

Image: Assembly Row Garage Restroom Sign

DOWNTOWN LOWELL
RESTROOMS



DIGNITY FOR THE UNHOUSED
AMENITY FOR VISITORS



TODAY WE'LL TELL YOU...

- 1. WHY ARE RESTROOMS IMPORTANT?**
- 2. WHAT ARE OTHER CITIES DOING?**
- 3. WHAT IS IN LOWELL TODAY?**
- 4. WHAT IS OUR PROPOSED SOLUTION?**

WHY? TOURISM AND VISITATION PROMOTION

Imagine you're visiting Lowell with your grandparents. You finished dinner and are viewing the canals before the sun sets. Do we have clean, accessible facilities for them?

We want people to get out, visit Lowell, and enjoy nature along the river and canals. **But when nature calls, where do you go?**

ACCORDING TO RESEARCH DONE BY My Travel Research.com Consulting, RESTROOM QUALITY IS A "KEY BRAND ASSET" FOR TOURISM AND MAKES A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IN VISITATION.

Image: Lowell Folk Festival, visitma.com

WHY? HUMANITARIAN REASONS

Immediately after a disaster, the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) sets a standard of 1 toilet per 50 people

Two years after the disaster, the UN standard is 1 toilet per 5 people

In January 2019 (last available local data), Lowell's Continuum of Care region counted 736 people in emergency shelter or outdoor - by UN standards, our region should have at least 150 toilets available!

WHY? OTHER CITIES' POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

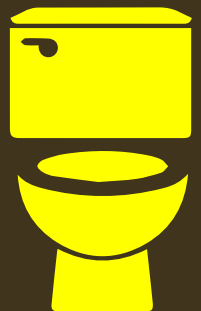
An additional compelling reason is that other cities, some quite similar to Lowell, have implemented public restrooms and have had positive experiences!

THE NEXT SECTION WILL DISCUSS THOSE EXAMPLES!

WHAT ARE OTHER CITIES DOING?

SAN FRANCISCO: TIMED UNITS

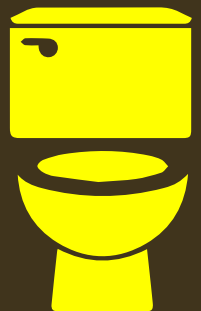
- 25 self cleaning toilets
- Paid for by public service/ advertising kiosks and newspaper kiosk stands on City sidewalks
- ADA Compliant
- San Francisco units timed - automatic cleaning, you can't lock yourself in.



DENVER: ADA-COMPLIANT TRAILER

- ADA Compliant
- Avg summer use: 170
- Some days: 250+

“Knowing that there’s a restroom there supports you physically and puts your mind at ease,” said Carol McCreary, program manager for Public Hygiene Lets Us Stay Human (PHLUSH),... “People will not congregate in multigenerational groups in public space unless the restroom is there.”

