

Public Meeting #2: San Pablo/University Restroom Project

Date: 02/04/2025

This public meeting summary contains questions from attendees regarding the San Pablo/University Restroom Project. The Key concerns raised include:

1. **Location and Orientation-** Clarify where will the restroom be placed, what is its exact directional orientation?

ANSWER: The restroom design location is on the Northeast corner of San Pablo (University cross street). It will be oriented parallel to the sidewalk. Based on feedback during the meeting, we are re-evaluating this location.

2. **Accessibility Considerations-**

- a. Has the design accounted for residents using different types of mobility aids, such as power chairs, wheel chairs and others?

ANSWER: The project sites were surveyed and the design complies with Americans with Disabilities (ADA) guidelines to accommodate a wide range of mobility needs. The team included an architect who specializes in ADA compliance.

- b. Has the city considered collaborating with community organizations (eg. CIO) to better assess accessibility needs?

ANSWER: Yes. The facility assessment included some collaboration of various organizations. The Portland Loo comes in a standard design with wide doorways and enough space inside to provide adequate access.

3. **Sidewalk Space-**

- a. How much sidewalk will remain after restroom installation?

ANSWER: If placed on San Pablo, there will be approximately 5 feet of sidewalk.

- b. Can individuals be using a wheelchair or power chair move side by side with their caregiver or partner?

ANSWER: Sidewalk width will meet ADA requirements and will allow one person to support one wheelchair user.

4. **ADA Concerns of Navigation for Blind/Low vision Individuals**

- a. Design could make blind/ low vision individuals walk into unsafe areas, such as to the street?

ANSWER: Site improvements will safely align with existing conditions to the best of engineering capabilities. The structure will serve as a barrier between the road and the sidewalk.

- b. Have planners considered accessibility needs specifically for those who don't use canes for navigation?

ANSWER: This project focuses on the addition of a restroom and compliance with ADA requirements.

- c. Has the city evaluated potential obstacles/tripping hazards near restroom such as the bicycle rack?

ANSWER: The bicycle rack will be relocated, and the direct path of travel will be clear of any trip hazard.

5. **Public transport Accessibility & Safety –**

- a. How will the proposed structure (restroom/kiosk) affect the ability of bus riders to see oncoming buses and prepare for boarding?
ANSWER: [The new structure will not alter the sightlines at the intersection and will not affect the visibility of oncoming traffic due to the location of the bus stop. The City is coordinating with AC transit.](#)
 - b. Could the design create a barrier for the bus stop users in the area?
ANSWER: [No.](#)
 - c. Is the restroom location easily accessible for individuals who rely on public transportation?
ANSWER: [Yes. Public transportation is one of the designs and placement parameters.](#)
6. **UV Light for Drug Use Pretension-** How does the UV light work in discouraging drugs?
ANSWER: [UV light makes it more difficult to identify veins under the skin. It also serves as a psychological deterrent.](#)
7. **Existing Issues Safety and Crime Concerns in the Area** - The intersection is already facing problems such as drug use, homelessness, prostitution. It will be unsuitable to install this public restroom in this area and will make the area worse.
ANSWER: [The restroom makes the area cleaner and improved. Less pollutants on the street.](#)
 - a. How does this project address existing crime issues in the neighborhood? Crime cannot be solved with restrooms. However, it will make the overall area more pleasant and less dirty.
ANSWER: [The restroom project aims to improve the public sanitation and hygiene in this area.](#)
8. **Lack of Confidence in Maintenance** – What measures will the city implement to maintain and keep the public restrooms clean and safe? Provide commitment to maintenance several times daily.
ANSWER: [The City will collaborate with janitorial companies to establish and maintain a cleaning schedule for this location, with services provided multiple times a day. The City of Santa Rosa services their restroom three times a day and mostly have to clean the area for trash and debris. They have reported positive feedback regarding the durability of the Portland Loo's unit/fixtures.](#)
9. **Alternative Solution and Site Selection** –
 - a. Has the city considered to use/ enhance the nearby public building for restroom facilities instead of installing new restroom? What was the reason for not proceed with alternative option.
ANSWER: [Yes, but none have the capacity for 24/7 restroom. Also, upgrading a restroom and ensuring proper ADA-compliant access could be more challenging and expensive at existing facilities.](#)
 - b. Why is another public restroom needed when supervised, clean restrooms already exist at the public library and the food pantry
ANSWER: [Restrooms at these locations are available during business hours only.](#)
 - c. Is there any data/study supporting the kiosk design as cost effective and providing reasonable public access? What was the pros and cons of kiosk vs indoor restroom at Premier Cru?

