



August 26, 2021

Re: Portable Hygiene Stations in Downtown Los Angeles

Dear Councilmember De León:

At our regularly held public meeting on August 26, 2021, the Board of Directors of the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council (“DLANC”) voted to provide the following comments below:

The lack of adequate restroom facilities has had many health and social consequences for Downtown Los Angeles’ and Skid Row’s unhoused population. Poor hand and body hygiene can transmit illness or infections. With the COVID-19 variant Delta at a high risk of spread, it is important to add public restrooms to help prevent COVID-19 and other serious illnesses.

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Los Angeles established portable hygiene stations all across L.A. that were meant to help curb the spread of the original variants of the virus from reaching the unhoused community. However, due to lack of maintenance and care, these stations fell under disrepair that became both unsafe and unusable for those that desperately needed them. With the City’s new efforts to redeploy and restore portable hygiene stations in Los Angeles, the need for safe and well-kept facilities is more important than ever before (CF: 21-0307).

Programs like PitStop, The Shower of Hope, and the Los Angeles Mission’s public restroom program, have served as successful models of the benefits of providing safe and clean sanitary facilities for those who have little to no access to alternative facilities through the use of onsite bathroom attendants. The presence of onsite attendants has served as deterrents for crime and vandalism while also allowing additional sources of employment for those transitioning out of homelessness.

While expanding public toilets and handwashing stations will benefit unhoused individuals, the real solution must include stable and affordable housing with supportive wrap-around services. In the meantime, 24/7 restrooms are a health benefit for both unhoused individuals and the general public as it helps prevent the spread of disease and saves costs in the long run.

Therefore, Downtown Los Neighborhood Council asks Council District 14 to submit a motion for the City Council to instruct the Board of Public Works, Bureau of Sanitation, and LAHSA, with the assistance of the City Homeless Coordinator, the City Administrative Officer and the City Attorney, to report back in 30 days on available funding and the feasibility of a creation of a program to provide hygiene attendants at city-funded portable hygiene stations in the Skid Row and the adjacent Downtown Los Angeles community for those experiencing homelessness.

We further ask that the motion instruct such entities to investigate the creation of an RFP process to allow Downtown area service-based organizations and social service providers to administer, operate and staff the hygiene station attendant program.

Sincerely,



Richard Nordin
President,
DLANC



Debby Zhou,
Chair,
DLANC Livability Committee



Wendell Blassingame
Chair,
DLANC Urban Needs Committee

CC: Board of Public Works (via email)
Bureau of Sanitation (via email)
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (via email)