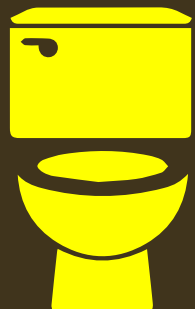
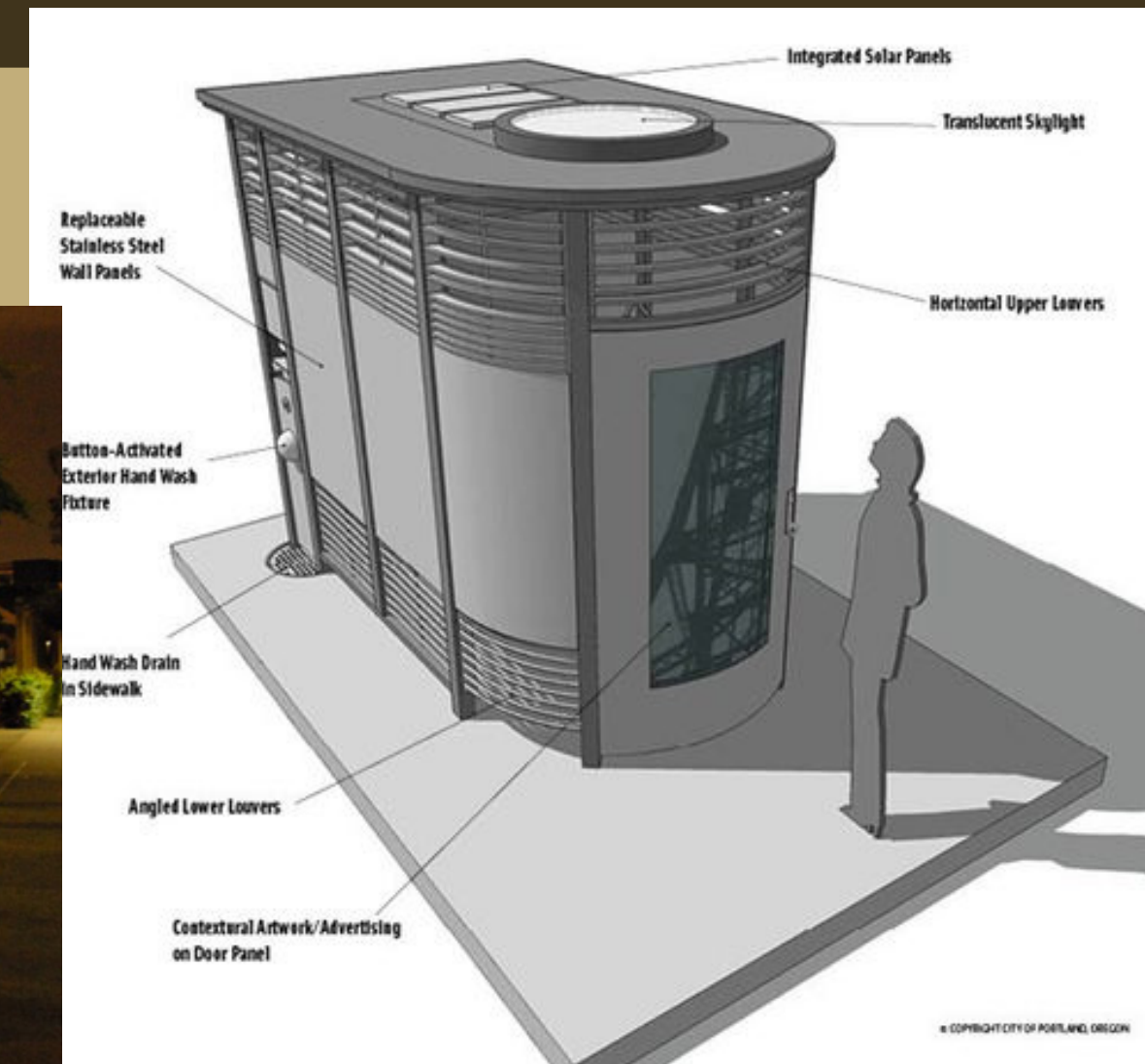


PORTLAND LOO: MORE THAN JUST PORTLAND

- Designed by city of Portland, OR
- Discourages graffiti
- Open Grating
- Integrated Solar
- Easy to Clean
- \$100,000 to buy, Installation extra
- Cambridge, San Diego, Campbell River (pop: 35,000), and others have installed



