

UNIVERSITY DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL
C/O 4534 UNIVERSITY WAY NE
SEATTLE, WA 98105
udistrictcommunitycouncil.org

January 20, 2025

The Honorable **Bruce Harrell**, Mayor
City of Seattle
P O Box 94749
Seattle, WA 98124-4749

**Re: Public Restroom as Temporary Replacement During Renovation of the
University Branch Public Library**

Dear Mayor Bruce Harrell,

Next week, our local branch of the Seattle Public Library will close for a year of renovations, and the publicly-accessible restrooms with it. *Where will those constituents go during the loss of these essential services?* **We ask for your help to provide a timely alternative for this urgent need.**

A public restroom has been a top-priority, neighborhood goal for well over a decade to supplement the limited options available, particularly to serve our neighbors who are currently unhoused. Although we are relieved that the proposed Low Income Housing Institute's development project at NE 45th & Roosevelt Way will bring a publicly-accessible restroom, this project is a year or more away.

This service is important because our ability to respond to a universal biological need is a basic human right, and public toilets enable us to be physically active and enjoy experiences when away from home. Sadly, for some of us, there are few dignified alternatives, and the impacts to local neighbors are equally repugnant.

Members of the University District neighborhood have come together (udistrict.org/toilet) to develop a few proposals that we urge the City (Electeds, Council Committees, and Departments) to seriously consider and prepare for the imminent public library restroom closure.

Our community's proposals for a temporary replacement of publicly-accessible restroom facilities as close to the library and the adjacent U District Food Bank as possible include: 1) reopen the bathrooms at University Playground Park and maintain them for extended use; 2) siting a maintained bathroom trailer at the public library parking lot; or 3) subsidizing bathroom facilities at the U District Food Bank for public use. Each of these alternatives have their challenges, as expressed by those who would manage any public toilet, but the need persists nonetheless. All of them must be maintained and serviced effectively.

We are prepared to collaborate with you on this urgent project. We recognize that the upcoming budget year presents a challenge for allocating public resources. However, we believe that the unspent money from the participatory budget for public restrooms and the already allocated funds for parks maintenance allow for some or all of these proposals to be realized and funded.

We **now** need your leadership to make it happen. People are waiting in line with nowhere to go.

Thank you,



Cory Crocker, President

cc: Councilmember **Maritza Rivera** - 4th District, Chair of Libraries, Education & Neighborhoods
Councilmember **Joy Hollingsworth** - 3rd District, Chair of Parks, Public Utilities & Technology Committee
Councilmember **Cathy Moore** - 5th District, Chair of Housing & Human Services Committee
Councilmember **Sara Nelson** - Citywide, Chair of Governance, Accountability & Economic Development Comm.
Councilmember **Alexis Mercedes Rinck** - Citywide, Chair of Sustainability, City Light, Arts & Culture Committee
Anthony-Paul (AP) Diaz, Superintendent of Seattle Parks & Recreation Department
Darth Nielsen, Assistant Director for Public Services at The Seattle Public Library
Paige Chernow, Adult Services Librarian, Seattle Public Library - University Branch
Joe Gruber, Executive Director, University District Food Bank
Sharon Lee, Executive Director of the Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) of Seattle
Don Blakeney, Executive Director, University District Partnership