ANSWER: The study emphasized the need for 24-hour restrooms at San Pablo & University, as there are none in the area. City facilities like Premier Cru are not open around the clock. The Portland Loo, which was designed to improve sanitation and discourage drug use, was found to be a cost-effective solution for public access, especially in high-foot-traffic areas where 24/7 availability is needed. In contrast to indoor restrooms, the Portland Loo is low-maintenance and durable, which helps lower operational costs. More details regarding indoor restrooms can be found in part A above.

10. Impact on Businesses and lack of community consultation –

- a. Local business owners and community members are not consulted in decision making process for this location. How is the city addressing their concerns?

ANSWER: The City and consultants have carried out outreach efforts and, most recently, informed residents, property owners, and businesses near San Pablo and University about a virtual community meeting. The City is currently reviewing public comments, including the valuable feedback received during the meeting, as well as ongoing email submissions. Based on input gathered, the city has engaged a consultant to re-evaluating the location and ensure local individuals and groups are included in the assessment process.

- b. How can residents without internet access effectively participate in discussion and voice their concerns?

ANSWER: Residents can use a library, join one of the City's homeless drop-in centers, or any other public space that has internet access.

11. Neighborhood impact & Location – why is this location being chosen for the project despite ongoing safety and security concerns raised by local resident (who lives close by the intersection)

ANSWER: The location was selected based on extensive needs evaluation and recommendations. As part of the WASH assessment, the consultant conducted several spatial analyses for each focus group to assess needs across the City. The user groups considered included the unhoused, outdoor workers, transit users, and public areas. The location recommendations were based on data collected from interviews, community meetings, discussions with homeless support organizations, and an online survey.

12. Impact on Public Space Development- Does the project align with San Pablo Avenue specific plan and the goal of improving public spaces?

ANSWER: Yes, it does.

13. Opposition to Permit Approval – speaker states that they plan to raise their concerns with Caltrans and oppose permit approvals if their issue is not addressed.

ANSWER: While an encroachment permit application is being processed, Public Works will perform a review. This is due to the high volume of requests received from the public for relocation of the unit.

14. Outdated Plan Concerns- speaker stated that the project plan does not align with updated California laws aimed at enhancing pedestrian safety at busy intersection.

ANSWER: This location is on the departure side of the intersection so daylighting, or the legal requirement (AB 413) to paint 20' of red curb to enhance pedestrian safety/visibility does not apply at this location. Daylighting only applies at the 4 approaches to each intersection.

15. Fire and Emergency Response Concerns-

- a. What measures will be taken to ensure adequate emergency response, considering past difficulties in getting assistance from fire and police departments?

ANSWER: [This is beyond the scope of this project.](#)

- b. Will there be a dedicated security presence to monitor the site and ensure safety for residents and visitors?

ANSWER: [The restroom will not be staffed at all times, but it will be serviced several times a day.](#)

16. Supervision Concerns- How does the project plan to address concerns about unsupervised public restrooms, given existing issues with graffiti and vandalism in the area?

ANSWER: [A maintenance agreement will be established to service the restroom multiple times in a day. The restroom is constructed from heavy-duty materials and is graffiti-resistant, making it easier to maintain.](#)

17. Past Public Meetings- Speaker stated that the statistics about 30 & 51 meetings referring to T1 in general not for SP/U restroom location.

ANSWER: [That is correct; we had two San Pablo/University \(SP/U\) public meetings.](#)

18. Hand washing & Cleanliness- Since handwashing station is outside the restroom, doesn't this create a contamination issue when users have to touch the door before washing their hands?

