



About PHLUSH

Availability – or lack of availability – of public toilets in the Old Town Chinatown neighborhood has been an open issue for years. The need for public toilets has consistently shown up on needs lists, in vision plans, and in development requirements for neighborhood projects.

In early 2005, the OTCT Neighborhood Association invited newly-elected Portland Mayor Tom Potter to visit the neighborhood. As a result of the ensuing dialogue, the neighborhood took on the challenges of engaging this issue of public toilets as a part of a collaborative process with the city. The PHLUSH initiative was launched May 2005 by a team made up of Old Town residents, business owners and staff of human services organizations.

Following the PHLUSH report in February 2006, Relief Works partnered with the Office of the Mayor to recommend formal policy and practice in their June 2006 report “Going Public! Strategies for Meeting Public Restroom Need in Portland’s Central City.” PHLUSH is currently working with the city to implement key recommendations of this plan.

PHLUSH Partners



www.oldtownchinatown.net



www.americanrestroom.org/us/portland



When People Get Together,
Things Get Done

www.solv.org

American Restroom
Association

www.americanrestroom.org

PHLUSH

Old Town Chinatown’s
public restroom
advocacy group



www.americanrestroom.org/phlush

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Restrooms for a livable Portland.

Early in the twentieth century, the people of Portland, Oregon acknowledged the need for public toilets and started building facilities that were clean, comfortable, and conveniently located.



Workers in the mills along the river and farming families who came into in the heart of the city on streetcars could relieve themselves and clean up before attending to business.

The historic comfort stations still in use in Ankeny, Lownsdale and Chapman Parks served everyone. In the 1950s Portland still boasted public restrooms staffed by attendants.

By the end of the 20th century, however, many of the old facilities were closed. The right to relieve oneself became a consumer item, dependent on the purchase of a cup of coffee at the very least.

While European and Asian cities continue to build excellent toilet facilities, Americans have lost sight of the many benefits of public restrooms.

Public restrooms help revitalize downtown neighborhoods. People are comfortable strolling in downtown when there are public facilities. For visitors to a neighborhood or to an establishment, the restroom is often the place where first and lasting impressions are made.

Public restrooms get people out of cars and onto their feet, bicycles and mass transit. Many commuters need restrooms along the route; without them, people will drive.

Public Restrooms can promote both fitness and public safety. One of the attractions of private gyms is access to toilets. Restrooms in public areas promote fitness, activate space and provide natural surveillance.

Public restrooms contribute to public health. Adverse health effects result from involuntary urinary retention. Mental health suffers when people want to be out with their families and friends but restrooms are not available.

Public restrooms serve the “restroom challenged”. The American Restroom Association uses this term for two types of people. First are those who have to go frequently - every hour or so. Second are those who need go comes suddenly and urgently. “Restroom challenged” people may have normal conditions - pregnancy, young age, old age etc - or medical conditions, many may be invisible.

Let's restore civility and human dignity.

We are members of one diverse community. Ensuring availability of clean, comfortable, well-designed public restrooms is a way to defend our shared values of human rights and dignity and meet common requirements.

What you can do.

Read “Going Public! Strategies for Meeting Public Restroom Need in Portland’s Central City.” This study by graduate researchers at PSU’s School of Urban Affairs won a national award. Get it free at www.americanrestroom.org/us/portland

Use Portland’s public restrooms. They were built for everyone and will improve when more people visit them.

Report problems. If cleaning is needed, call Downtown Clean and Safe at 503.224.7383. Share suggestions on management with city officials or through PHLUSH.

Learn about Mayor Tom Potter’s Restroom Implementation Team. Public restroom availability downtown is growing! www.portlandonline.com/mayor/index.cfm?c=44879

Contact PHLUSH. Your ideas and participation are welcome. If you’re building restrooms, we can review your plans and share what we’ve learned about restroom management and CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design). Call 503.984.4081 or email carol.mccreary@americanrestroom.org

