

Regarding increased signage on existing public restrooms in Cambridge, Mr. Cox reviewed a list of these sites and recommended 5 locations as possibilities for more signage: Danehy Park, City Hall, the Water Department at Fresh Pond, and the municipal buildings at 51 and 57 Inman St. He noted that for most of the public facilities that allow public access, there was concern that publicity would result in increased use, higher maintenance costs, and problems including criminal activity. Signs will alert people who don't know about the facilities now.

Vice-Mayor Davis expressed concern that this short list did not help with the problem, since these buildings are either used now or not in operation. She wants to develop more sites and asked for a list of 5 sites each in Central and Harvard Squares and 1 in Porter Square.

Ms. Peterson noted that the toilets that have worked well have a staff presence. City Hall has a maintenance staff of two during the day, with additional staff at night. In other city sites, such as the firehouses, staff has to maintain the toilets in addition to their regular duties; increased publicity and use would create maintenance and staffing complications.

Vice-Mayor Davis commented that APTs were considered an attractive alternative because of the problems with current sites; however, APTs are expensive. She asked what public facilities were available other than firehouses. Facilities should be available throughout the city, especially in the squares. She suggests that a reasonable goal for Central Square might be 4 or so sites such as City Hall, the library, the firehouse (with increased DPW assistance), and the Multi-Service Center.

Ms. Feinberg pointed out that one problem with using public buildings to provide service throughout the city is that most of them are located in Central Square; some possibilities, however, are libraries, social service agencies and fire and police stations. Mr. Simonsen raised the possibility of MBTA stations as sites, which had not been explored. Vice-Mayor Davis also suggested some possible Harvard Square sites, including Holyoke Center, the MBTA, the Garage Mall, and some of the churches.

Mr. Cox indicated that his office was still talking to malls and stores in Harvard and Porter Squares regarding increased signage. Although some businesses will allow access on request, they are reluctant to allow publicity because they do not want security and maintenance problems. Only three businesses were willing to consider signs: Holyoke Center, the Garage Mall, and Porter Square Galleria.

Vice-Mayor Davis asked Mr. Cox to try to make progress on more signage in 4 locations each in Harvard and Central Squares, as a goal of the Committee.

Regarding the use of churches as potential sites, Mayor Sullivan noted that some churches are locked because of thefts. He is interested in the option of using currently existing facilities rather than putting toilets on the sidewalk, and allowing the facilities to advertise. Along the same lines, Ms. Davis restated her interest in exploring the city's rental of private property, with city financing of toilet services.

Ms. Glowa stated her concern about legal issues and the city's exposure if it rents space in a private business. Because the site would not be city-owned, it would not have the protection of G.L. c. 258, which limits municipal liability. The law department has to look into the city's financial exposure under the rental scenario.

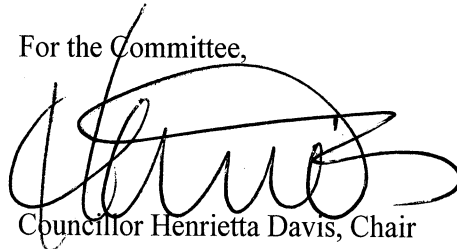
Regarding the advertising of library facilities, Vice-Mayor Davis asked what the maintenance issues were and if they could be resolved. Ms. Peterson noted that while the city's DPW is trying to increase its service to libraries, they still remain responsible for their interior maintenance, with three custodians serving the entire system. Ms. Davis suggested that if the city advertised and increased the use of library toilets, it might have to provide more service. Mayor Sullivan asked if there were dangers in encouraging greater use of library toilets, including criminal activity. Vice-Mayor Davis noted that APTs were seen as an alternative to the problems of advertising current facilities and maintaining them. However, there is limited space available for APTs in Cambridge, and placement in isolated sites like parking lots could create safety problems.

Several people raised questions about the costs of different options, specifically a comparison of the costs of renting space in existing buildings versus using APTs, including the costs of maintenance, staffing, insurance and liability for criminal incidents. Vice-Mayor Davis pointed out that this issue was on the agenda for the next committee meeting.

Vice-Mayor Davis thanked all who attended the meeting. She scheduled the next meeting for Wednesday, October 2, 2002, at 6:00 P.M. in the Ackermann Room.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 P.M.

