



PBIA Advisory Board

Sanitation (Public Restroom) Master Plan Update

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Title

Sanitation (Public Restroom) Master Plan Update

Recommended Action

N/A - Discussion only

Report

Issue:

Whether to receive an update on the work completed to date on a Downtown Sanitation (downtown restrooms) Master Plan and the public restroom pilot project.

Staff Contact:

Amy Buckler, Downtown Programs Manager, Community Planning & Development, 360.570.5847

Presenter(s):

Amy Buckler

Background and Analysis:

Olympia's Downtown Strategy calls for the City to locate public restrooms downtown as one of its clean and safe efforts, with the assumption this action would help to reduce the impact of human waste in public spaces. Accordingly, in 2017 the City hired Young Architecture (consultants with experience siting restrooms in other communities) to help develop a master plan to identify best practices, needs, locations, timing and costs for potential future downtown restrooms. The City Council directed that the plan should consider restrooms for all, and specifically for people who are street dependent as well as visitors. Also in 2017, the City embarked on a pilot project to test the viability of 24-hour public restrooms in five locations.

Staff's presentation will cover:

- The Master Plan process so far,
- Results of research into existing conditions and needs,
- Best practices for siting, operating and designing public restrooms,
- Results from the pilot projects, including available data, and
- Next steps

Attached is a list of best practices for siting, operating and designing restrooms, derived from other cities and Olympia's experience. Public restrooms are commonly susceptible to abuse, and these best practices are intended to curb or mitigate negative behaviors so that clean, safe restrooms can be maintained for all. The attachment highlights where best practices were employed in each of the five pilot projects; during the briefing staff will provide more information about these practices and how employing them or not employing them has affected conditions in each of the pilots.

Conditions in Olympia/Franklin Lot and Percival West

When compared to the best practices, we found these restrooms are located in less active places, and they are not sufficiently designed for 24-hour permanent use. Regularly recorded misuse of these restrooms presents unsafe conditions for our community, including:

- Drug dealing and drug using
- Prostitution
- Graffiti
- Vandalism
- Unsanitary conditions occurring on an almost daily/nightly basis despite a cleaning schedule (trash, biohazard deposits - vomit, feces, spit, blood)

In February, staff presented this information to the Council's Land Use & Environment Committee; accordingly, the Committee recommended to City Council that the City remove the portable restroom located in the Olympia/Franklin lot, and return the Percival West restroom to its normal operating schedule (completely closed in the winter, open the rest of the year from dawn to dusk.)

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

From business surveys, public outreach events at Sylvester Park, the Farmer's Market and an open house at City Hall, staff and consultants heard interest in providing public restrooms in order to serve people who are street dependent, as well as visitors, and as a possible means of reducing human waste in public spaces. We also heard that providing restrooms is an economic development issue, as it supports the needs of downtown businesses.

Options:

Receive the briefing

Financial Impact:

Under current conditions, the annual cost of continuing to operate and maintain the:

- Olympia/Franklin portable restroom is \$29,100
- Percival West restroom is \$80,600

Attachments:

Best Practices Chart
Pilot Project Map