

## **Resolution 31057 Amended re Automated Public Toilets**

Endorsing the recommendations of an evaluation of the automated public toilet program and requesting the termination of the program and the development of alternative public toilet services.

### **Background Brief**

Seattle Public Utilities completed an evaluation of the APT program in March 2008 and reached the following conclusions—

1. That the APT design is “inefficient and ineffective.”
2. That the APTs are “attractive places for concealment of illegal activity.”
3. That removing the APTs would “minimally impact publicly accessible toilet services.”
4. That the APTs “are much less cost effective than alternative toilet services.”
5. That removing the APTs would save “the City approximately \$4.5 million within five years” (if removed in January 2009 as originally proposed by SPU.).

### **EEMU Committee Action**

The Council’s EEMU committee on Tuesday, May 13, 2008 voted to recommend passage of an amended resolution that states in Section 2: “The City Council requests the Director of Seattle Public Utilities to exercise the City’s option to terminate the automated public toilet contract no later than June 1, 2008 and then remove the automated public toilets.” (EMMU voted 3-0; Conlin, McIver, and Burgess)

### **Arguments Favoring Passage of the Amended Resolution**

1. SPU’s evaluation conclusions support removal of the APTs.
2. In addition to the long-term savings of approximately \$4.5 million dollars, central staff analysis shows that an additional \$300,000 can be saved in 2008 and 2009 combined by removing the APTs in June, 2008 instead of January 2009.
3. Removing the APTs immediately will remove what have become “magnets” for criminal behavior—drug use and trafficking, prostitution, assault, robbery, and illegal alcohol consumption. Council should weigh carefully how best to balance the public safety/quality of life issues

presented here against the need for toilet services for certain underserved populations. The APTs have lowered the quality of life and violated the sense of community surrounding the downtown parks.

4. Public urination and defecation in alleyways and on sidewalks has been a continuing problem, both before and *after* the APTs were installed. In fact, incidents of public urination and defecation have *increased* since the APTs were first installed in 2004. Removing them immediately will not materially impact this problem one way or the other.
5. There are 152 publicly accessible toilets within two blocks of the APTs with daily usage capacity of 109,116. These numbers compare with the maximum daily usage of the five APTs of 1,140.
6. Removing the APTs immediately does not stop the city from continuing to arrange for alternative toilet services if they are necessary for underserved populations. SPU has proposed using the removal savings—approximately \$750,000 per year—to fund alternative toilet services; this seems like a very good topic for our fall budget deliberations.

5-14-08 tlb