

Presentation to DC BID Council Community Restroom Incentives Pilot

PFFC Downtown DC Public Restroom Initiative

(www.pffcdc.org/what-we-do/public-restrooms)

September 14, 2021

Topics for today's presentation

Clean, safe restrooms

- Why needed
- Availability in commercial areas of DC

Law 22-280, Public Restroom Facilities Installation & Promotion Act

- Overview of Law
- Provisions for Community Restroom Incentives (CRI) pilot
- Next steps

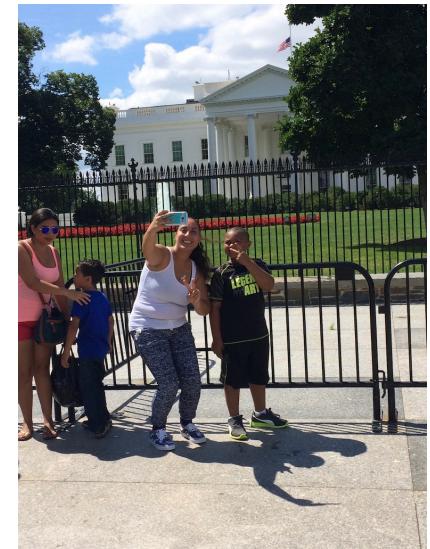
Community Toilet Scheme (CTS) upon with CRI pilot is based

- Key characteristics
- Findings from studies
- Lessons learned applicable to DC

Everyone deserves ready access to a clean, safe public restroom when nature calls

- A human right & fundamental to human dignity
- Contributes to personal and public health
- Fosters urban livability and good for tourism
- Makes good business sense
- Is especially needed by those who are restroom challenged

(includes: pregnant women, young children, senior citizens, people with diabetes, crones & colitis, people with physical disabilities)



*In European & Asian capitals clean, safe public
restrooms are readily available*

**Not so in Washington DC, our
Nation's Capital**

- ❖ Pre-COVID off the Mall only 6 public restroom open downtown during the day, most with limited hours and no signs.
- ❖ Only two are open 24/7 in all of DC (Lincoln & Jefferson Memorials) both out of the way of evening activities, no signs
- ❖ Businesses are increasingly limiting restroom access to customers only



Law 22-280

Public Restroom Facilities Installation & Promotion Act of 2018

Directs DC government to carry out two restroom pilots.

11 ANCs with commercial areas sent resolutions to DC Council supporting more public restrooms

1. Install and maintain two stand-alone public restrooms open 24/7 in two high need locations in the District
2. Create a program to provide financial incentives to businesses in a selected Business Improvement District to open their restrooms to the public.

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Charges MPD, within two years, to report to DC Council on number of police reports at/near restrooms and nature of the reports.

Charges Mayor, within two years, to report to DC Council on annual costs of the program and number of participants.

Before launching pilot, Mayor to issue rules to guide implementation of the pilot.

If successful, DC shall continue this program adding more BIDs over a four year period



*Roles for BIDs in
implementing Law 22-280*

Standalone Public Restroom Pilot

In October 2020 Mayor went out to ANCs, BIDs & Clean Teams requesting that they identify locations where public restrooms are needed.

- Report, including recommendations from BIDs that responded, issued on April 23, 2021.
- Working group named by Mayor in process of recommending two locations where a need has been identified and a standalone public restroom model.



Community Restroom Incentives Pilot

- Pilot to be carried out by one BID, not to be in area where standalone public restroom is being piloted.
- DC Department of Small & Local Business Development (DSLBD) charged with implementing pilot;
- DSLBD is expected in October to issue rules, for public comment, outlining how program will operate.

City of London Decal



Community Toilet Scheme Origins

- In 2008 Borough of Richmond Upon Thames decided to pilot program to provide incentives to businesses to open their restrooms to the public.
- Consultation with businesses and public in general carried out before launching pilot
- Incentives provided to participating businesses
- Participating businesses (restaurants, coffee houses, stores, pubs) spaced out in commercial areas.
- Contract developed & signed with opt out clauses both by participating business and Borough.
- Participating business required to put decal on window

Richmond Upon Thames Decals



- Businesses required to provide access to everyone, with access denied only in exceptional circumstances
- Establishment of CTS accompanied by wide ranging media campaign (posters, adds in newspapers, flyers, other)
- Borough employee put in charge of overseeing effort, including periodic oversight visits to participating businesses.
- Signage put up in vicinity of participating businesses, along with interactive map on website showing locations, hours, and characteristics.



