Why do we need more public restrooms downtown?
- Public restroom access is a basic human need. For all people to enjoy spending time downtown, from a parent with their toddler to a visitor in a wheelchair, this basic need must be met.
- At the peak of the pandemic, limitations on indoor operations called attention to the lack of stand-alone public restrooms for those working, visiting, and living unhoused downtown.
- The City Administrator hosted Downtown Listening Sessions in the summer of 2022; the top issue was the lack of public restrooms in the downtown area.

Why a pilot? What is the desired outcome/goals?
The overarching goal is to provide a safe & dignified public restroom option for all people regardless of ability, gender, race, housing status, culture, and age.

The desired outcome for the pilot period is to help us determine where and how we install public restrooms downtown to meet this goal, including the needed infrastructure and service. The final recommended option could include the Throne to provide both infrastructure and service or a different combination of model and service option.

What public restroom model has been selected for the pilot and why?
Following downtown stakeholder sessions in summer 2022, the City Administrators Office convened an internal team to address the desire for more public restrooms downtown. Through this work, the Throne was selected as the pilot restroom option.

Features: The Throne provides a gender neutral, ADA accessible model with baby changing stations in each unit. In addition, we have asked the Throne to provide signage in braille, a sharps container, and menstrual products in compliance with the Sanitation Supplies in Public Restrooms Ordinance.

Installation and service: Without an existing service model, it is important to pilot an option that includes service. The Throne was the only option that provided high-quality public restroom infrastructure and corresponding service.

Installing the Throne may require some site preparation work (e.g., concrete), but infrastructure work for the pilot is minimal compared to other options as Throne restrooms do not require water or sewer connection.

How long is the pilot?
The goal is to begin piloting the Throne in spring 2024. The pilot will be a temporary installation for approximately one year so that we can test a stand-alone public restroom option through all seasons and a range of downtown activities.
**How much does the Throne cost?**
The Throne charges a base fee of $24,000 per unit + $1,000 - $5,000 per month to service the unit. The monthly service fee depends on how often the Throne is used in that month. Overall, the Throne Pilot cost will range from $36,000 - $84,000 per unit. We do not anticipate installing more than two units downtown during the pilot period.

**How do you access a Throne public restroom?**
There are three ways individuals can access a Throne (watch [30 second demo video here](#)). The most common method is text-to-enter. Users either scan a QR code that pre-populates a text that is sent to open the door. If an individual does not have a smartphone, they can text “Throne” to the phone number on the unit. Frequent users can download the app that helps users find nearby Thrones and provides real time cleanliness ratings from other users. Lastly, those without reliable access to a phone, Throne works with local service providers to distribute tap cards that maintain accountability without requiring a phone.

**What level of service/maintenance does the Throne provide?**
Throne provides a turnkey solution for the City. This includes:
- On-going monitoring and as-needed service
- Cleaning approx. 30-50 uses or as needed
- Pumping approx. 220 uses or as needed
- Field tech support
- All paper goods & soap
- Throne repair and replacement

**What other cities have used the Throne?**
Throne has worked with multiple cities in the Washington, DC area including Fairfax (VA), Hyattsville (MD), Mount Rainier (MD) as well as business improvement districts, private businesses and schools in the District of Columbia and Arlington (VA).

**How will you select a pilot(s) location?**
The DDA has formed a Downtown Public Restroom Work Group to recommend the public restroom goals and the pilot placement analysis and evaluation criteria.

The Work Group is made up of:
- Ann Arbor District Library Director
- City of Ann Arbor Commission on Disability Issues representatives (2)
- City of Ann Arbor Director of Organizational Equity
- City of Ann Arbor DDA Executive Director
- City of Ann Arbor Public Services Area Administrator
- Downtown Business District Association Directors
  - Main Street
  - State Street
  - South University
- Shelter Association of Washtenaw County Executive Director
The Work Group will help inform:

Pilot placement analysis: Before the pilot can be installed, we need to determine where the Throne can physically fit, major destinations, and areas of need. The Work Group will help set the criteria that our consultant will use to find a feasible pilot location(s).

Evaluation criteria: The Work Group will also help set program goals and metrics to measure the pilot against.

Who will approve the pilot cost and implementation?
Any purchase over $75,000 requires approval by the DDA Board or City Council, depending upon the funding source. As part of this approval step, DDA and City staff will include the Work Group recommendations for goals and evaluation criteria. Pilot implementation can begin once funding is approved.

How can I provide input into the pilot?
Once the pilot is installed, quantitative and qualitative data will be collected to understand how well the pilot is meeting stated goals. This will include an opportunity for broader public feedback.

Additional Information

https://www.thronelabs.co/
https://ggwash.org/view/75209/yes-we-need-more-public-restrooms-in-dc-but-how-do-we-make-them-usuable-for-everyone
https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2016/7/1/public-bathrooms
https://www.crohnscolitisfoundation.org/get-involved/be-an-advocate/restroom-access