For the Committee,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Henrietta Davis', written over a horizontal line.

Councillor Henrietta Davis, Chair

Update on Public Toilets

July 23, 2002

The following are brief case studies of public toilets in three cities: Provincetown, MA; Boston, MA and San Francisco, CA.

Public Toilets in Provincetown, MA

Provincetown has two public restroom facilities, which are owned by the town and operated by the Department of Public Works. One is a freestanding "comfort station" located in the main tourist area; public bathrooms are also located in town hall. In addition, the town rents several porta-potties that are located across the parking lot from the comfort station, which primarily serves late-night bar goers.

Description of restroom facilities:

Freestanding comfort station – This facility was constructed in the 1960s. The women's room has 9 stalls (including one handicap accessible). The men's room has 5 stalls (including one handicap accessible) and 4 urinals.

The comfort station is open 7 days a week, 8:30 a.m. to 11 p.m., from mid-June through Columbus Day. From mid-November through mid-April, it is open Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays only, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. During the spring and fall transition months hours increase and decrease, respectively. Both the women's and men's rooms are staffed by attendants during operating hours.

During high season, six attendants are employed to staff the bathrooms. During the winter months, two part-time (24 hours/week) attendants staff the bathrooms. Attendants are inside the facility at all times. They are constantly cleaning sinks, toilets, etc.

Town Hall – Public facilities are open from April through Columbus Day, 28 hours a week. The women's room has 3 stalls (including 1 handicap accessible) and the men's room has 1 stall and 2 urinals.

User population

Approximately 3,500 people live in Provincetown year-round. During the summer months, an estimated 30,000 to 50,000 people visit Provincetown every day.

Successes & failures

The Department of Public Works considers its restroom facilities a great success. They are clean and well stocked. There are few, if any, incidents of vandalism, drug use, or other illicit

behaviors. A DPW spokesperson attributes the success of its facilities to the attendants. She stated that it is imperative that public restrooms be staffed at all times to avoid problems.

The only weakness identified by the Provincetown DPW was a need for additional facilities. However, the spokesperson mentioned that the town selectmen would like to see the facilities remain open after-hours (i.e. after bars close), but DPW has resisted because they feel it would jeopardize the safety of the elderly attendants.

Ownership & Expenses

The town spends approximately \$156,500 annually on its facilities. Of this, \$110,000 goes toward the attendants' salaries. The attendants are mostly seniors; they earn \$11.55/hour. The remaining \$46,500 is spent on electricity, heat, pumping the septic system, repairs, building maintenance, porta-potty rentals, supplies (e.g., soap, toilet paper), and telephones for the attendants.

Expansion plans

At present, the town is negotiating with the Provincetown Visitors Service Board for the VSB to pay for renovations on existing facilities and fund the construction of two new facilities. The VSB is run by the town; its revenue comes from room taxes. The new locations would be in a soon-to-be-renovated firehouse and a soon-to-be-constructed library.

Automatic Public Toilets in Boston

Mayor Thomas Menino first learned about automatic public toilets at a U.S. Conference of Mayors in San Francisco. Mayor Menino felt the APTs might alleviate tension between the city and the local restaurants and hotels that were tired of providing “public” restrooms for Boston’s many tourists. Homelessness was not an issue, according to Betty Holland in the Mayor’s Office.

In November 1998, the City of Boston issued a RFP for a 20-year franchise agreement for the installation, maintenance, and operation of street furniture including APTs, bus shelters, newsstands, and electronic information kiosks. Boston will be the first city in the United States with a coordinated street furniture system.

A contract between the Boston and Wall USA was signed in early 2001. Phase I of the program included the installation of eight APTs, 250 bus stop shelters, nine information kiosks, four newsstands, and a number of “news condos,” according to the Mayor’s Office.

As of July 2002, there are three Wall APTs in operation. One is located across from Faneuil Hall on Congress Street, the other located in Boston's Historic North End on Commercial Street, at Langone Field.¹ The third just opened at Shipyard Park, Constitution Pier in Charlestown.

On Sunday, July 21, 2002, the *Boston Globe* reported about illicit activities occurring in the Wall toilet at Langone Field. According to the article, Boston Police reported they had received several complaints about sexual activity and had made three drug-related arrests (heroin possession) in May and June.² No problems have been reported at the Congress Street site.

