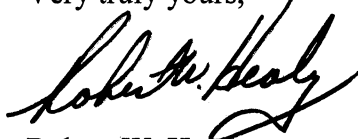


The two malls and arcade were the only group of businesses that expressed interest in the proposal. Positive responses were given by The Garage Mall (Harvard Square), the Porter Square Galleria (Porter Square), and Holyoke Center (Harvard Square). The sentiment among the two mall representatives was that financial support from the city would be greatly appreciated since they were already effectively financing "public" toilets.

In addition to the malls, the Cambridge Public Health Department interviewed managers from a handful of fast-food restaurants, coffeehouses, hotels, and bookstores. Representatives from these businesses rejected the hypothetical offer for a variety of reasons, including:

- Not enough stalls to meet increased demand; system is already "overloaded."
- Limited staff capacity to monitor bathrooms.
- Providing public restrooms is the job of the city, not private businesses.
- The presence of unkempt/mentally ill/delinquent bathroom users may frighten paying customers, who may then take their business elsewhere.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy", written in a cursive style.

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec

The facility is operational from Memorial Day Weekend through Columbus Day. It is open daily in July and August, and weekends only from Memorial Day through June 30 and September 1 through Columbus Day. Hours of operation are 10 a.m.–5 p.m. In total, the Newburyport restroom facility operates 7 hours a day for 87 days.

2. An agreement to post signage and expand restroom hours of existing bathroom facilities in malls and arcades.

This approach would involve the City of Cambridge negotiating individual agreements with local malls, arcades, and other businesses that have the capacity to handle a large influx of bathroom users. The terms of the agreement, as put forth by former city councilor Kathy Born in May 2001, would be that malls and other entities that already offer public access toilets would expand their restroom hours and post signage advertising their facilities in return for compensation from the city or in-kind support (i.e., police presence). In addition, the city would pay for the signage.

This approach was explored in a 2001 report to the City Council called “Public Access Toilets in the City of Cambridge.”

A summary of the 2001 report findings

At present, only a handful of Cambridge businesses allow the public unrestricted access to their restroom facilities. These businesses include the Garage Mall, Holyoke Center, Au Bon Pain at Harvard Square (near the Pit), the Porter Square Galleria, the Harvard Coop stores, and several coffeehouses and fast-food restaurants.

Restaurants, malls, and other places of assembly do not have a legal obligation to provide restroom facilities to non-customers. With the exception of the Holyoke Center*, the bathrooms in the aforementioned businesses are intended *only* for customers, tenants, and employees.

In 2001, the Cambridge Public Health Department informally posed the signage offer to representatives from:

- The Garage Mall (Harvard Square)
- The Atrium (Harvard Square)
- Holyoke Center (Harvard Square)
- The Cambridge Galleria (Harvard Square)
- Au Bon Pain at Harvard Square
- Starbucks Coffee (Central Square)
- Harvard Coop (Harvard Square)
- Porter Square Galleria (Porter Square)
- University Park Hotel @ MIT (Kendall Square)

* Harvard University, which owns Holyoke Center, has designated the ground floor bathrooms in the Holyoke Center as public bathrooms.



8.

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Robert W. Healy, City Manager

Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager

June 10, 2002

To The Honorable, The City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report Item No. 02-27, regarding a report on a recommendation for private entities or non-profits sponsoring and maintaining public toilets through an agreement with the City, Chief Public Health Officer Harold Cox reports the following:

The Cambridge Public Health Department has identified two possible types of public/private agreements for maintaining and sponsoring public toilets in Cambridge:

1. A joint sponsorship agreement to install and maintain permanent public restroom facilities in Cambridge.

This type of partnership would involve an agreement between the city and private entities to jointly fund the purchase, installation, and maintenance of a public restroom facility. The private entities might include the membership of Cambridge business associations; Harvard University and MIT; and possibly non-profit organizations. The facility could either be a traditional, freestanding public restroom facility or an automatic public toilet that would be owned by the city and its partners.

An example of this type of public/private partnership is Newburyport's public restroom facility. In 1998, the Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce funded the construction of a 38' X 10' clapboard restroom facility. The building is divided into a women's room with three stalls, a men's room with two urinals and one stall, and a storage room. Both male and female bathrooms have ADA-accessible toilets. Construction costs were \$30,482; however, this figure probably underestimates the actual cost since local plumbers and architects donated a significant amount of labor.

The city of Newburyport budgets \$6,000 for the seasonal operation of its restroom facility. The City of Newburyport, the Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce, and Yankee Homecoming (a local nonprofit that sponsors festivals and other events) each contribute a third of the budget (\$2,000 each). The \$6000 is spent on labor associated with cleaning and restocking the facility (approx. \$2,500) and supplies/replacing broken or vandalized equipment (more than \$3,500), according to the president of the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber of Commerce spends an additional \$1,000-\$1,500 on water and electricity for the unit. The unit is not air-conditioned or heated.

S-182

Consent Agenda #8

Awaiting Report Item
Number 02-27, regarding a
report on recommendations for
private entities or non-profits
sponsoring and maintaining
public toilets through an
agreement with the City.

In City Council June 10, 2002

**REFERRED TO HEALTH
AND ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE.**