



**MEMORANDUM**

Christine McCall, AICP  
*Assistant City Manager, DPD Director*

TO: Eileen M. Donoghue, City Manager

FROM: Christine McCall, Assistant City Manager/DPD Director

DATE: September 28 2021

SUBJECT: MOTION OF 08/10/2021 FROM COUNCILOR ELLIOT REQUESTING CITY MGR. PROVIDE A REPORT REGARDING POSSIBILITY OF PROVIDING A PUBLIC BATHROOM DOWNTOWN.

The following locations offer bathroom access during the hours listed:

- Toilet Trailer at Life Connection Center (192 Appleton St) Monday-Friday 9:00 a-4:00p
- Eliot Presbyterian Day Center (273 Summer St) Monday-Friday 8a-2p (In order to access this bathroom, guests must sign in at the front door, and wear a mask in the program)

There are other locations, such as Living Waters (10 Kirk St) or and the Middlesex County Sheriff's Office (291 Summer Street), that may be available to some individuals experiencing homelessness. These locations are not broadly available to everyone, and may be limited to individuals engaged in services or otherwise approved by the facility. It is possible that individuals may be able to access other toileting and handwashing facilities, such as the library, restaurants and cafes, or retail establishments. However, a brief assessment of the downtown area showed many establishments with signs indicating that restrooms are for customers only, and can only be accessed while paying for a good or service.

Other Massachusetts cities have addressed public restrooms in different ways. For example, the City of Boston has a map on their website that lists public bathrooms by neighborhood, and includes information on hours and features. They include Fire Department Headquarters and City Hall on the list, as well as several "City Toilets" that are open 24 hours a day and cost a quarter to use. Another example, in the City of Cambridge opened its first public toilet in February 2016 in Harvard Sq., and installed a second in Central Square in 2018. Designed and built by the "Portland Loo", the structures are designed with a safety focus and ease of cleaning.

We are exploring the options that may be available for Lowell, recognizing that there are challenges that range from funding to location to safety. The Department of Planning and Development will coordinate with the Department of Public Works, Downtown residents, and our business community to identify a potential location that would be an appropriate site for a public bathroom Downtown. Once a suitable location has been secured, the DPD will seek funding for installation and ongoing maintenance of the facility.

CMM