

Meeting Description: Downtown Public Restroom Work Group (DPRWG) Meeting #3 to discuss locations

Meeting Location: Virtual

Date Issued: July 14, 2023 Issued by: Jon Bixby

Attendees:

Amber Miller, Capital Projects & Planning Manager, Ann Arbor DDA
Maura Thomson, Communications Manager, Interim Executive Director, Ann Arbor DDA
Christopher Wall, PE, PTOE, Vice President, Business Development Lead, Wade Trim
Jon Bixby, Professional Engineer, Wade Trim
Laura Orta, Director of Organizational Equity, City of Ann Arbor
Sandra Andrade, Executive Director, Main Street Area Association
Skye Stewart, Chief of Staff, Public Services Administration
Eli Neiburger, Deputy Director, Ann Arbor District Library
Brian Steglitz, Public Services Area Administrator
Will Purves, Director of Planning and Program Development, Center for Independent Living

Discussion

Amber discusses the agenda and reviews and confirms the final draft goals with the Work Group. No concerns were raised about making the goals final. Amber reviews the location criteria, noting consensus at the June meeting except Throne's recommendation to consider crime data such as vandalism. She invites all to discuss if this criterion should remain.

Brian asks if we can run potential sites by the police, and Amber confirms that is something that staff can do in addition to looking at the data. Laura acknowledges that at the last meeting they shared concern about leaving out people in high crime areas but after hearing input from others understands that this may not be a concern for a pilot project with two units. Eli talks about "point" crime versus "area" crime and wants police input regarding points (not blocks or areas). Amber agrees that the focus is on very specific locations. Amber confirms with the group that all are comfortable proceeding with using a combination of police department input and crime data as a consideration for the final location opportunities. The Work Group confirms. Chris dives deeper into primary location criteria and Wade Trim's Procedure, stressing that site visits will be necessary. Chris begins to share the mapping process, which results in possible locations based on the Work Groups location criteria. See attached slides.

Laura asks if the primary criteria areas incorporating existing public restroom locations only account for their availability during business hours. Chris replies that that is the case.

Will asks for the meaning of the "not directly adjacent to outdoor dining" criterion. Chris explains that the locations to avoid are derived from businesses with permits for chairs and tables on the street. Will wonders about locations across the street or several spaces away and people seeing the restrooms while they eat. Amber confirms that locations several spaces away or across the street are reflected in the location map and that was the staff and consultant teams attempt to balance the desire for highly visible and active locations with the desire not to have spaces directly adjacent to outdoor dining.

Chris talks about secondary criteria and mentions refining the locations with site visits. Chris shows the final map with the Work Group criteria applied, discussing some general example locations for which all the criteria was met.

To begin the Work Groups discussion, Amber recommends discussing Main Street first. Maura concurs saying a location at Main and Washington has worked well for temporary bathrooms for past Taste of Ann Arbor events. The northeast corner would host porta johns at the side of Chase Bank. Sandra agrees with Maura. Eli reinforces the north side of Washington at Main and suggests that the full block of Washington and near the Fourth and Washington Parking Structure be considered. Will supports a Washington location and is in favor of locations around the corner of Main Street rather than directly on it. Will points out that while locations on Main Street do not have outdoor dining today, they may in the future. Amber reinforces that one of the Work Group's criteria is to find a location that can transition to permanent.

Laura suggests Fourth Ave between Catherine and Ann street. Will agrees and mentions the food co-op. To help guide the site analysis, Amber asks about spaces in front of the county parking lot across the street from the food co-op. Will likes this idea because there's no interference with dining.

Maura suggests the group discuss the south side of Liberty around the vicinity of Liberty Plaza. Eli shares that he does not think that is a location that will be highly used by all. Will suggests a location to the east. Amber asks the groups about parking spaces between Thompson and Maynard. Will supports these locations.

Amber continues guiding the group through the possible locations in the State Street neighborhood suggesting the group discuss State near North University/the Diag and Chris mentions the Church on William just outside the main strip and his cognizance of its ADA spaces. Maura wonders about interference with Art Fair. Amber notes that the Liberty and William locations would interfere with an Art Fair booth, but the Diag location would not. Will notes that Art Fair would benefit from more accessible restrooms. Skye and Will support scoping out the Liberty and State/North U location. Skye is less supportive of the William Street location because it is not very visible.

Amber points out that a location on South U met the groups criteria but is less accessible to the rest of downtown and asks the Work Groups input. Maura says with only 1-2 locations for the pilot, we shouldn't prioritize South University and the rest of the Work Group concurs.

Amber asks if there are any other locations the Work Group would like to discuss.

Skye suggests Liberty between 4th and 5th Ave and acknowledges that it is not City property but may be a partnership opportunity. Amber notes that the location could be evaluated before making a request for placement, but there's no electric access. Chris suggests a location closer to Fifth Ave may have electrical access but after a closer look in Google Streetview it appears challenging. Eli notes that the location also could not be serviced if the block closed permanently.

Eli suggests First and Liberty and that it is used as a route by the unhoused with the potential for free space at the northeast corner. Amber notes that the location may have accessibility challenges due to grade but asks the group to consider the location pending a site evaluation. Maura mentions that Dan (not present) has previously mentioned this area by Fleetwood Diner as a preferred location and does think it is a highly used area.

Amber asks again if there are any other locations the group would like to discuss before ending the meeting (no other suggestions from the Work Group).

Chris wraps up by discussing the site evaluation as the next step for the priority locations.

Amber notes that based on the group's criteria discussion at the start of this meeting, this will include a review from City safety services as well.

Action Items

Presentation Slides

Jon Bixby

Attached

The above notes represent the writer's understanding of the items discussed and conclusions reached at the meeting. Please notify the writer immediately if your understanding is different. A clarification or correction will be issued to all parties. This document will be considered accurate if no corrections or clarifications are received within one week of issuance.

Minutes by,

Wade Trim Associates, Inc.

Jon Bixby
Professional Engineer

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cc: All Attendees