



# MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

## ASSEMBLY MEMORANDUM

No. AM 805-2023

Meeting Date: October 24, 2023

1 **Submitted by:** **Assembly Members Chris Constant, Meg Zaletel and**  
2 **Anna Brawley**

3  
4 **Subject:** AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE SUBMISSION TO THE  
5 QUALIFIED VOTERS OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE,  
6 ALASKA, THE QUESTION OF THE ISSUANCE OF NOT TO  
7 EXCEED TWELVE MILLION FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND  
8 DOLLARS (\$12,500,000) OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS OF  
9 THE MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE TO PAY THE COSTS OF AN  
10 AREAWIDE PUBLIC RESTROOM PROJECT AT THE ELECTION TO  
11 BE HELD IN THE MUNICIPALITY ON APRIL 2, 2024 AND  
12 APPROVING AND ADDING A PROJECT TO THE AREAWIDE 2024  
13 CIB TO INCLUDE THE PUBLIC RESTROOM PROJECT.  
14

15 The attached ordinance will place a general obligation bond proposition for the  
16 Areawide Public Restroom Project (the "Project") on the ballot for the regular  
17 Municipal election to be held on April 2, 2024. The ordinance will also alter the  
18 Areawide 2024 CIB Budget.  
19

20 The Project bond proposal will address the ongoing lack of public restrooms in the  
21 Municipality of Anchorage. Public restrooms have been a common feature in cities,  
22 along with other public health and hygiene amenities such as drinking fountains,  
23 seating areas, and indoor and outdoor recreational facilities such as parks, transit  
24 stations, and community centers. However, communities in the United States have  
25 a significant lack of public restrooms compared to cities in other countries; a 2021  
26 study found that there are only 8 public restrooms per 100,000 people, compared  
27 with Iceland having 56 public restrooms per 100,000 people.<sup>1</sup>  
28

29 Public restrooms provide relief for a basic human need, but also specifically benefit  
30 diverse segments of the population who live or are visitors to the city:

- 31 • Elders
- 32 • Pregnant women
- 33 • Parents with toddlers and young children
- 34 • People who experience disabilities, including who use wheelchairs

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-11-05/why-american-cities-lost-their-public-bathrooms>

- People with a variety of medical conditions that affect bladder and digestive tract function, including bladder cancer, irritable bowel syndrome, ulcerative colitis, prostate issues, and side effects of some medications.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to benefits to individuals for these amenities in public spaces, provision of public restrooms has broader economic and environmental benefits. Providing more amenities in public spaces supports economic activity for residents, tourists, and other visitors; availability of public restrooms complements popular private business activities such as food concessions in public parks and along trails. Having public restrooms also offsets demand for, and associated costs with, the public using businesses' and organizations' restrooms, from routine cleaning to repairing damage from misuse. Increasing concern and frustration from business owners about these impacts to their own facilities has led to a trend of reducing public access to restroom facilities, such as requiring a purchase to use the restroom, use of keys and door codes to limit access, or simply not providing this convenience.

This bond would provide resources for between 20 and 30 sturdy, standalone public restroom units, intended to be utilized across the Municipality, as a pilot project for potential expansion of this service, if successful, in a future year. The unit contemplated is the Portland Loo, a well-tested public facility designed for safety, cleanliness, and resistance to damage that has performed successfully in over 20 cities, including Ketchikan and Kodiak, since being first installed in Portland, Oregon in 2004.<sup>3</sup> These units are ADA-compliant and designed to balance privacy and safety, with ground-level visibility to determine if a unit is occupied.

The Assembly desires to schedule a public hearing for this bond ordinance on November 7, 2023.

Please see the attached Project List, attached as Exhibit A.

Prepared by: Assembly Members Chris Constant,  
Meg Zaletel and Anna Brawley  
Acknowledged by: Alden Thern, CFO  
Acknowledged by: Anne Helzer, Municipal Attorney  
Acknowledged by: Marilyn Banzhaf, Acting OMB Director  
Acknowledged by: Kent E. Kohlhase, Municipal Manager  
Submitted by: Assembly Members Chris Constant,  
Meg Zaletel and Anna Brawley

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<sup>2</sup> <https://americanrestroom.org/who-are-the-restroom-challenged/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-11-05/why-american-cities-lost-their-public-bathrooms>

**EXHIBIT A**

**Areawide Public Restrooms  
2024 Bond Project List  
(000)'s**

<u>Project</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>O&amp;M</u>
The Portland Loo, or similar, stand alone bathrooms	\$12,500	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,500</b>	<b>--</b>