





Memorandum

TO: Kevin J. Jackson, Village Manager 
FROM: Tammie Grossman, Development Customer Services Director 
Vanessa Matheny, Grants Supervisor, DCS
FOR: Village President and Board of Trustees
DATE: March 1, 2023
SUBJECT: Community Restroom Update

Background

This memorandum provides information regarding the proposed community restroom (Portland Loo) planned to be located in Public Parking Lot #10, at Marion Street and North Bouvard.

The need for a community restroom was brought to staff's attention by the Village's community policing team. Director Grossman discussed this idea with Police Chief Johnson and Former Chief Reynolds, with both indicating support for the initiative. Access to a public restroom from a community and tourist standpoint provides a public health benefit. A community restroom will allow individuals to access a safe and clean public facility while in the Oak Park community. Further, the installation will help eliminate public urination and defecation, and reduce the strain on private local businesses to allow access to their restroom facilities. In the past, the Village has received complaints related to the lack of public restrooms in the downtown Oak Park area, especially near the Metra Station.

In researching this matter, it was discovered that the Park District of Oak Park (PDOP) has installed a Portland Loo near Rehm Park. The District reports experiencing limited to no challenges with the installed Portland Loo. In addition, the PDOP operates thirteen (13) public restroom facilities and parks throughout the community. However, some of the restrooms are seasonal and all of them operate between the hours of 7am-6pm.

Update

Maintenance and Safety Plan - On May 2, 2022 staff asked the Village Board for guidance to pursue the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to purchase and install a community restroom in Parking Lot #10. Prior to committing to the installation of the community restroom, the Village Board requested that staff prepare a maintenance and safety plan. In response to that request, staff did prepare the attached draft maintenance and safety plan. The plan was developed with assistance from both the Oak Park Police Department and the Public Works Department. The plan was also reviewed by the Downtown Oak Park (DTOP) business district.

Business District Feedback - In partnership with the Downtown Oak Park (DTOP) business district organization, a questionnaire was sent to the district's membership. The purpose of the

questionnaire was to collect feedback regarding the installation of the proposed community restroom. A total of 45 DTOP participants responded to the questionnaire. The DTOP members overwhelmingly support the idea of installing a public restroom in the business district. The results of the questionnaire, along with the written feedback, are attached. A summary of the results appears below.

- Do you allow customers to use your restroom? 40% Yes and 20% No
- Do you feel there is a need for a public restroom in DTOP? **62.2% Yes** and 31.1% No
- Are you in favor of a free-standing public restroom? **62.2% Yes** and 31.1% No
- Do you feel a public restroom would benefit the community? **68.9% Yes** and 28.9% No

Request for Proposal Results - In order to advance the discussion before the Village Board, staff issued a Request for Proposals to determine the actual cost of the purchase and installation of the community restroom (Portland Loo). Staff had planned to present the draft plans and bids to the Village Board in March for a discussion and final decision by the Village Board.

On February 2, 2023 the Engineering Division opened bids for the Community Restroom Project. The Village received two bids for the project with the low responsible bid from MYS, Incorporated in an amount of \$468,848. The other bid, from D Kersey Construction Co., was in an amount of \$518,784. Based on the two bids received and the engineer's estimate, MYS's bid represents a competitive bid for this work. The original budgeted amount for the project is \$225,000 using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds.

The Engineering Division reviewed the bids for this project. Costs for the project can be broken down into 5 main categories below. In order to have the proposed bathroom function year-round, the bathroom was specified for our climate with heating elements on the exposed plumbing and with additional heating elements to be installed by the contractor in the concrete slab (so the floor would not get icy when the bathroom is washed down in the winter) and heating on the underground water and sewer piping above the frost line. There was an error in the low-bid which exaggerated the cost for the heating elements and the contractor indicated they would work with the Village to adjust and lower costs for the electrical heating work, if awarded. An estimated adjusted cost to construct the project is shown at \$416,218 to correct this bid error should the Village decide to move forward with this project.