ANSWER: [The unit is built with sanitizer inside the unit and a recessed hand-washing station on the outside. This will deter washing clothes inside the unit.](#)

19. Diaper Changing Table- why isn't there diaper changing table in the restroom?

ANSWER: [The unit does not have a baby changing table because of ADA space compliance.](#)

20. Meeting notification issue- the initial notice for the meeting incorrectly identified the date, and potentially affected attendance.

ANSWER: [The City was made aware and corrected the flyer online and distributed in person before the meeting.](#)

21. Brown Act Compliance- Speaker suggested the meeting falls under the Brown Act, which requires proper notification and proposes rescheduling a similar meeting with proper advance notice.

ANSWER: [See question 20.](#)

- a. How does the city plan to ensure compliance with the Brown Act in post-meeting discussions?

ANSWER: [It depends on the situation. The City complies with all Brown Act requirements.](#)

- b. Is there a procedure to document and share important offline conversations that influence decisions?

ANSWER: [No, but all feedback is being taken into account and will send via email and post updates to the project webpage\(<https://berkeleyca.gov/your-government/our-work/capital-projects/restrooms-3-public-right-way>\).](#)

22. Concerns about participation Barrier- not everyone has access to smart phone or physical access this limited participation on this meeting. Those affected by this should have a proper space to express their concerns.

ANSWER: [Good comment. The City appreciates suggestions to improve.](#)

23. **Reference to Public article/Disappearing City Owned Facilities-** there was a recent Berkeleyside article about building owned by COB that essentially disappeared from their system for a couple of years. What measures of assurance are in place to ensure transparency in city-owned properties?

ANSWER: This is beyond the Engineering scope of this project. However, PW management team and staff has met with and engaged the services of a consultant to assist in identifying, assessing and accounting for all city owned properties managed by and under Public Works Dept's portfolio.

24. What is the criteria for selecting the right location for public restroom? Why was this particular intersection chosen for restroom installation?

ANSWER: See question 11.

25. Council Involvement Requested. This intersection is in two council districts:

a. How can both council members collaborate to address this issue?

ANSWER: Public Works cannot comment on council business.

b. Has Terry Taplin been involved?

ANSWER: Yes, he has provided feedback.

c. What steps can Beth Gerstein's office take to resolve this issue?

ANSWER: Public Works cannot comment on council business.

d. Will council member Kesarwani prioritize addressing this intersection issue, given its impact on her district and residence?

ANSWER: Public Works cannot comment on council business.

e. Requested an Action from council members to be taken.

ANSWER: Noted.

Additional Questions from Comment Section

1. Why single stall? Most public restrooms have two stalls.

ANSWER: The sidewalk on San Pablo or University are not wide enough to accommodate a restroom with more than one stall.

2. What does sight lines mean?

ANSWER: A sight line refers to the unobstructed line of sight between a person and an object. In terms of the restroom, the louvers at the bottom of the unit help indicate when the unit is occupied while preserving privacy.

3. Who will maintain it? the public toilets on Market street were often out of commission and /or vandalized. How will city prevent that here?

ANSWER: The city will work a maintenance agreement with a 3rd party vendor to ensure it is cleaned and stocked daily. In addition, the restroom is heavy-duty stainless steel with anti-graffiti coating and damage protection.

4. Do you have a photo of handwashing station?

ANSWER: No, but we recommend visiting the Telegraph-Channing facility. You can find photos on the project webpage: <https://berkeleyca.gov/your-government/our-work/capital-projects/restrooms-3-public-right-way>

5. Can you explain the maintenance? Also, how it will be attended/supervised.

ANSWER: The City will contract with a 3rd party janitorial company to service the facility. Maintenance includes cleaning the facility, removing debris and trash, restocking supplies, etc. The unit will be serviced several times a day.

6. Will there be water/sink in the toilet?

ANSWER: Yes, there is water.

7. Is there a public COB building within a block that is open 24/7?

ANSWER: No.

8. Diaper changing table can be at the Premier Cru building and Berkeley food pantry?

ANSWER: Diaper changing tables are not included due to ADA constraints.