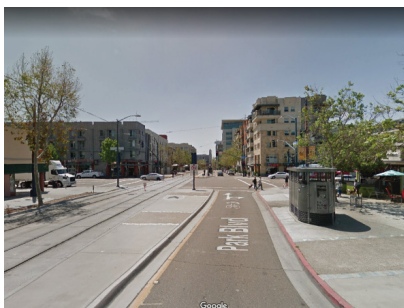
L Street runs about half a block from 14th Street before it becomes a dead end. Adjacent to the west of 14th Street is a large parking lot that extends for blocks and primarily serves the baseball stadium, Petco Park. These site characteristics create inconsistent traffic patterns, do not provide natural surveillance, and make it much more susceptible to negative behavior as documented.

Additionally, the Portland Loo incurred increased maintenance and repair costs that were double initial estimates. The costs and increased crime expanded on poor public opinion of the loo. All-inclusive costs for the loos were supposed to be \$215,000 when Councilwoman Marti Emerald first pitched the idea in 2010, but they eventually rose to \$560,000 because the loos were installed in spots where connecting to sewer and water lines was difficult, and because they don't meet California electrical, seismic and other standards.

This is one reason why location matters. The initial installation was made more costly by picking a site that didn't have good access to utilities.



Intersection of 14th Street and L street, which dead ends after one block. A large parking lot that extends for blocks is adjacent. The Portland Loo has been removed.



The Portland Loo at Park Boulevard and Market Street is located where there are many more eyes on the street.

<sup>2</sup> San Diego Union Tribune, San Diego yanks problem Portland Loo. Feb 5, 2016

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Another reason is for the long term use, care, and maintenance for the facility. The location at 14th and L has poor CPTED with limited natural surveillance. L street runs about half a block from 14th street before it becomes a dead end. Adjacent to the west of 14th street is a large parking lot that extends for blocks and primarily serves the baseball stadium, Petco Park. These site characteristics create inconsistent traffic patterns, do not provide natural surveillance, and make it much more susceptible to negative behavior as documented.

The second loo located at Park Boulevard and Market Street is still in use. News articles report this site has not spurred on a crime increase, and this location is only a half mile away from the 14th and L intersection. Difference makers begin with an intersection of two arterials that are heavily trafficked by cars, bikes, and pedestrians, include a light rail line that runs down Park Boulevard, bus lines along Market, a small cafe, and nearby residential units. Analysis of this location indicate strong CPTED components particularly natural surveillance. The story of the two loos in San Diego provide a powerful example of the need to provide good locations that encourage positive behavior and discourage negative behavior. This will not eliminate crime, maintenance, or repairs, but keep them manageable while providing an asset for all members of the community.

Clean, safe, public hygiene that includes toilets and hand washing facilities, is important to urban areas as made all too apparent by the recent declaration of a local public health emergency of the hepatitis outbreak<sup>3</sup> in San Diego.

The street dependent population was hit hardest by the highly contagious hepatitis A virus. Street dependent people account for more than 50 percent of hepatitis cases in San Diego. This population is known to be at increased risk for hepatitis A, in part because homelessness presents challenges to keeping good hygiene, such as limited access to toilets and hand-washing facilities, according to a 2009 paper published in the journal Public Health Reports. San Diego officials say the outbreak there is being spread from person to person “through contact with a fecal contaminated environment.” This type of contamination can occur when people with the illness don’t properly wash their hands after going to the bathroom, according to the CDC. Hepatitis A can be fatal when paired with pre-existing liver damage, older age and other various health conditions. Most citizens don’t realize how interconnected San Diego is as a community, with many of its residents sharing public spaces such as restrooms, cafes and transportation every day. This interconnectedness has further compounded the effects of the Hepatitis A outbreak, and cannot be ignored by the general population.

Long before the deadly hepatitis A outbreak, San Diego was warned about lack of bathrooms. A San Diego Union-Tribune review of public records found that since 2000, four grand jury reports emphasized the risks of human waste on city streets and a shortage of toilets available for use by the city’s growing homeless population.

### Key Success Factors

- Location with natural surveillance
- Public Process
- Support from adjacent businesses
- Access to utilities

### Distance Matters

- Impact of a public restroom is limited to a small area
- Proximity and visibility matter
- People aren’t going to walk a half mile to reach a restroom

<sup>3</sup> San Diego Union Tribune, San Diego’s public health emergency: Debunking the stigma surrounding Hepatitis A. September 21, 2017

### Denver Pilot Project

- Public engagement
- Clear communication

### Not just the Homeless

- People with out of town addresses have been ticketed for public urination

One such report, filed in 2010, explicitly warned that an outbreak of illness caused by such unsanitary conditions “could result in liability to the city.”<sup>4</sup> Each of the reports called on the city to either add more all-hours, publicly available restrooms or bolster its street-cleaning regimen to ensure the public would not be exposed to human waste.

Olympia has taken necessary steps to mitigate a potential hepatitis A outbreak with the efforts of the Clean Team. The Portable Restroom Pilot Project is in immediate need of providing handwashing stations at each location to encourage public hygiene, as the hand sanitizer had been vandalized at portable locations during our site visits.

### Victoria, BC

Victoria’s Langley Street Loo was purchased and installed in 2011. It was sited in the heart of a busy nightclub scene, and the goal was to address a rampant public urination issue. The first Portland Loo installed outside of Portland. A year later after the installation, the Portland Loo was popularly awarded with the prestigious “Canada’s Best Restroom” award. A second Portland Loo is now located along the Songhees Walkway by the waterfront.

British Columbia is now home to several Portland Loos, with recent installations in Nanaimo, Smithers, and Nelson.

### Denver

In 2016, The City and County of Denver launched a pilot project to understand and eventually address the need for public restrooms in the city and especially in high traffic areas. As part of that project, they deploy two trailers which contain single stall toilets; one serves downtown locations and the other serves locations in the neighborhood of Capitol Hill. These trailers are manned by an attendant and cleaned nightly to keep them fresh. By using a mobile structure, Denver tests different areas and gains the information they need to determine the best location for a permanent structure.

The movable public toilets are only part of the project. They government also activated and refreshed existing public restrooms, including winterizing restrooms in parks which allowed them to remain in use through the winter. A webpage on the government site displays a map of restrooms downtown which indicates the type of restroom they are (in a government building, in a park, etc). Communication has been a large of this pilot program from the beginning. The webpage also lists the restrooms hours. Mobile restrooms hours and shifts in locations are clearly shared to avoid confusion. Notably none of the restrooms are open 24 hours; one mobile restroom stays open as late midnight on Saturday in the downtown area. This information serves both local citizens as well as tourists to the area. It also shows the city’s confidence in these vital public amenities and sets expectations of consistency.

