

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### ***Need for clean, safe public restrooms in DC DC legislation for public restroom pilots***

#### **Why DC needs more clean, safe public restrooms**

- An internationally recognized human right
- Key for personal and public health.
- Everyone needs access to a clean, safe public restroom when nature calls
- People who are restroom challenged <sup>1</sup> must find a restroom urgently when nature calls or risk an accident.
- Most European & Asian capitals, recognizing the importance of access to clean, safe public restrooms for personal and public health, have public restrooms readily available in areas with high levels of pedestrian traffic.
- Our Nation's Capital (off the Mall) has 5 public restrooms open downtown during the day (4 with limited hours) and only two open 24/7 <sup>2</sup>

#### **Dupont Circle would be an excellent candidate for installing a clean, safe public restroom open 24/7:**

- No public restrooms available nearby: closest open during day (Lafayette Sq.) is .8 mile walk; closest open 24/7 is Lincoln Memorial (1.5 mile walk)
- High levels of pedestrian traffic during the day: 17,000 metro entries daily, major tourism site, many shoppers, bikers, joggers, walkers, people experiencing homelessness
- High levels of pedestrian traffic at night (5 liquor stores, 16 bars and nightclubs open until 2/3 am; 30 restaurants with liquor licenses --liquor is a diuretic);
- Businesses increasingly restricting restroom access to customers: 11 of 17 visited in 2015 open to the public; in 2017 only 1 of 17 open to public
- Strong community support: endorsements for more clean, safe public restrooms from ANC2B, Dupont Circle Citizens Association, Dupont Circle Village, Friends Meeting of Washington DC, Foundry United Methodist Church.

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<sup>1</sup> The list is long. It includes: seniors, young children, people with Cohn's & Colitis, individuals taking medicine to reduce blood pressure (which acts as a diuretic), individuals with diabetes,

<sup>2</sup> They are the Lincoln & Jefferson Memorials – both far away from populated areas where they are needed at night.

## Law 22-280, Public Restrooms Installation & Promotion Act of 2018, addresses DC's need for more clean, safe public restrooms

### History

- Introduced by Council Members Nadeau, Grosso, Silverman and Todd in April 2017 based on research<sup>3</sup> done by People for Fairness Coalition (PFFC) Downtown DC Public Restroom Initiative.
- Passed by the DC Council in December 2018 by unanimous vote
- Became Law 22-280 on April 11, 2019
- DC FY 2020 Budget passed by the DC Council on May 28, 2019 provides first year funding

### Highlights of Law 22-280:

Directs the DC government to establish a Working Group to explore solutions to the lack of public restrooms in downtown DC.

Group to consist of DC Water, DPW, DDOT, DGS, DPR, DOH & DHS, MPD, DMPED and five non-governmental representatives: two from DC nonprofits that address homeless issues, one non-profit with a focus on issues affecting seniors, one nonprofit with a focus on public health, and one individual with expertise in urban planning.

Within first 45 days: Mayor is to go out BIDs, ANCs, and other community organizations requesting that they submit information on areas within their jurisdictions where they consider that there is a need for public restrooms.

With first 180 days: Mayor names Working Group tasked with proposing the number and type of public restroom facilities, if any, that would best serve the District's needs.

Working group is charged with recommending two pilot programs:

1. Install and maintain two stand-alone public restrooms open 24/7 in high need locations in the District (providing opportunities, once the sites are selected, for public comment with the ANC in the area where the restroom is to be installed to vote on its installation);
2. Create a program to provide financial incentives to businesses in a selected Business Improvement District to open their restrooms to the public.

Charges the MPD with collecting information on police reports at/near the restrooms and the nature of the reports. At the end of the first year the Mayor shall report to the Council on the actual annual costs of installing, maintaining, policing, and repairing the public restroom facilities.

MPD monitoring information and report to be used to decide whether to continue and/or expand one or both pilot programs.

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<sup>3</sup> Information on the Downtown DC Public Restroom Initiative and the research it has done may be found at [www.pffcdc.org/what-we-do/public-restrooms](http://www.pffcdc.org/what-we-do/public-restrooms)

## Funding

Fiscal Impact Statement (FIS) prepared by the Office of the DC Chief Financial Officer provides for \$400,000 in first year funding:

- \$270,000 to purchase and install two stand-alone public restrooms open 24/7 and \$64,000 for cleaning and replacement parts (as needed)
- \$66,000 for business incentives program (estimated to cover contracts with up to 30 businesses)

## Responsibility for implementing public restroom pilots

- Department of General Services (DGS) is responsible for implementing stand-alones open 24/7 including maintenance and keeping them clean.
- Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) to contract with one BID which will identify participating businesses in their area, arrange for contract signatures and do monitoring.

## Key moments <sup>4</sup>

- On/about November 15, 2019 (45 days in) Mayor request that BIDs, ANCs, community organizations advise where they believe public restrooms are needed.
- On/about April 1, 2020 (180 days in) Mayor forms Working Group
- On about November 1, 2020 (395 days in) signs put up in areas where stand-alone restrooms are to be installed requesting public comment, ANC to vote on this matter

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<sup>4</sup> Assumes Law 22-0289 becomes effective as October 1, 2019, start of FY 2020.