In response, police are increasing patrols in the park, especially during bocce and youth baseball games. In addition, the bathroom time per user was reduced at Langone Field in June, from 20 minutes to 10 minutes, at the request of the police and neighborhood residents.³

¹ From City of Boston Website, www.cityofboston.gov/basiccityservices/street_furniture.asp.

² “Sex, Drugs, and Pay Toilets.” *Boston Globe*. July 21, 2002.

³ *Idid*.

Automatic Public Toilets in San Francisco

San Francisco was the first U.S. city to install automatic public toilets on a permanent basis. In the early 1990's, former Mayor Frank Jordan learned about automatic public toilets during a U.S. Conference of Mayors in New York City. Mayor Jordan felt APTs would provide a much needed service for San Francisco's sizable homeless population. San Francisco issued an RFP for automatic public toilets in 1994, and chose the Paris-based firm JC Decaux. During the 2-year trial phase (1996-1998), Decaux installed 20 APTs. The majority were concentrated along Market Street, an area with a high concentration of homeless people.

User population

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 776,733 people live in San Francisco. Based on the Mayor's Office' 2001 homeless count, there are 7,305 homeless men, women, and children living in San Francisco. Of these individuals, 3,156 are living on the streets at night. (By contrast, the Cambridge homeless population is an estimated 527, about 172 of whom are unsheltered.⁴)

Successes & failures

San Francisco's automatic public toilets have been become increasingly controversial among residents, businesses, and civic leaders. On one hand, the 24-hour toilets provide a much needed public service. According to JC Decaux, the 25 toilets collectively have logged 3.7 million flushes in seven years.⁵ The most successful sites have been those in more affluent neighborhoods and in the Fisherman's Wharf area. At the same time, many of the toilets have been plagued with vandalism, mechanical failures, and misuse (e.g., drug use, prostitution, sleeping), particularly in neighborhoods with high populations of homeless people and drug users. (For specifics, see attached "The Good, the Bad & the Ugly," excerpted from the July 15, 2002 *San Francisco Chronicle*.)

In response, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors (i.e., city council) have recently passed several laws addressing toilet misuse.

- In October 2001, the Board of Supervisors passed legislation that only one toilet user enter the facility at a time, unless a child or disabled person needs a helper inside. In addition, the new law prohibits loitering within 20 feet of the JC Decaux toilets. Violators could be fined \$100 to \$500.
- In July 2002, the Board of Supervisors voted to outlaw public urination and defecation. Violators could be fined \$50 to \$500. The legislation is pending the Mayor's approval.

⁴ "Addressing Issues of Homelessness, Public Intoxication, and Nuisance Behaviors," Multidisciplinary Working Group, Cambridge, MA. November 22, 1999.

⁵ "S.F.'s street toilets run from gamy to great," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 15, 2002.

REPORT CARD: San Francisco's Automatic Public Toilets

(Article appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle on July 15, 2002). San Francisco Chronicle reporters surveyed San Francisco's 25 JCDecaux automated street toilets and here's what they found:

The Good

The best of the bunch, clean and working:

- Fisherman's Wharf (two toilets)
- Pier 7
- Drumm and Clay streets
- Justin Herman Plaza
- St. Mary's Square: Pine and Quincy streets
- Union Square: Geary and Powell streets
- Stanyan and Waller streets
- Civic Center: Grove and Larkin streets.

The Bad

Some mechanical problems and trash:

- Coit Tower: No toilet paper, auto hand washer didn't work.
- Bay and Taylor streets: Clogged toilet.
- Washington Sq: Union St. and Columbus Ave. Auto hand washer didn't work, littered with beer cans.
- Market and Spear streets: Door opened only halfway, toilet panel open.
- Transbay Terminal: Mission and First streets. Auto hand washer didn't work, some filth around toilet.
- Macauley Park: Larkin and O'Farrell streets. Auto hand washer didn't work, vodka bottle and eggshells on floor.
- Boeddeker Park: Eddy and Jones streets. Digital display stuck on "Please Wait" (Should read "Occupied," "Vacant" or "Cleaning"). Opened only with a shove.
- South Van Ness Avenue and Cesar Chavez Street: Clean but auto hand washer didn't work.
- Twin Peaks: Clean but when the door opened a soapy jet of water continuously gushed from the floor level.
- Pier 22 ½: Handicapped exit button didn't work.