Conclusions of study focusing on Richmond Upon Thames Experience

- Residents preferred using toilets in managed buildings compared to Automated Public Toilets.
- More cost effective in comparison to using automatic public conveniences
- Provides public with access to a greater number and range of toilets.
- Well-maintained & signposted toilets, accessible to all, can contribute to local economies
(help create town & city centers where people want to spend their time and consequently their money)
- Recruit businesses with premises located in busiest areas, where need for toilet facilities will be highest among the public.
- Enlist as many businesses as possible with fully accessible facilities for people with disabilities and families
- Effective promotion & marketing of scheme's benefits can help accelerate recruitment process during early stages.
- Ensure availability of a mixture of types of premises available to the public in each area.
- CTS is not appropriate for areas where many people need restroom access at same time (ex: tour buses).

*2018 study of CTS's in four Boroughs
carried out by
PFFC Downtown DC Public Restroom Initiative*

Characteristics of 4 participating Boroughs

Population, square miles, other relevant

- City of London :9,100 population in one square mile; 300,000 commuters, major tourist district with 300,000 coming/day
- Richmond Upon Thames :(195,600 pop., 22.1 square miles along both sides of Thames River south of London. Primarily residential with some commercial areas.
- Merton: 205,000 pop.,outer SW Borough of London, 2 town centers, 14.7 square miles
- Wealdon: District in South east England, 323 square miles, population 158,000, six villages with populations ranging from 8,000 to 20,000

Restroom availability

City of London: 75 participating businesses, 4 attended restrooms open 8 am – 8 pm, 8 Automated Public Toilets,4 urinals come up at night in pub district

Richmond Upon Thames: 70 participating businesses, 10 public libraries

Merton: 6 businesses, one standalone public toilet

Wealdon: 22 businesses in different villages, 3 public restrooms open during day.

Key Findings

Contracts with Boroughs: all had contracts

Variation in incentives: from 400 to 1,400 British pounds depending on city, restroom characteristics.

Instances in which Borough terminated contract with business: none

Instances of businesses opting out: none in two Boroughs; in City of London one business opted out due to too much business; in Merton one business opted out when someone overdosed on drugs.

Oversight: City of London's CTS's visited every 4 to 6 weeks; varied in other boroughs.

Borough of Ashford Decal

We're in the
Community Toilet Scheme

Use our facilities for free



Takeaways for DC

- Relatively low cost, low maintenance way of rapidly expanding restroom availability in commercial areas of DC that have a great deal of pedestrian traffic during the day and early evening when participating businesses are open.
- No need to reinvent the wheel: models, ideas for decals, & contracts available through the four Community Toilet Schemes contacted and others.
- Consult with businesses before and during program
- Promote the program through personal visits, posters, flyers, adds in newspapers, other
 - Space out participating businesses to ensure adequate availability within commercial area
 - Select variety of businesses recognizing that some people may not be willing to enter some (ex: bars).
 - Give preference to selecting businesses with adequate facilities for: disabled, people. with babies.
 - Ensure adequate signage in participating areas, DC government and/or BID to post website with locations/characteristics of participating businesses.
 - Not a solution for areas with high level pedestrian traffic at night: which is better for standalones open 24/7

Next Steps

Community Restrooms Incentives Pilot

1. On October 1, \$66,000 becomes available in DC FY 2022 budget to implement the pilot
2. Soon thereafter DSLBD to issue rules; with 30 days available for public comment.
3. DSLBD to perform outreach to let the community know when comments are published in the DC Register.
4. BID(s) apply and DSLBD selects BID to carry out the pilot.

Recommend that DC BID Council invite DSLBD Deputy Chief of Staff Bobby Dorsey during public comment period to share the rules and be available for questions.

Borough of Wealdon Decal



Comments? Questions?

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