<sup>4</sup> LA Times, Long before deadly hepatitis A outbreak, San Diego was warned about lack of bathrooms. Sept 21, 2017

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### Public Engagement

Public engagement has been a large of this pilot program from the beginning. Denver initiated the project in responses to constant complaints from residents. It held listening sessions with stakeholders to gain more information about the problem and determine the best approach to finding a solution. Additionally the webpage clearly communicates the work of the project and asks for feedback with a link to a comment

### Learnings

So far Denver has learned that it isn't just homeless people who relieve themselves on the streets – tourists and citizens with home addresses were also ticketed for public urination and related offenses. They also learned that restroom proximity and visibility matter. People aren't necessarily going to walk half a mile to reach a restroom. On a related note they learned that impact is limited to a small area around the restroom – it might not have an impact 8 blocks away. This upsets the argument that one restroom is enough for a city of 40,000. Use of the city might be better indicator of how many restrooms to open up downtown. The city seems unified in thinking about public restroom access as a needed amenity and municipal duty.



# Best Practices

## BEST PRACTICES

### Research

Our research has taken us all over the nation and the world and then brought us back to the Northwest again. The World Toilet Organization states: 1 billion (15 % of the world population) still practice open defecation.

Our research has revealed that there are ways to improve public sanitation, making facilities safe, clean, private, and welcoming for all, and doing so benefits all of society.

### Attendants

Use of bathroom attendants have resulted in some of the best public restrooms, even in the most challenging of environments. New York City's Port Authority Bus Terminal public restrooms were recently renovated and as reported by gothamist.com:

"The Port Authority Bus Terminal, which John Oliver has accurately described as "the single worst place on Earth," is undergoing a \$90 million face-lift that's just getting started. But "Phase One" of its restroom rehabilitation project has already transformed two of the terminal's notoriously terrifying bathrooms into sparkling new comfort stations.

The renovation included the addition of an attendant to greet people and tidy the restrooms, and expansion of the cleaning program.

The restrooms at Bryant Park utilize a bathroom attendant to keep the marble counter tops clean and the flowers fresh. VirtualTourist.com compiled a list of the "World's Top 10 Toilets", and the Bryant Park restrooms in New York City, NY were ranked number one. The Bryant Park restrooms also benefit from their location, adjacent to a busy sidewalk and metro stop.

"Who would have thought that a loo in the middle of such a dirty, noisy, frenetic city would have classical music, fresh flowers, and even an attendant! Visitors report that it's also spotlessly clean."<sup>1</sup>

### Active Spaces - CPTED

When more people are using restroom facilities, they are generally safer places to be as more eyes pay attention leads to less abnormal use like loitering. CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, pronounced "sep-ted") design principles provide strategies for encouraging the use of these facilities and reducing crime and the fear of crime. CPTED principles include the following concepts:

#### Natural Surveillance

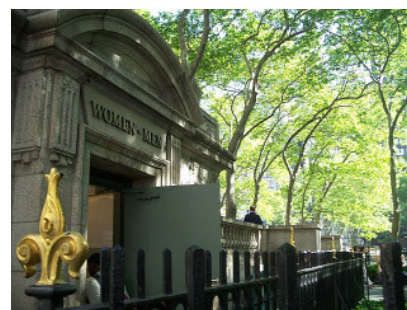
"See and be seen" is the overall goal when it comes to natural surveillance. A person is less likely to commit a crime if they think someone will see them do it. Clear sight lines, lighting and landscape play an important role. Locating restrooms adjacent to centers of activity also contributes to natural surveillance.

### Best Practices

- Location Location Location
- Provide attendant
- Activate surrounding area
- Natural surveillance
- Direct entry stalls
- 24 hour facilities with high visibility both of the unit, and through the unit as much as possible.
- Easy to clean, and remove graffiti
- Directional signage and way finding
- Well lit areas
- Portable Units are temporary not permanent solutions
- Handwashing stations for portable units to prevent the spread of disease



NYC Port Authority Bus Terminal public restroom. Attendants keep the new facility clean.



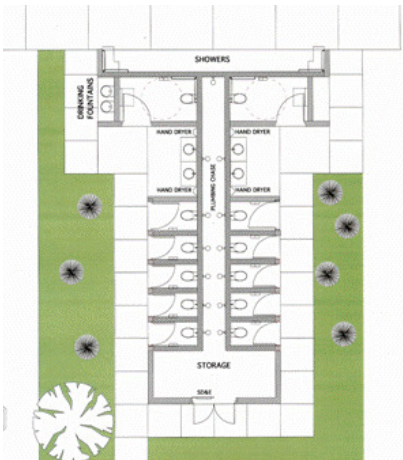
Award winning restrooms at Bryant Park

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.virtualtourist.com/press-center/ugliest-buildings-list>





Marble counter tops, fresh flowers, with classical music in the background.



Kellogg Park Comfort Station South in La Jolla California, achieves maximum function in minimum space. This is achieved with direct entry stalls, sinks outside, ADA / changing rooms, and showers outside.

## Semi-Private Space

Around the sinks and mirrors was cited as the most problematic



Directional signage (need better examples)

## Natural Access Control

Natural Access Control is more than a high block wall topped with barbed wire. CPTED utilizes the use of walkways, fences, lighting, signage and landscape to clearly guide people and vehicles to and from the proper entrances. The goal with this principle is not necessarily to keep intruders out, but to direct the flow of people while decreasing the opportunity for crime. Natural approaches and natural surveillance could be supplemented by organized means such as attendants.

## Territorial Reinforcement

Creating or extending a "sphere of influence" by utilizing physical designs such as pavement treatments, landscaping and signage enables users of an area to develop a sense of proprietorship over it. Public areas are clearly distinguished from private ones. Potential trespassers perceive this control and are thereby discouraged.

## Image/Maintenance

The "Broken Window Theory" suggests that one "broken window" or nuisance, if allowed to exist, will lead to others and ultimately to the decline of an entire neighborhood. CPTED expands on this point encouraging regular maintenance of restrooms to support continued use of the facility for its intended purpose. Neglected and poorly maintained properties can appear abandoned and unsafe, lead to reduced use and become breeding grounds for criminal activity.