Work Category	Bid Cost	Adjusted Cost (Estimated)
Purchase and installation of Portland Loo Bathroom	\$ 225,000	\$ 225,000
Misc., demo, concrete pad, restoration, etc.	\$ 104,687	\$ 104,687
Water & Sewer Services	\$ 52,733	\$ 52,733
Electrical Work Lighting	\$ 4,411	\$ 4,411
Electrical Work Heating	\$ 82,017	\$ 29,387
	\$ 468,848	\$ 416,218

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Due to this proposed project being overbudget, staff has discussed pausing this project until 2024 when the Public Parking Lot #10 reconstruction project will be occurring in order to combine the two projects and potentially achieve construction savings. The proposed work would include the purchasing and installation of the prefabricated (Portland Loo) installation and construction of the necessary infrastructure for the underground plumbing, electrical work, heating cables, concrete slab, and associated restoration work. In order to have the restroom function year-round, the water supply piping must have electrical heating cables and insulation wrapped around all pipes above the frost line. The concrete slab will also have electrical heating elements embedded in the slab to prevent the formation of ice when the floor and bathroom are washed down.

Current Recommendation

Staff is recommending that the Village obtain two temporary port-a-lets in 2023 to place in the DTOP area and utilize the draft maintenance and security plans to test the concept of the community bathroom. This will allow the Village to see if this concept works, prior to investing in the purchase and installation of the Portland Loo.

Further, staff is recommending including the permanent public restroom (Portland Loo) installation in the overall Public Parking Lot #10 construction project in an effort to reduce the cost of this potential project.

Attachments

Community Restroom Maintenance and Security Plan: Staff drafted a maintenance and safety plan with Oak Park Police Department and Public Works Department.

Please contact Tammie Grossman, Development Customer Services Director, with any questions at tgrossman@oak-park.us or 708/358-5422.

cc: Lisa Shelley, Deputy Village Manager
Ahmad Zayyad, Deputy Village Manager
Christina M. Waters, Village Clerk
All Department Directors

Community Restroom

The Village of Oak Park is looking at options for a community restroom to benefit public health and reduce the strain on local businesses that allow access to their facilities. The community restroom is intended to be a service for residents, tourists, commuters and individuals experiencing homelessness. Plans, which are subject to Village Board approval, call for the public restroom to offer 24/7 access to an ADA compliant restroom facility with a changing table and a sharp object disposal box. The final location of the community restroom is intended to be in a public area near public transit, local businesses and parks to benefit the community, deter crime and reduce waste in common areas.



The Village is looking at the design of the Portland Loo as the prototype for a community restroom in Oak Park.



Potential location of community restroom near Marion Street and North Boulevard.

Proposed Maintenance Plan

Measures for cleanliness: The Village's contracted maintenance company will include the community restroom on its daily cleaning schedule. The restroom will be cleaned and restocked with supplies twice a day.

Servicing of unit: If the community restroom needs servicing, whether it be a broken lock, clogged toilet or frozen pipes, the Village's contracted maintenance company will take care of any servicing needs.

Graffiti control: There is a graffiti proof powder coat on all of the internal and external sides of the unit to help reduce the chances of it being tagged, while also making it easy to clean. If the unit is scratched, the Village's Public Works Department will be able to buff the surface to erase any markings, since the unit is made of stainless steel.

Sharp-object disposal: Items placed in the sharp-object disposal box in the community restroom will be taken by the Village's contracted maintenance company to the Public Works Center for proper disposal.

Proposed Security Plan

Hours of operation: The community restroom is intended to be open to the public 24/7, 365 days a year. The restroom is capable of being locked, if needed, and use will be assessed to determine if 24/7 access is needed and safe for the community.

Security staffing: The community restroom will be added to the Oak Park Police Department's 40-beat patrol route to ensure up to five (5) security checks will be completed during each shift, for a total of 15 checks during a 24-hour period.

Occupancy: The Portland Loo is designed to have louvers on the top and bottom of the restroom to allow for privacy while utilizing the space, but to also help ensure individuals use the space for intended purposes.

Combating drug usage: A blue light in the community restroom is utilized to deter intravenous drug usage as the light inhibits individuals from locating veins. In addition, there will be a sharp-object disposal box located in the community restroom.

Fire prevention: The Portland Loo is constructed out of stainless steel. All contents of the Loo are also made of stainless steel, minimizing the possibility of it catching on fire. It is also designed with louvers on the top and bottom that allow circulation within the unit.