Image: Portland Loo in San Diego

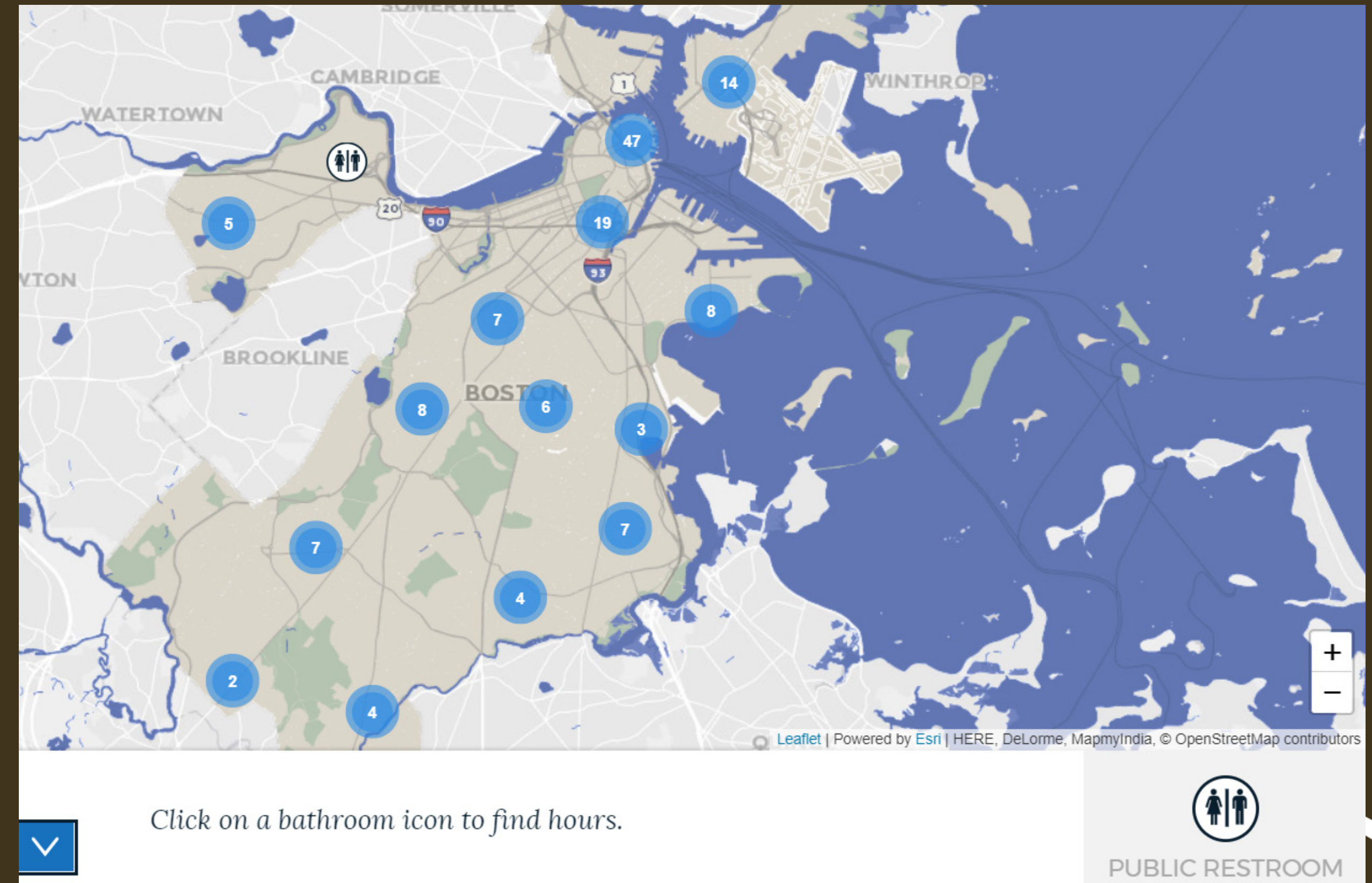


IS THERE A LOWER-COST SOLUTION?

The previous examples generally have high capital/start up costs, which may be difficult for the City to install quickly. But other cities have taken advantage of their existing restrooms, providing monitoring in order to turn them into visitor amenities!