While CPTED principles do generally focus on the design of new buildings and outdoors spaces, they could also be applied to indoor facilities. In particular, attention to Natural Surveillance, Territorial Reinforcement, and Image/Maintenance would aid in the design of a changing room that feels safe, reduces crime and leads to continued use.

## Direct Entry Stalls

The PHLUSH Public Toilet Advocacy Toolkit's design principles for public restrooms identifies single door direct entry stalls over traditional multi-stall, gendered facilities. Advantages to this design include space savings by eliminating the semi-private space surrounding the sinks, increase in capacity, while resolving gender parity, trans and gender non-conforming issues with each stall all gender. Further benefits include the ability to clean individual stalls without closing down half or all of the facility.

## Way finding and Directional Signage

Signage and maps at park entries, or along streets and sidewalks approaching the park are helpful to inform visitors and passers by that public toilets are available, and direct them about where to go. More users and more eyes create natural surveillance and make the park feel more safe.

## Websites

The ODA and PBIA websites could identify and direct people to restroom locations.

## BEST PRACTICES

### Parking Areas & Restrooms

Transportation nodes are a historical and natural place to find public restrooms. Restrooms that are collocated with a parking garage have several potential advantages, including shared construction costs, attendants who collect fees and may monitor cars and restrooms, and cleaning and maintenance. Disadvantages to this approach include staff not making the restrooms accessible to all as in the case of Sante Fe, or no staff with an automated parking fee system. Our best practice recommendation is that the restrooms need to be located on the street with direct access from the public way, without having to actually enter into the garage. This provides added safety, and greater accessibility, without the perception that the restrooms inside the garage are for customers only.

### Quick Cleanup

In addition to a cleaning and maintenance program to keep toilet facilities clean and sanitary, a secondary back up measure is also recommended. The Seattle Police's East Precinct utilize a vendor service<sup>2</sup> who will respond 24-hours a day, seven days a week and clean holding cells if there is a biohazard. The response time is 90 minutes. A phone number posted on the facility could be used by the public to call for needed service.

### Loo Specifications

- **Direct entry stalls** - Eliminate semi-private gendered spaces where the majority of harassment occurs. Direct entry to stalls from a public way is the safest solution for all people.
- **Full height doors** - Within 2" of the floor and up to 8 feet high with louvers designed to allow for airflow and visibility of the ground or floor and legs, while providing adequate privacy.
- **Locks** - Functional door locks with occupied indicators, that can be unlocked from the outside by authorities (for medical emergencies).
- **Fixtures** - Keep facilities similar to allow for standard equipment, and easier replacement, provide water efficient solutions. Use heavy-duty fixtures, equipment, and hardware.
- **Controls** - All controls, levers, handles shall be ADA compliant for universal accessibility. Provide automatic flush sensor to minimize contact with restroom surfaces. People often will use their foot (shoe) to activate flush controls that can lead to unsightly and unsanitary conditions.
- **Finishes** - Utilize vandal-resistant materials and components, especially for door hardware, toilet partitions, fixtures, and accessories. Utilize concrete floors with epoxy floor finish. Apply graffiti resistant and washable coatings.
- **Sharps** - A sharps disposal in or in close proximity to a public restroom provides a public amenity and supports a safe environment for all users. To combat the spread of disease through accidental stick pricks, city



Indicator lock



Through wall sharps disposal at the new Portland Loo

<sup>2</sup> Vendor, Bio Clean Inc. Utilized by Seattle Police Department





Recessed Sanitary Napkin Disposal

governments have installed bins for secured sharps disposal containers in public restrooms. Brisbane, Belfast and San Francisco place sharps bins in public toilets which have a high incidence of drug use to encourage responsible disposal of needles.

Bins for sharps containers in public toilets ensures safe and immediate options of disposal at the locations where the sharps become waste products. Bins allow for easy disposal of single needles, and the location, materiality and design of the bins promote safety and deters vandalism and theft. Best practices suggests bins should be through wall slots with no access, or secured to the wall or floor using very strong brackets or bolts to prevent removal, designed and constructed to prevent access to sharps container and include locking system, adequately sized to accept expected waste volumes, clearly marked as disposal for sharps only, and located out of reach of children. Regular and safe maintenance of the containers is essential to the success of these programs.

- **Sanitary Napkin Disposal** - Provide sanitary napkin disposal to prevent items from being flushed down the toilet, or placed into the sharps disposal.
- **Artwork** - Make restrooms positive attractions and incorporate historic artifacts, artwork, maps, or city information, and community involvement in design. At the Open House/Workshop, artwork and artful wayfinding on the restrooms were strongly favored by participants as a way to make facilities more multi-purpose and more 'of Olympia' in character.
- **Bins** - Provide garbage, recycling, and compost station nearby. This will help prevent people leaving their garbage behind on the floor of the unit, or trying to flush debris down the toilet.
- **Signage** - Traditional restroom signage tells us WHO is allowed in a restroom by identifying it as "Mens" or "Womens". A more equitable approach states WHAT (services) are in the room (ADA compliant, changing table).



# Site Analysis

## ANALYSIS

### Site Analysis

The following identifies each of the public restrooms currently available in downtown Olympia, as well as new locations identified by our team. We reviewed each site for best practices including provisions for providing safety, cleanliness and accessibility.

#### A. Percival Landing West Public Restroom

Owned and operated by the City of Olympia  
Located at the South end of the marina near D-Dock.

##### Description:

Originally composed of four single occupant stalls accessed through alcoves, this structure was recently modified and reopened June 1, 2017 to incorporate an ADA complaint 24-hour restroom with water closet and lavatory.

##### Analysis:

This restroom location serves the Isthmus area and part of 24-hour access to sanitary facilities for the western part of downtown Olympia and the Heritage Park Fountain. The reconfigured restroom all hour entry faces the street with surveillance cameras providing much better visibility. While this new configuration is an improvement, the CPTED qualities and in particular natural surveillance is very poor, for this comfort station that is located at the end of a dead end street, and out of the way of pedestrian and vehicle traffic.

#### B. The Harbor House on Percival Landing

Owned and operated by the City of Olympia  
Located to the East of the marina near F-Dock.

##### Description:

Comfort station with attached shelter house. There are separate men's and women's ADA compliant stalls with water closets and lavatories.

##### Analysis:

This nautical inspired structure is a perfect example of a design to further the Downtown Strategy character area guidelines. Once open to the public 24-hours a day, now they are closed at dusk after issues were reported. Mariners may obtain key codes for 24-hour access. Showers require quarters to run hot water. One quarter will get two and half minutes of time. The Harbor House is built to serve the marina, but is also open to the public. There is also a space inside the building that can be booked for private events.

