

Meeting Description: Downtown Public Restroom Work Group (DPRWG) kickoff to help set goals and location criteria to pilot 1-2 public restrooms.

Client: Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority

Project Name: Ann Arbor DDA Support Services 2022

Project Number: AAD201802T

Client Project Number: NA

Meeting Date: May 22, 2023 Meeting Time: 1:00pm

Meeting Location: Virtual

Date Issued: May 22, 2023 Issued by: Jon Bixby

Attendees:

Amber Miller, Capital Projects & Planning Manager, City of Ann Arbor DDA
Maura Thomson, Interim Executive Director, City of Ann Arbor DDA
Christopher Wall , PE, PTOE, Vice President, Business Development Lead, Wade Trim
Jon Bixby, Professional Engineer, Wade Trim
Jess Heinzelman, Co-Founder & COO, Throne Labs
Laura Orta, Director of Organizational Equity, City of Ann Arbor
Katie, Kerrytown, Assistant Property Manager
Sandra Andrade, Executive Director, Main Street Area Association
Skye Stewart, Chief of Staff, Public Services Administration
Eli Neiburger, Deputy Director, Ann Arbor District Library
Daniel Kelly, MSW, Executive Director, Shelter Association
Frances Todor-Hargreaves, Executive Director, State Street District
Katie Landeta, MAV/Kerrytown Representative

Discussion

Larry Keeler (Vice Chair on the Commission on Disability Issues) is not present.

Alex Gossage (Commission on Disability Issues) is not present.

Amber Miller began the meeting shortly after 1pm with an introduction to the Work Group, encouragement to communicate with dignity, and the background for selecting a pilot restroom model. She continued with the focus of the DPRWG and the anticipated schedule of meeting once a month from May through September.

Amber states we will determine the project goals of the pilot project and the location criteria during June and July. We will discuss the hours of operation, location findings, and determine evaluation metrics during August and September.

Jessica presents the features of the Throne, discussing why they're needed, how they're serviced, and how they're accessed.

Eli asks how many units are deployed now and if they've ever deployed in a cold-weather area. Jessica responds that there are seven units out now as they scale up to 15. Throne has not operated in a Michigan climate before but has during the winters of Washington DC. Because of the cold weather in Michigan, additional power will be needed beyond solar to each unit.

Laura asks about how many people have utilized cards for access instead of just their phones. They also inquire if there is a time limit regarding restricted access and for details regarding ADA items. Jessica responds that card access is still new for Throne, so they don't have data on the demand for card access. She mentions that unsheltered individuals and people with data privacy concerns are the ones most likely to utilize a card for access. Rather than a ban for users suspected of nefarious acts, Jessica stresses that escalating matters to Throne often leads to working with the person and lifting any restrictions. Further accommodations include a baby changing table and feminine hygiene products in all units.

Daniel asks about time limits per use and the process for when that limit is reached. He also inquires about how often each unit is cleaned. Jessica states that Thrones can be set to any duration, but by default, users have 10 minutes use the facility. At that point, lights begin flashing and a recording is played to remind users to be courteous to others. Should the user still not exit, Throne can send people out to check for misuse. Each unit is cleaned every 30-50 uses, but large events can accommodate approximately 70 uses due to lower wear-and-tear. Throne also monitors the number of uses per hour to determine the need for cleaning. Each truck can accommodate 300 uses.

Skye inquires about the size, space, and location requirements of the pump trucks. Jessica states that Throne placement must be within 80 feet of a pump truck, that their process is more sanitary than that of traditional porta johns, and emptying tends to take place early in the morning.

Laura asks about the cleaning contractors and adult changing stations. Jessica replies that Throne would likely contract through third parties in the Ann Arbor area. Adult changing stations are currently not available but can discuss the need. She emphasizes that there is still plenty of room for people with disabilities to enter accompanied and that Throne exceeds the requirements of the ADA.

Jessica leaves the meeting and Amber continues the presentation, providing examples on how to establish program goals, how to determine location criteria for the unit, and how to evaluate if the program goals are being met. She asks the group to prepare draft goals by the start of the next meeting – noting they can be shared in advance or at the June meeting.

Amber states that the use of Throne is contingent on available funding. Throne requires renting 15 units of which two could be placed downtown while the remaining 13 within Parks. This arrangement is still being discussed. If the City and DDA are unable to meet this threshold, another model will be used and the DPRWG's efforts will still apply.

Chris presents on location criteria for the Throne units. Previous discussions with City staff recommended locations with the most people activity, existing ADA access (or the ability to create it), and existing electrical access. They recommend avoiding areas with steep hills, areas that would conflict with utility access, areas with site distance issues at crosswalks, and areas near other public restrooms.

Amber stresses that Jon and Chris will handle the intricacies of implementing location criteria and opens the floor up to any remaining questions.

Frances asks if she'd like businesses to provide input on the program. Amber responds that they don't want businesses to choose whether a restroom is located near them; they would like broader input based on business type. For example, considering previous complaints about odors from porta john servicing times, we may not want to place a public restroom next to outdoor dining.

Laura asks for a right-of-way map to assist with location criteria. Amber and Chris say that Wade Trim can help provide this.

Eli inquired about the DPRWG's avoidance of Parks and whether we could consider unique areas not traditionally thought of as parks. Amber responded that since the DDA does not operate in

Parks spaces, we should focus on public street and sidewalk areas within the DDA boundary before considering other solutions. If our location analysis shows us that there aren't options within City streets and sidewalks, then we will have to reconsider.

Chris states that the next meeting will be a deeper dive into each member's draft program goals and draft location criteria.

Amber asks about the date of our next meeting. Maura asks if this meeting time tends to work for people and the consensus is yes. Amber suggests the second or third Monday of each month but conflicts quickly arise. She concedes that she'll pick a date, and if conflicts arise, she'll use a Doodle poll to determine availability.

Action Items

Draft goals of the pilot program	All	Next meeting
ADA Model Details	Jessica	ASAP
Right-of-way map	Jon	With Minutes

Minutes by,

Wade Trim Associates, Inc.

Jon Bixby
Professional Engineer

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AAD201802T
Path/file

cc: All Attendees