BOSTON: INTERACTIVE MAP

- Provides interactive online map of public restrooms



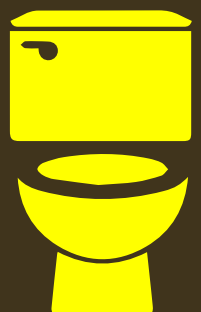
SOMERVILLE ASSEMBLY ROW

- Interior garage restroom
- Open 9-6
- High level of design
- Positive experience
- Privately owned and maintained



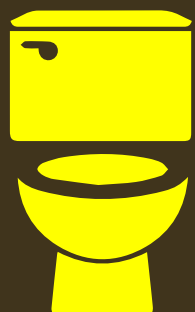
PORTLAND, MAINE

- Exterior and interior garage rooms
- Open 10-7:30
- Mixed experience, net positive and supported by businesses
- Public & Business Improvement District maintains
- Restrooms are also in parks, these are unmonitored



PORTSMOUTH, NH

- Interior garage restroom
- Open 24/7
- Light shows when occupied
- Positive experience
- Publicly owned and maintained
- Cleaned 3x Daily



LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE THREE NEARBY CITIES

- If digital occupancy sign is on for more than 10-20 minutes police are called; this was highly recommended
- Place doors to bathroom in view of attendant's booth and/or garage security
- Doors that lead to street and were easily accessible from the street had fewer security issues than doors not visible to public
- Located in an area meant to appeal to families and clearly marked - visitors and tourists use them!
- Some towns found having a public restroom that is open to the public preferable to a closed restroom because it reduced excretion in stairwells and alleys
- Some towns found having a public restroom that is open to the public preferable because it allowed tracking and monitoring of illicit activities, enabling attendants to call for emergency response when appropriate, whereas others did not note illicit activities occurring at all

WHAT IS LOWELL DOING TODAY?

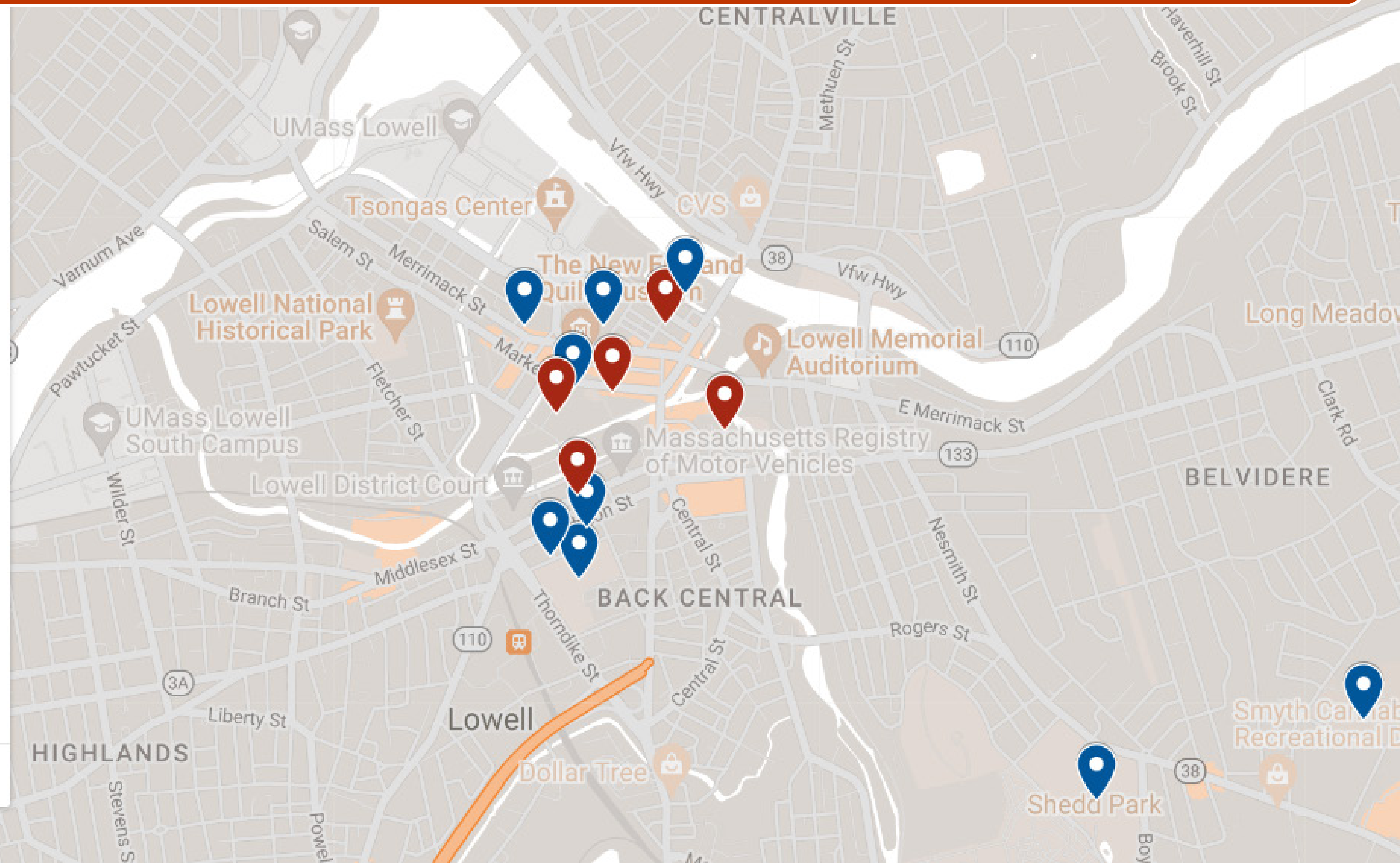
WHAT IS IN LOWELL TODAY?