#### C. Olympia Center

Owned and operated by the City of Olympia, Parks, Arts and Recreation  
222 Columbia St. NW, Olympia, WA 98501

##### Description:

Community center building with reception area. There are separate men's and women's ADA compliant stalls with water closets and lavatories.



Newly reopened Percival West

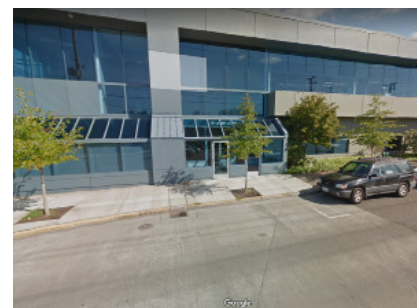
Hours:  
open to the public 24-hours



The Harbor House at Percival Landing.

Restroom Hours:  
Open daily to the public and closed at dusk.

Showers:  
Open daily to the public and locked at dusk.



Olympia Center

Hours:  
M-F 8AM-10PM  
Sat. 8AM-5PM



Intercity Transit Center

Hours:  
M-F 6:30AM-7PM  
Sa-Su 9AM-7PM

#### Analysis:

The Olympia Center provides a central location en route towards the farmers market. However, this is off the main route and currently not an obvious choice to visitors to Olympia. Way finding and graphics proposed in the Downtown Strategy could assist in directing people to this location. Street dependent people may not want to enter into a building to use the restroom with all of their belongings, or where they may feel judged.

### D. Transit center

Owned and operated by Intercity Transit  
222 State Ave NE, Olympia, WA 98501

#### Description:

Small building with ticket counter area. There are separate men's and women's ADA compliant stalls with water closets and lavatories.

#### Analysis:

The Transit Center provides a needed location at a transportation hub, and in proximity to street dependent services, such as Union Gospel Mission, and the Thurston County Food Bank. Street dependent people may not want to enter a building to use the restroom with their belongings, or where they may feel judged.



Portable unit near the transit center.

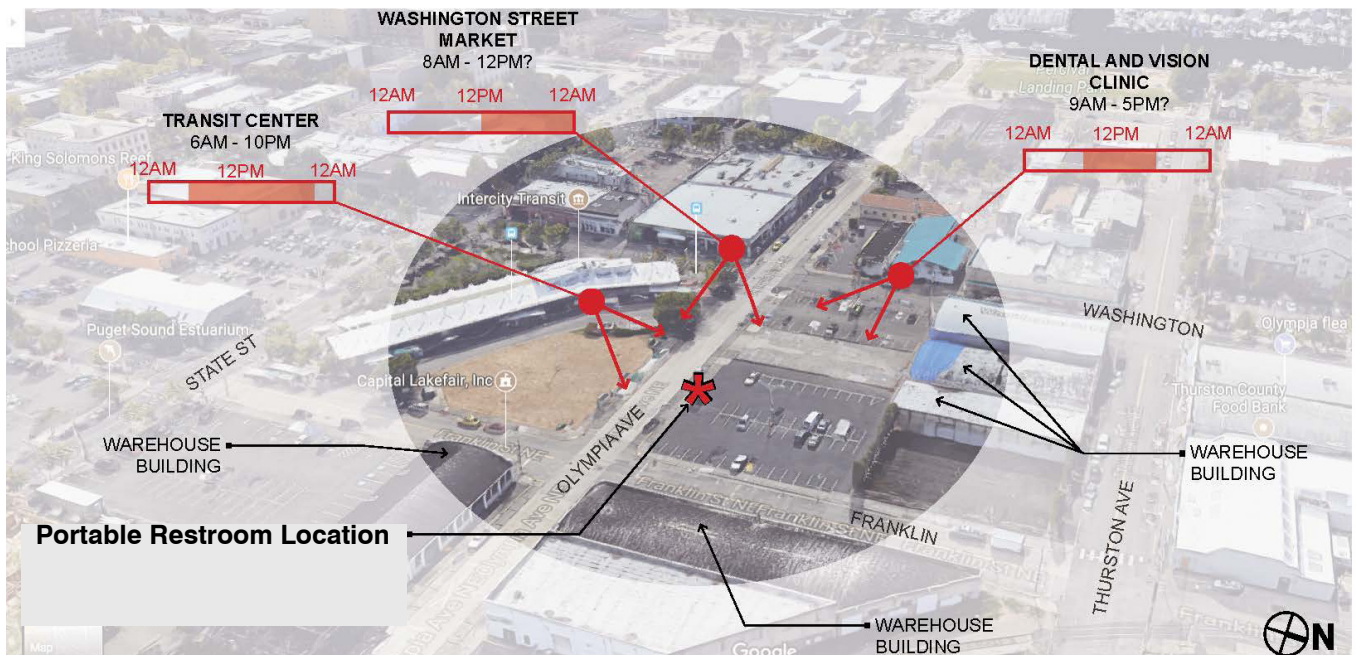
Hours:  
24 hours, 7 days a week

### E. Portable Restroom (Transit Center)

Operated by the City of Olympia  
251 Olympia Ave NE, Olympia, WA 98501

#### Description:

Portable Unit, ADA compliant single occupant direct entry stall with dry pit toilet and hand sanitizer, no hand wash.



## ANALYSIS

### Analysis:

The portable unit is situated across the street from the Transit Center. This is helpful for natural surveillance, however, The Transit lobby and attended spaces face the opposite direction and there is not enough active space, and retail business to create natural surveillance for this site, particularly when the Transit Center is closed.

### F. East Bay Public Plaza

Owned and operated by LOTT Clean Water Alliance  
325 Marine Drive in Olympia, Washington

#### Description:

The plaza is an urban open space with a wading stream and a demonstration wetland, both fed by Class A Reclaimed Water. The plaza features restrooms, interpretive elements, benches, and a small stage. The restrooms are ADA compliant single occupant direct entry stalls with water closet and lavatory. The restrooms are required within 100 feet of the water feature, and are open when the water feature is operational.

#### Analysis:

There is a security guard providing surveillance for the site. The plaza appears to function very well and draw many visitors. This is a great example of a public restroom located in a more remote area of the City that is activated by the plaza, water feature, and stage. The only issue here is the limited hours of operation and seasonal closure.