The Ugly

Major mechanical problems and filth:

- U.N. Plaza: Market and Seventh streets. Door opened and closed only with a shove, digital display stuck on "Please Wait," auto hand washer and handicapped exit button didn't work, toilet clogged.
- Market and Church streets: Door opened only with a shove, digital display stuck on "Please Wait," trash and canned food on the floor.
- Market and Castro streets: Digital display stuck on "Please Wait," auto hand washer didn't work, toilet clogged.
- Market and Powell streets: Digital display read "Out of Service," syringe on floor, toilet clogged and nothing worked.
- Mission and 16th streets: No toilet paper, auto hand washer didn't work, trash on floor included needles, blood in sink.
- Mission and 24th streets: Digital display read "Please Wait," door stuck open, nothing worked inside, needles on the floor.

A Short List of Public Restrooms in Cambridge

Organization	Address	Neighborhood	Hours
Firehouse – North Cambridge	2029 Mass. Avenue	NORTH CAMBRIDGE	6 am – midnight, daily Note: bathrooms inaccessible when firefighters are out.
Library – O'Neill Branch	70 Rindge Avenue	NORTH CAMBRIDGE	9am-8pm –M, W, Th 9am-5:30 pm – T, F
* Danehy Park	99 Sherman Street	NORTH CAMBRIDGE/ ALEWIFE	Permanent restrooms: 7 a.m. to dusk, year-round Temporary toilets: 24/7
Firehouse – Taylor Sq.	113 Garden	TAYLOR SQUARE	6 am – midnight, daily Note: bathrooms inaccessible when firefighters are out.
Golf Course Club House	691 Huron Ave.	WEST CAMBRIDGE	Dawn to dusk
Library – Collins Branch	64 Aberdeen Ave.	WEST CAMBRIDGE	M, Th: 1 pm-8 pm T, W, F: 9 am-5:30 pm
Firehouse –West Cambridge	167 Lexington Ave.	WEST CAMBRIDGE	6 am – midnight, daily Note: bathrooms inaccessible when firefighters are out.
Library – Main	449 Broadway	MID CAMBRIDGE/ HARVARD SQUARE	Monday-Friday: 9am-9pm Sat: 9am-5pm Sun: 1pm-5pm (Sept-May)
Firehouse – Main	491 Broadway	MID CAMBRIDGE/ HARVARD SQUARE	6 am – midnight, daily Note: bathrooms inaccessible when firefighters are out.
Library – Central Sq.	45 Pearl St.	CENTRAL SQUARE	M, W, F: 9:30 am-6 pm T & Th: 9:30 am-9 pm S 9:30am-6pm (Sep-Jun)
Firehouse – Lafayette Square	378 Mass. Avenue	CENTRAL SQUARE	6 am – midnight, daily Note: bathrooms inaccessible when firefighters are out.
* City Hall	795 Mass. Avenue	CENTRAL SQUARE	8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.; later on meeting nights
Citywide Senior Center	806 Mass. Avenue	CENTRAL SQUARE	8:30 a.m.-4:50 p.m., M-F; 8:30 a.m.-12:50 p.m., S-S
Building Department	831 Mass. Avenue	CENTRAL SQUARE	Regular hours: 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Hearing nights: 6 pm-10 pm
Multi-Service Center	19 Brookline Street	CENTRAL SQUARE	8:30 a.m.– 5 p.m.
Windsor Street Health Center	119 Windsor Street	CENTRAL/KENDALL	7 am-11 p.m., M-F; 10 am-2 p.m., Sat.
Firehouse – South Side	176 River Street	SOUTH SIDE	6 am – midnight, daily Note: bathrooms inaccessible when firefighters are out.
* Water Department	250 Fresh Pond Parkway		