Location	Hours	Restrictions	Maintains?
Leo A. Roy	No public use	Two bathrooms inside garage, one used as bathroom for LAZ/Security and the second used by City Employees (downtown street sweepers).	Unknown
Lower Locks	No public use	Ladies room on first floor around corner from office, Men's room in basement under ladies room. Bathrooms used by Laz employee and security.	Unknown
Joseph Downes	Normally no public use	Used now by NPS for summer music series and kids shows during week. Typically open for special events, folk Fest, etc.	National Park Service
Edward Early Jr.	No public use	M & W rooms inside of inside building corridor. Used by employees of RMV, LAZ, Security and Garcia Brogans (when in business).	Unknown
HCID	No public use	M&W rooms used by Laz and Security.	Unknown
George Ayotte	No restrooms		
Gallagher Terminal	5 am - Midnight		LRTA
South Common Pool	11 am – 6 pm	Summer Only	Unknown
McPherson Pool	11 am – 6 pm	Summer Only	Unknown
Shedd Park	7 am – 3 pm	April to December	Unknown
Cawley Stadium	7 am – 10 pm	March to December	Unknown
Pollard Library	9 am – 9 pm M - Th 9 am – 5 pm F - Su	Reduced Summer Hours	City/Library Staff
NPS Visitor Center & Boott Museum	10 am or 12 pm - 5 pm	V.C. Closed for Winter 2022-23	National Park Service
Living Waters		Generally not for public	Workforce Program
Eliot Church	8 am - 5 pm		Unknown
Lowell Transitional Living Center	Not open during day	Generally not for public	Unknown
Life Connections Center	9 am - 2 pm M - F 9 am - 1 pm Sa (Knock 2 pm - 6 pm)	Renting 3 shower/3 stall trailer, used by public and unhoused people	Workforce Program
NPS Visitor Center & Boott Museum	10 am or 12 pm - 5 pm	V.C. Closed for Winter 2022-23	National Park Service

WHAT IS IN LOWELL TODAY?