### G. Artesian Commons

Owned and operated by the City of Olympia  
415 4th Ave E

#### Description:

The Portland Loo<sup>1</sup> is a simple, sturdy, flush toilet kiosk, that is direct entry and ADA compliant. Louvers at the top and bottom of the wall create an interior environment that offers complete visual privacy, while remaining as connected with the outside as possible. The lower louvers are angled to provide law enforcement the opportunity to observe the number of users within the unit without compromising privacy. The unit's hand-washing station is mounted on the exterior to promote shorter use times and to serve the general pedestrian population.

#### Analysis:

The restroom is located along a very busy section of 4th Ave and a well-used park. There is only about a month of collected data on the Portland Loo since its installation, which is too soon to draw solid conclusions. So far, the unit is performing as hoped, and has remained clean and sanitary and has been shown to potentially have an impact in a reduction of nearby human waste deposits. An updated heat map will likely be available for the final report.



LOTT East Bay Public Plaza

Hours:  
Daily 10AM–6PM  
April to October



Portland Loo at the Artesian Commons.

Hours:  
24 hours, 7 days a week

### Central Location

The new Portland Loo at the Artesian Commons is within an eight minute walk of much of downtown from Plum St. to Capitol Way, and Thurston Ave to 8th Ave.

<sup>1</sup> Portland Loo. <http://theloo.biz/>





Portable unit at the Salvation Army

Hours:

24-hours, 7 days a week



Portable unit at the Salvation Army

Hours:

24-hours, 7 days a week

## H. Portable Restroom (Salvation Army)

Operated by the City of Olympia

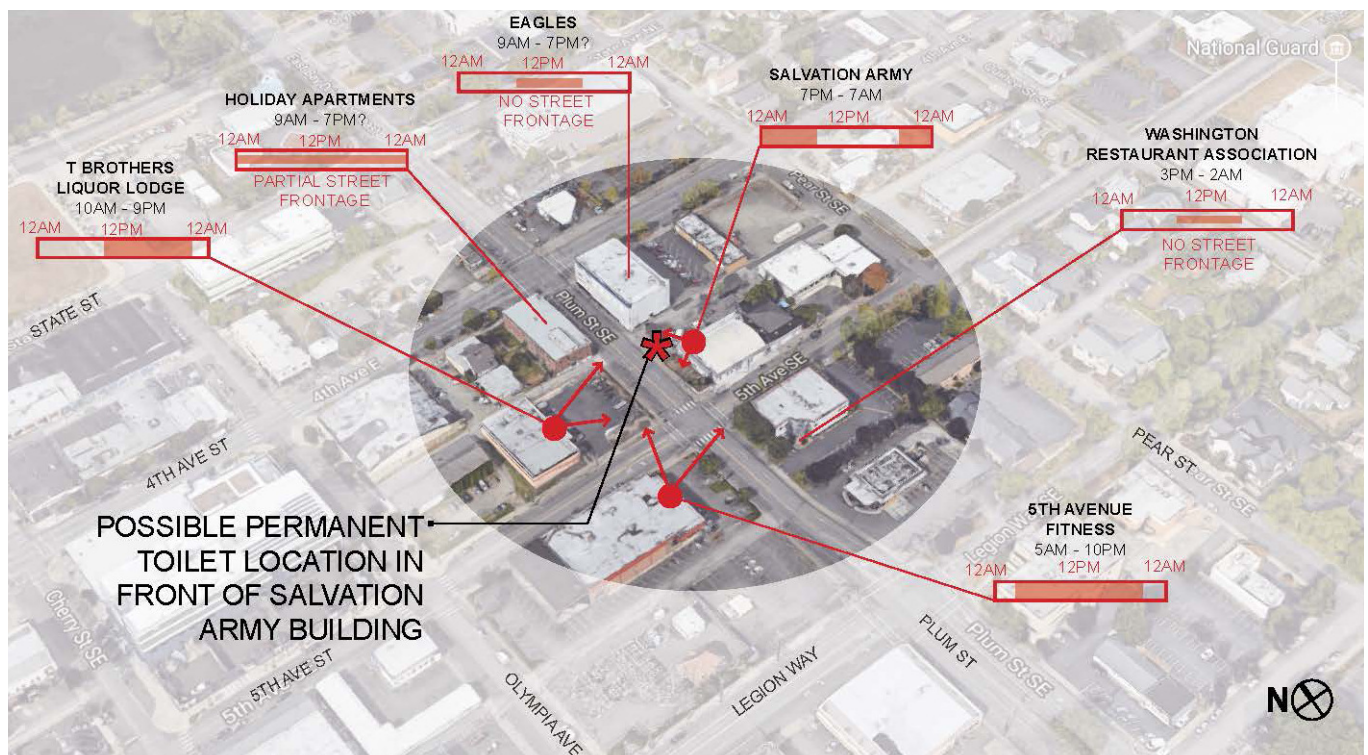
Mid-block between 4th and 5th on Plum St.

### Description:

Portable Unit, ADA compliant single occupant direct entry stall with dry pit toilet and hand sanitizer (currently missing), no hand wash.

### Analysis:

This location is better than the transit center but not very good from a CPTED perspective. Despite being along a very busy four lane arterial which provides significant vehicle traffic, there is very little foot traffic along the sidewalks at this location. The two businesses across the street do not provide adequate natural surveillance. Both the liquor store and the gym are set back from the sidewalk with parking lots in front of the businesses and over 150 feet from the portable restroom. There is a residential building across the street about 90 feet away. Much like predicting the weather, while we cannot predict that negative behavior will occur, the site conditions and the past performance of the portable unit warrant prudent action of providing greater surveillance to encourage the desired outcome of a clean, safe, and available public accommodation. The Salvation Army is very interested in the success of a public restroom. A partnership with the city appears to be a possibility, with the Salvation Army providing a job opportunity or increased staffing to provide an attendant.



Eyes on the Street diagram showing proximity and hours surrounding the portable unit.

## ANALYSIS

### I. Heritage Park Bathhouse

Owned and operated by DES  
Heritage Park, Water Street SW and Legion Way SW

#### Description:

Bath house structure with community area. There are separate men's and women's ADA compliant stalls with water closets and lavatories.

#### Analysis:

This restroom serves the western edge of downtown. It is perceived to be too distant from downtown to be a viable option.

### J. Portable Restroom at Heritage Park

(Located adjacent to the bathhouse), Operated by DES

#### Description:

Portable Unit, ADA compliant single occupant direct entry stall with dry pit toilet and hand wash station.

#### Analysis:

This restroom is a result of the Just Housing protest that called for: Suitable public property for tent encampments and for street and camp sweeps to end; Repeal of all laws that criminalize the homeless; and Open public bathrooms that operate 24/7. This is a portable unit, and is not a permanent solution. The location adjacent to brick and mortar building appears ad hoc and temporary, and does not give the impression of reliability or reflect the goals of the Downtown Strategy or investments the city is making. The hand wash station was functional at the time of inspection.

