



City of Long Beach
Working Together to Serve



R-32

MEMORADUM

Date: December 7, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilwoman Stacy Mungo Flanigan, Fifth District
Councilman Daryl Supernaw, Fourth District
Councilwoman Cindy Allen, Second District

Subject: Recommendation to Pilot a Clean Parks Restroom Facilities Initiative

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation to direct the City Manager to work with all appropriate departments to report back within 180 days on piloting an innovative citywide Clean Parks restroom facilities initiative to address resident concerns and improve the cleanliness, accessibility, and use standards of our public park restroom facilities.

DISCUSSION:

Public bathrooms are necessary, and they are for everyone. However, they fail to serve their purpose if they are not open, clean, and safe, especially in our parks.

Most, but not all, of the bathrooms in our parks now stay open 24/7. While staffing to lock up bathrooms daily has been considered, it would be at the cost of cutting another park priority. Additionally, locking bathrooms also means that those experiencing homelessness don't have access to facilities and use inappropriate alternatives which cause other Public Health concerns. Unfortunately, unlocked park bathrooms have become a de facto shelter for the homeless to the detriment of other park users.

Exhibit A for the issues surrounding the opening and closing of park bathrooms is the Bixby Park bathrooms. These were recently closed permanently due to ongoing damage and illegal use of the facilities where people would lock themselves in. The city spent an exorbitant amount of time and money on maintenance costs, even after a pilot where staff locked them nightly. The residents in the area agreed to have them closed but are now stating that they need access to bathroom facilities and are concerned with the escalation of incidents of human feces found in the park.

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In the 5th District, we have also been getting a lot of reports regarding the bathroom facilities by El Dorado Park West where baseball parents have found homeless people sleeping in the bathroom, needles, and feces while taking their kids in to use the facilities.

We need to find a solution. Research shows other cities are piloting several options for us to consider:

- **Workforce Development “Pit Stop” Programming – San Francisco, CA:** San Francisco Public Works’ pioneering Pit Stop program provides clean and safe public toilets, as well as used-needle receptacles and dog waste stations, in San Francisco’s most impacted neighborhoods. All the Pit Stop facilities are staffed by paid attendants who help ensure that the bathrooms are well maintained and used for their intended purpose. Public Works manages the Pit Stop program. Four nonprofits are under contract to staff them: Civic, Hunters Point Family, Mission Neighborhood Centers and Urban Alchemy. JCDecaux funds the staffing for nine locations in the program. In 2019, due to the successes of the program, they introduced the Park Stop restroom attendant program to 7 city parks. Visit their official website for program details: <https://sfpublicworks.wixsite.com/pitstop>
- **Automated Smart Restrooms – Los Angeles, CA:** The City of Los Angeles has installed over a dozen units so far, with more on the way. These smart restroom units include auto-wash and automatic door features. They have an automated toilet-paper dispenser with a limit to how much it dispenses, and a no-touch soap dispenser, water faucet, and hand dryer. The North Hollywood restroom has two cubicle stalls and self cleans after 30 occupancies. A “virtual room attendant” will give a verbal prompt on the 10 minute time limit. The system does not eliminate traditional cleaning but significantly reduces the frequency of detail cleaning. Visit the following for a video demonstration: <https://abc7.com/bathroom-restrooms-toilets-self-cleaning/5487281>
- **Flashcam Technology – El Paso, TX:** Flashcam is a solar-powered, motion-activated security camera that triggers a verbal announcement, which can be customized or pre-recorded. A photo flash pops and still pictures are downloaded, via a Bluetooth connection, for follow-up investigation. At the sports complex site in El Paso, the recording warns individuals that they are in a restricted area after hours. It instructs them to leave immediately and informs them their photo will be taken and forwarded to law enforcement, if necessary. See the following article for details: <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2018/december/a-few-safety-and-security-solutions-for-restrooms>

Therefore, we move to direct the City Manager to work with all appropriate departments to develop an innovative citywide Clean Parks initiative.

This matter has been reviewed by Budget Manager Grace H. Yoon on November 23, 2021.

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FISCAL IMPACT

The recommendation requests the City Manager to work with the appropriate departments to report back within 180 days on establishing a citywide Clean Parks initiative. Any new initiative is likely to have fiscal impacts related to program and staffing costs, which will be outlined in the report back to City Council. The requested action is anticipated to have a moderate impact on staff hours beyond the budgeted scope of duties and is expected to have a moderate impact on existing City Council priorities.

EQUITY LENS STATEMENT

Staff will consider issues of equity and access with any program proposals brought forward to ensure the City's commitment for everyone reaching their highest level of health and potential for a successful life, regardless of background, neighborhood, or identity.