Source: Cambridge Public Health Department

Organization	Address	Neighborhood	Hours
Magazine Pool	719 Memorial Drive	CHARLES RIVER	M-F: 11 am – 7 pm S-S: 10 am – 6 pm *Open in July & August:
* 57 Inman – municipal building	57 Inman	CENTRAL SQUARE	7 a.m.-8 p.m., later on meeting nights
Firehouse – Inman Sq.	1384 Cambridge St.	INMAN SQUARE	6 am – midnight, daily Note: bathrooms inaccessible when firefighters are out.
The Cambridge Hospital	1493 Cambridge Street	INMAN SQUARE	Reception area: 6 am.-8 pm ED restrooms: 24/7
Library – Valente Branch	826 Cambridge Street	INMAN/ EAST CAMBRIDGE	M, Th, F: 10 am-6 pm T, W: 10 am-8 pm
Firehouse – East Cambridge	175 Cambridge Street	EAST CAMBRIDGE	6 am – midnight, daily Note: bathrooms inaccessible when firefighters are out.
Library – O’Connell Branch	48 Sixth Street	EAST CAMBRIDGE	M, W, Th: 10 am-5 pm Tues: 10 pm-7:30 pm Friday: 1pm-5pm
* 51 Inman – municipal building	51 Inman	CENTRAL SQUARE	

Source: Cambridge Public Health Department

PUBLIC TOILETS

The Garage Mall (Harvard Sq.)

Holyoke Center (Harvard Sq.)

Porter Sq. Galleria

City of Cambridge

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

*Councillor Henrietta Davis, Chair
Councillor Anthony Galluccio
Councillor Brian Murphy*

In City Council September 9, 2002

The Health and Environment Committee conducted a public meeting on Thursday, July 25, 2002 at 6:00 p.m. in the Ackermann Room.

The purpose of the meeting was to continue discussion on the implementation of a plan for the establishment of public toilet facilities:

Present at the meeting were Vice-Mayor Henrietta Davis, Chair of the Committee, Councillor Brian Murphy, Mayor Michael Sullivan, Lisa Peterson, Public Works Commissioner, Harold Cox, Chief Health Officer, Suzy Feinberg, Communications Specialist, Cambridge Public Health Department, Elizabeth Soares, Executive Assistant, Cambridge Public Health Department, Nancy Glowa, First Assistant City Solicitor, Cambridge Law Department, Garrett Simonsen, Mayor's Office, and Elaine McGrath, City Clerk's office.

Councillor Davis opened the meeting and stated the purpose. She noted that the last meeting ended with a discussion of the possibilities of better signage about existing toilet facilities, possible leads for public/private partnerships and information about other cities' experience with Automatic Public Toilets (APTs). She asked Mr. Cox to report on the information he had gathered about these options.

Mr. Cox offered a report captioned "Update on Public Toilets" dated July 23, 2002 (**Attachment A**) and asked Ms. Feinberg to report on her research on the track record, costs, and use of facilities in San Francisco, Boston and Provincetown. San Francisco and Boston have had similar experiences with APTs, with success in trafficked tourist areas, and a range of problems in more isolated areas. San Francisco started its APT program to address the needs of its considerable homeless population. Abuse and misuse of APTs in some areas, including criminal activity in APTs, have led the San Francisco police to advise discontinuing the facilities in these areas. As of July 2002, Boston has 3 APTs in operation, near Faneuil Hall, in Langone Field in the North End, and at a recently opened site in Shipyard Park, Charlestown. While no problems have been reported at the Faneuil Hall site, complaints about drug and sexual activity at Langone Field have resulted in increased police patrols and a reduction in bathroom time from 20 to 10 minutes. As in San Francisco, there are more problems in isolated areas.

Ms. Feinberg emphasized that with APTs, the real issue is location; problems with maintenance, security and criminal activity are linked to isolated spots. She is still investigating the costs of APTs.

Ms. Feinberg also reported on the public toilet facilities in Provincetown which include 2 building sites and porta-potties. The building sites are staffed during operation, with little vandalism or crime reported, and at least one is open year-round. The town spends approximately \$156,000 to maintain all of these.

S-264

Committee Report #1

Committee Report from Vice Mayor
Henrietta Davis, Chair of the Health
and Environment Committee, for a
meeting held on July 25, 2002 for the
purpose to continue discussion on the
implementation of a plan for the
establishment of public toilet
facilities.

In City Council September 9, 2002

**REPORT ACCEPTED.
PLACED ON FILE.**