### K. Starbucks

Privately owned and operated  
550 Capital Way South, Space C, Olympia, WA 98501

#### Hours:

M-F	5AM-7PM
Sat. Sun	6:30AM-7PM

#### Description:

Coffee shop tenant inside of large building. There are ADA compliant single occupant direct entry stalls with water closet and lavatory. Starbucks's company policy is that anybody can use the restroom and does not have to make a purchase in order to do so. Street dependent people appreciate a clean private restroom and prefer theirs to the public facilities. There is a code for the restroom, and it is changed daily, sometimes more frequently. Starbucks can refuse to give the bathroom code if someone is causing a problem.

#### Analysis:

Reliance on this restroom to meet the needs of ALL citizens and visitors for this area of downtown is inadequate, and the policies could change without sufficient notice for alternative facilities. The availability of this restroom is not well known, advertised, or signed, though appears to be well known among



Portland Loo at the Artesian Commons.

#### Hours:

Summer (April 1 - October 31) are 7 - 9 pm  
Winter (November 1 - March 31) are  
7 - 7 pm. Security is provided by the  
Washington State Patrol.



Portable unit at Heritage Park bathhouse

#### Hours:

24-hours, 7 days a week



the street dependent population. However, this restroom demonstrates how businesses can support the downtown strategy. There is an opportunity here for businesses offering to open their restrooms to customers could be rewarded for their efforts with inclusion in the city way finding and signage and recognition for their contributions.

## **L. Library**

313 8th Ave SE, Olympia, WA 98501

### **Hours:**

M-Tue 11AM–8PM / W-Thur 11AM–7PM

Friday 10AM–6PM

Saturday 10AM–5PM / Sunday Closed

### **Description:**

Library building with reception / book check out / return area. There are separate men's and women's ADA compliant gang stalls with water closets and lavatories.

### **Analysis:**

Street dependent people may not want to enter a building to use the restroom with all of their belongings, or where they may feel judged or shushed.

## **M. Portable Restroom the Commons at Fertile Ground.**

311 9th Ave SE Olympia, WA

### **Description:**

Operated by the City of Olympia, the portable unit is open for use during non-park hours, 24-hours a day, 7 days per week. This unit is used, though not as heavily as the units at the Salvation Army, Artesian Commons, or Transit Center. However, the non-profit organization that volunteered to host the portable restroom as a benefit to the community has requested the city to remove the unit<sup>2</sup>. There is evidence of vandalism and illegal activities taking place at this location.

### **Analysis:**

This location is distant from the downtown. There are no nearby active spaces for natural surveillance to take place. The portable unit is well hidden into the garden facing away from the street making it difficult to be patrolled.

## **N. Sylvester Park**

No Restrooms, nearest facility Starbucks until 7pm, then Heritage Park or Artesian Commons.

### **Description:**

At our public outreach event that took place during the Music in the Park, the site most selected for public restrooms was at Sylvester Park. Marygrace Jennings, Cultural Resources Manager for DES (Department Of Enterprise Services) who manages the park was contacted and asked about future

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Fertile Grounds

## ANALYSIS

planned renovations of the park, and if they would include public restrooms. Her response was that coordination of Sylvester Park Improvements with the city's efforts downtown is welcomed. The State has no plans to add public restrooms to the park. The improvements envisioned were primarily for soils, drainage, and revisions to sidewalks. The funding that was available for the work in 2015-17 was, unfortunately, redirected to critical projects to repair active leaks on the capitol campus during this last winter. Funding is planned to be requested for the 2019-21 biennium.

### Analysis:

A restroom in Sylvester Park would be ideal. It is close to downtown, and hosts large civic events, and serves as a gathering spot for many street dependent people during daylight hours. In addition to the cost of operating a restroom in the Park, siting a structure in the historic park would be challenging without significantly altering the park's appearance and design. One way to reduce visual impact of a restroom would be to recess the facility into the slope at the east side of the site.

# **Master Plan - Recommendations**

## MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Downtown Olympia has made recent public and private investments into the downtown area and aspires to fulfill the community goals and visions that are outlined in the Downtown Strategy.

### Downtown at 4th Ave & Washington Street

Possible Location at the southwest corner of 4th Avenue and Washington Street in the public right of way. Of the possible locations for a public restroom, this one is the most central in terms of need, based on the Human Waste Heat Map, nearby nightlife establishments, and lack of nearby existing restrooms. This work could be coordinated with planned street improvements identified in the Downtown Strategy for Washington Street and 4th Avenue. A Portland Loo or similar style toilet kiosk could be located in the public right of way with the construction of planned curb bulbs. The adjacent property is owned by US Bank, and conversations with Matthew Klifman, Branch Manager, have been supportive of a public restroom at this location. This location is at the center of the heat map showing human waste discovered by the Clean Team as well as near the cross roads of Capitol Way and 4th Ave, the main traffic and pedestrian ways of downtown. Public outreach at all events have identified this area of downtown as a needed location for public restrooms.