## Options for standalone public restrooms open 24/7 <sup>5 6</sup>

- Portland Loo
- Automated public toilets

### PORTLAND LOO <sup>7 8</sup>



Built by Committee (outreach, assistance & buy in from): City of Portland, Portland Police, Portland Fire Department, Clean & Safe (Portland's BID), Portland Water Bureau, Portland Parks & Recreation, Portland Environment Services, Madden Fabrications – taking into consideration experiences elsewhere.

Successfully installed and maintained in 28 cities in US, Canada, and New Zealand. They include: Portland OR, San Diego CA, Greeley CO, San Antonio TX, Miami FL, Cambridge MA, Cincinnati OH, Hoboken NJ, Salt Lake City UT, Vancouver BC.

Size of a parking space

#### Designed using CPTED <sup>9</sup> measures to be safe and avoid being used for illicit activities:

- Louvers at top and bottom so one can see and hear what is happening inside
- Lighting inside and outside at night
- Blue light inside to discourage shooting up.
- Situated in an open space where there is a lot of pedestrian/vehicular traffic.
- Local business & community buy-in is critical as they serve as eyes and ears during the day.
- Arrangement for police to pass by during their rounds at night.

#### Designed for minimum stay/maximum use:

- No sink inside; water spout on outside for hand washing and to fill water bottles (up to 300 flushes/day)

#### Easy to clean and maintain:

- Visited between 2 and 5 times/day by an individual who manually cleans inside and outside
- Panels are graffiti proof and can be easily cleaned and, as necessary, replaced.

#### Economical to purchase and maintain

- Purchase and transport: \$94,000
- Installation: \$25,000 - \$35,000 (if near water & sewer connection)
- Cleaning & maintenance: \$12,000 to \$20,000/year
- Each flush uses 1.25 gallons of water
- Solar panels in areas with lots of sun provide needed electricity.

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<sup>5</sup> It is up to the Working Group to decide which option to select.

<sup>6</sup> Most appropriate for areas experiencing high levels of pedestrian traffic during the day and late at night.

<sup>7</sup> Preference of PFFC Downton DC Public Restroom Initiative; Portland Loo used as basis for preparing Fiscal Impact Statement.

<sup>8</sup> For more information on the Portland Loo go to [www.portlandloo.com](http://www.portlandloo.com)

<sup>9</sup> CPTED stands for Crime Presentation Through Environmental Design

## AUTOMATED PUBLIC TOILETS <sup>10 11</sup>



In existence for a number of years. Produced by a variety of firms (among them Delacroix, Hering, ToiliTech and EXCELon).

May be found in US (San Francisco, New York City), throughout Europe and Asia.

Size of a parking space.

### Characteristics:

- Entirely closed
- User usually has up to 20 minutes before automatic door opens

### Safety considerations:

- Depends on where it is placed: in some areas there are no problems; other have experienced vandalism
- Given that it is closed and one can't see what is happening inside, possibility of its being used for illicit purposes

### Cleanliness

- Depends on location
- Depending on model, is cleaned by spraying water in toilet area or whole interior; in some cases after each use, others up to after 10 uses.
- Doesn't pick up trash left on floor

### Costs to purchase and maintain

- \$250,000 - \$1,000,000 purchase
- \$25,000 - \$35,000 installation if close to water/sewer lines
- Up to \$100,000 to clean and maintain
- High water use/cost

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<sup>10</sup> For more information on Automated Public Toilet (APTs): <https://home.howstuffworks.com/home-improvement/household-hints-tips/cleaning-organizing/self-cleaning-toilets.htm>

<sup>11</sup> We know less about APTs in spite of attempts to learn more; they work well in some places and not in others

## INCENTIVES TO BUSINESSES TO OPEN THEIR RESTROOMS TO THE PUBLIC

Patterned on Community Toilet Scheme which originated in England in 2003, has spread to boroughs throughout England and more recently picked up by Germany and Australia

DC will be the first in the US to pilot this approach

### Community Toilet Scheme <sup>12 13</sup>

#### How it works:



Local government finances/initiates program – either directly or contracting it.

Participating business sign contract indicating they will provide restroom access to everyone during their operating hours; with access to be denied only under exceptional circumstances.

Businesses are free to drop out; local government can terminate business for lack of compliance

Businesses must display special decals in their windows

Local government provides signs with locations of participating businesses.

#### Benefits to participating businesses:

- People using restrooms may decide to make purchases at participating business
- Business shows civic consciousness

#### Funding provided:

- Varies in England depending on borough: ranging from 600 Euro in downtown London (regardless of hours open or no. of toilets) to between 500 and 1,200 Euro in Wealdon depending on number of toilets and hours open)
- Preliminary estimate (for FIS) is up to \$2,000/year per participating business

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<sup>12</sup> For more information on the Community Toilet Scheme: [https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/transport-and-streets/clean-streets/Pages/Community-Toilet-Scheme-\(CTS\).aspx](https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/transport-and-streets/clean-streets/Pages/Community-Toilet-Scheme-(CTS).aspx)

<sup>13</sup> Best for areas with high levels of pedestrian traffic/need during the day and early evening.