- South Common
- Joseph Downes Garage
- Boott Cotton Mills Museum
- Lowell National Historical Pa...
- HCID Parking Garage
- Pollard Memorial Library
- Shedd Park
- McPherson Park
- Cawley Memorial Stadium
- Life Connection Center
- Eliot Church
- Living Waters Center of Hope
- Lowell Transitional Living Ce...
- Lower Locks Parking Facility
- Leo A. Roy Parking Facility

Base map



LOWELL UNHOUSED SURVEY

IN A SURVEY OF 41 UNHOUSED PEOPLE IN LOWELL, PEOPLE REPORTED THEY GO TO THE BATHROOM...

DUNKIN'
LESS THAN 3%

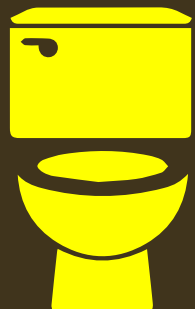
LIBRARY
LESS THAN 3%

OUTSIDE
90%

LIVING WATERS
LESS THAN 3%

ELIOT CHURCH
LESS THAN 3%

DOWNTOWN
LOWELL
RESTROOMS



LOWELL UNHOUSED SURVEY

WHERE DO YOU SPEND THE MOST TIME?

DOWNTOWN, INCLUDING APPLETON/MIDDLESEX (85%)

HOW OFTEN DO YOU USE THE BATHROOM WHEN OUTSIDE
2-3 TIMES DAILY (MOST COMMON ANSWER)

HOW FAR WOULD YOU GO FOR A RESTROOM?
10 MINUTES OR ~1 MILE (MOST COMMON ANSWER)

WHAT ELSE SHOULD WE CONSIDER?
KEEP IT CLEAN (95%)



LOWELL UNHOUSED SURVEY

HOW CAN WE MAKE A RESTROOM FEEL SAFE?

MONITORING
85%

LIGHTING
80%

LOCK IT UP
70%

CALL BUTTON
LESS THAN 5%

ON A POLICE ROUTE
LESS THAN 5%

PREVIOUS LOWELL EXPERIENCES

- A “sanitation facility” was located at 159 Paige Street from 1919 - 1924 and 161 Paige Street from 1924 - 1964.
- Garage restrooms were open to the public sometime before 2012, but were unmonitored and experienced overdoses, damage, and cleanliness issues.
- Downtown porta potty outside of Living Waters: 4 volunteers monitoring, Life Connection Center had porta potty as well. Both broken into overnight - Living Waters closed their restroom, LCC upgraded to trailer

**LESSON: MONITORING, MAINTENANCE,
AND GOOD FACILITIES ARE KEY!**

WHAT SHOULD LOWELL DO?

THE DIY LOWELL PROPOSAL: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- Enhance existing garage bathrooms at John Street and Hamilton Canal Innovation District
- These restrooms are most visible from the street and places where tourists and unhoused folks spend time!
- Install emergency button, exterior cameras, and interior motion monitors meant to alert monitors for sleeping or overdoses along with a 10-minute alarm (similar monitors are used by Lowell Community Health Center)
- Upgrade lighting if necessary
- Install clear signage directing visitors to facilities

THE DIY LOWELL PROPOSAL: OPERATION

- Monitors will be employed 7 am - 9 pm seven days a week with restrooms locked at all other times
- Monitors make sure no issues are taking place and do light cleaning such as wiping down sinks and toilets multiple times each day
- Full cleaning regularly by trained staff
- Consider using electric dryers to reduce waste/messiness
- Continuous evaluation
- Monitors will be emergency-response trained

THE DIY LOWELL PROPOSAL: STAFF OPTIONS

- Employ City staff
- Modify garage contract to include restroom monitoring
- Employ a nonprofit-managed workforce program similar to Life Connections Center using a similar agreement to the “Operation Able” program
- In addition to the above, support continued and permanent sources of funding for existing restroom programs