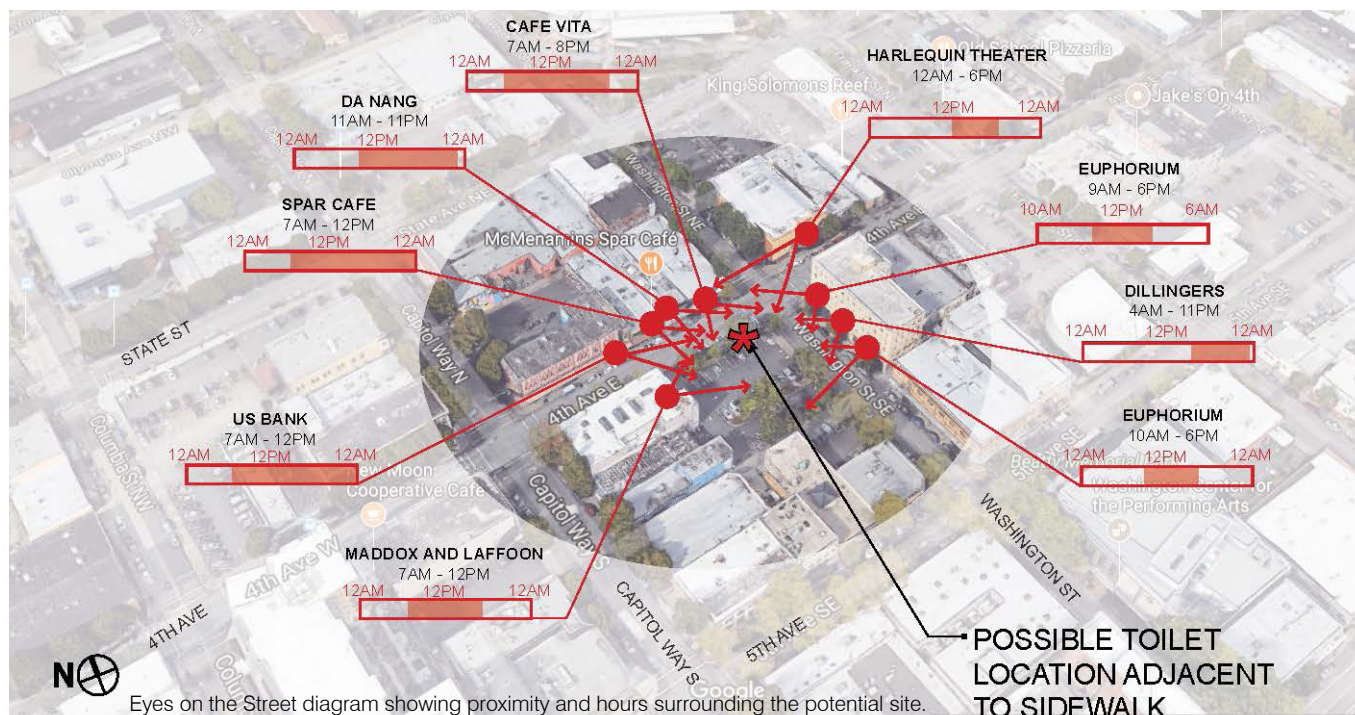
- **Facility Type** - Portland Loo, or similar toilet kiosk.
- **Hours of Operation** - 24-hours, 7 days a week.
- **Cost** - rough order of magnitude cost \$300,000-400,000, pending the extent of associated street improvements.
- **Schedule** - the work is in the city right of way and adjacent property owner is supportive of the idea. Public outreach and design could begin as soon as possible, with a goal of providing a restroom in 2018.

### Recommendations

- Install second loo in ROW with street improvements
- Public restroom needed at fountain to meet code.
- Welcome Center with public restrooms needed.
- Portable units are temporary solution. Need hand washing station, or sanitizer.
- Forge partnerships with entities that want to support a loo, i.e. Salvation Army to provide an attendant.

### Utilities

Abandoned drinking fountain at this site, should provide good access to water reducing utility costs compared to other locations downtown.



### Best Practices

- An attendant provides the eyes, that natural surveillance may not.
- Cleaning the unit more frequently addresses the “broken window concept” by keeping the unit from looking run down.
- At Volunteer Park, providing tile for the comfort station, new fixtures, and better lighting has resulted in better behavior, fewer issues, and less graffiti.

### Percival West

The existing city owned and operated Percival West comfort station has been reconfigured and is now open 24-hours. Recently, the restroom has been a target of negative behavior including graffiti, drug use, littering, clogged toilets, and unhygienic conditions that include dozens of needles left behind. Because of the poor CPTED elements at this site, we recommend limiting this facility to day use only, after the proposed loo at 4th and Washington is operational.

- **Facility Type** - Existing Comfort Station.
- **Hours of Operation** - Currently 24-hours, reduced to day use only
- **Cost** - No additional cost, may reduce operational costs.
- **Schedule** - Implement change after the proposed loo at 4th and Washington has been installed..

### Heritage Park Fountain

City owned and operated Heritage Park Fountain is a popular site that is being used by the public as a spray park for water play. Although this was not the original intent, it is the current reality, and health code requires that restrooms shall be located within 100 feet of the fountain. The nearest facilities are over three to four times that distance and across the busiest arterials in the city. There are possibilities for public restrooms to be built into future development of the site, or the installation of one or two Portland Loo type facilities which may well serve wet bathers in the summer.

- **Facility Type** - Comfort Station that is incorporated into current or future development of the site, allowing for clear line of site from fountain to restrooms.
- **Hours of Operation** - At a minimum, the hours of operation need to match those of the fountain to meet code. Longer hours are desirable due to the location and proximity to downtown.
- **Cost** - Construction taking place entirely on city property as opposed to the city right of way or street reduces utility costs considerably. Existing power, water, and sewer connections on site
- **Schedule** - The property is city owned and programming and design should begin as soon as possible, with a goal of providing restrooms at the start of the fountain season in 2018.



Denver Public Restrooms Pilot Project. These portable restroom trailers provide more sanitary flushing toilets.

### Recommendations

An alternative solution would be to use portable restroom units that were available during the hours that meals were provided.

### Portable Restrooms near Intercity Transit

The portable unit located at mid-block along Olympia Way is part of a pilot project and has demonstrated a clear need for public restrooms in the area around the transit station, between the new Community Care Center, Thurston County Food Bank, and Union Gospel Mission, especially considering the meals that are provided in the adjacent parking lots. However, with the use and abuse that the unit has suffered, it has become as much of a health concern as it is an asset. The absence of hand sanitizer, which had been stolen, is a great concern considering the outbreak

## MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

of hepatitis A in San Diego that is passed via the oral-fecal route. At a minimum, a handwashing station needs to be provided, ultimately the unit should be removed.

The city population and development in this vicinity has not achieved a level of density to provide natural surveillance for a Portland Loo at this location. To mitigate potential negative activity, an attendant would be needed, or a partnership with one or more organizations. The transit center is currently planning expansions, which might present an opportunity for such a partnership.

- **Facility Type** - Mobile or portable toilets that were removed or locked after hours.
- **Hours of Operation** - During meal service.
- **Cost** - TBD
- **Schedule** - Hand washing station (hand sanitizer) needs to be provided immediately. Unit should be removed. Negotiate with service groups for partnerships as soon as possible to find a replacement for current portable unit.

### Portable Restroom at Salvation Army

The portable unit at the Salvation Army location has demonstrated a clear need as part of the pilot program and like the unit by the transit center has seen its fair share of use and abuse. The Salvation Army and neighboring businesses have seen a great reduction in the number of incidences of human waste found in the nearby streets and alleys which demonstrates its effectiveness. However, also like the Transit Portable, with the hand sanitizer unit missing, this unit has become as much of a sanitization liability as an asset.

The Salvation Army themselves has also expressed a keen interest in keeping a restroom at this location, and upgrading to a better, more sanitary unit like a Portland Loo. Because of the relatively poor natural surveillance at this location, a partnership with the Salvation Army would be needed to mitigate potential negative behavior.

- **Facility Type** - Portland Loo, or similar toilet kiosk.
- **Hours of Operation** - 24-hours, 7 days a week.
- **Cost** - Rough order of magnitude cost \$200,000-300,000, pending the extent of utility work. It may be possible to utilize Salvation Army existing utility connections for power, water and sewer. With an agreement for the utility connections it may be possible to do the work on site which is less expensive than work in the ROW.
- **Schedule** - First, provide a handwashing station or remove the unit. Second, begin discussions, and programming with the Salvation Army to discuss a partnership which could take place as soon as possible.

### Salvation Army Site

- A 24-hour restroom here may be seen as primarily for the use of the street dependant, however, all people and businesses are welcome and all will continue to benefit as the pilot project has demonstrated.
- Temporary parking and directional signage from the nearby food truck lot, could encourage use, and provide needed support and partnerships.



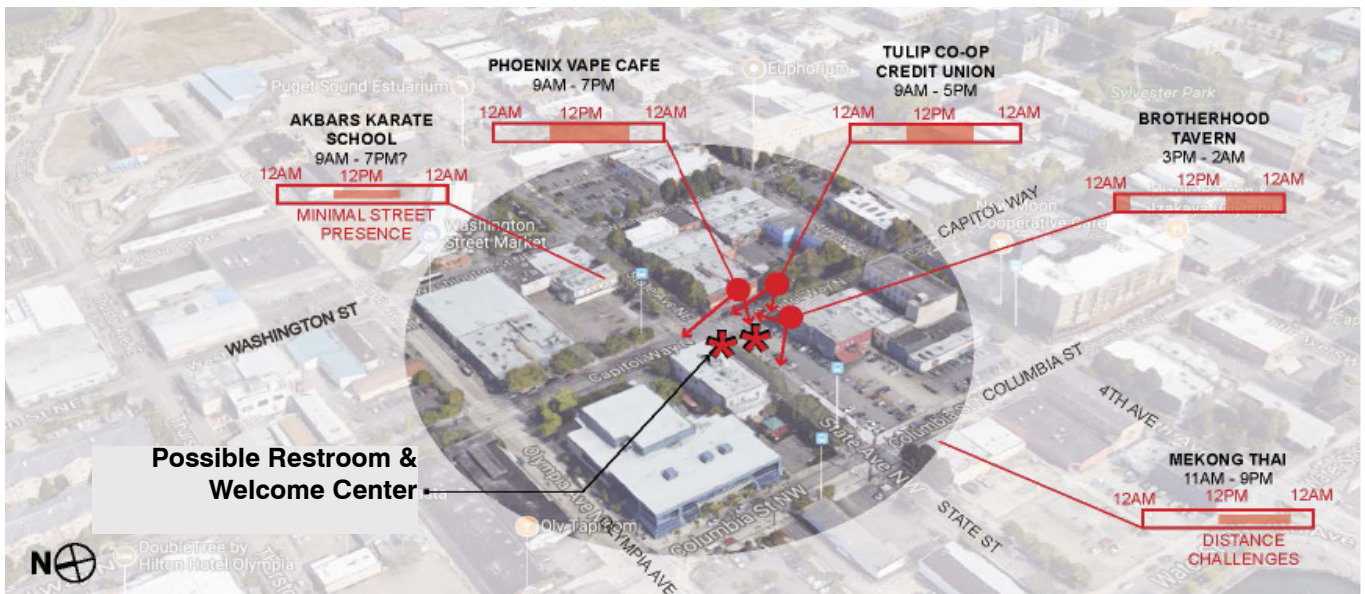
## Sylvester Park

Our public outreach events heavily identified Sylvester Park as a needed location for public restrooms. Though currently there are no plans for DES to add a restroom with future improvements for the park, there is a possibility of a partnership to provide needed accommodations. The best location would be in the ROW adjacent to the park near the intersection of Capitol Way and Legion Way, however there is no existing sewer line there or anywhere in the park. Therefore we turned our attention towards siting a Portland Loo in the ROW on a curb bulb at one of the corners of the intersection of Legion Way SE and Washington Street SE, which are identified in the Downtown Strategy for street and sidewalk improvements. This location is also in very close proximity to the major hot spots for human waste incidences on the heat map. A loo at this location could replace the 24-hour portable unit at the Heritage Park Bathhouse, and the saved funds could be used for cleaning and maintenance for the new loo.

- **Facility Type** - Portland Loo, or similar toilet kiosk.
- **Hours of Operation** - 24-hours, 7 days a week.
- **Cost** - Rough order of magnitude cost \$300,000-400,000, pending the extent of associated street improvements..
- **Schedule** - Negotiate with vendor for added services and identify contingency funding to be able to respond quickly should the need arise.

## Welcome Center

Locating a Welcome Center near the intersection of State St and Capitol Way, along a primary arterial could provide great visibility for tourists, visitors, shoppers, who are utilizing transit, walking, biking, or driving. As identified in



Eyes on the Street diagram showing proximity and hours surrounding the portable unit.


## MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

the Downtown Strategy, a Welcome Center needs to have public restrooms which will improve the image of downtown Olympia. A review of the city on GIS revealed that there is currently city owned property, a parking lot, along Capitol Way at the intersection of State St.. This site is very heavily trafficked by both vehicles and pedestrians but still not the strongest CPTED option for natural surveillance. A facility here would need to be paired with a Welcome Center to provide eyes on the street.

- **Facility Type** - Comfort station.
- **Hours of Operation** - Same as welcome center
- **Cost** - Pending design and programming for the facility.
- **Schedule** - Continue discussions and make preliminary site selections in 2018 for public input.

### Artesian Commons

The Portland Loo installed here has thus far operated well providing clean, safe sanitary facilities. It is inevitable that this facility may make the news with an incident, but rather than let that become a deterrent, our recommendation is to follow up with temporary additional support in surveillance with Park Rangers, or additional cleaning up to four per day as is planned in Seattle Parks.

- **Facility Type** - Portland Loo, or similar toilet kiosk.
- **Hours of Operation** - 24-hour  7 days a week.
- **Cost** - Double monthly expense for short term if negative behavior occurs to maintain a safe and sanitary public accommodation (if necessary).
- **Schedule** - Negotiate with vendor for added services and identify contingency funding to be able to respond quickly should the need arise.