

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

General

The public convenience appeared in early cities as an attempt to alleviate problems of pollution and falling health standards. However, the public convenience has become in modern time somewhat of a paradox. Through a general reluctance to discuss the public toilet's function or take responsibility to identify either need or provision thereof, they have remained a public service that is rarely spoken about in detail, are most likely to be overlooked in terms of numbers, location, design and construction and are still an item of public infrastructure that is least likely to receive adequate funding. However, the general public's attitude and expectation regarding the use, standard and provision of public conveniences has changed in recent years. Security issues and user convenience are a higher priority, with people less likely to feel embarrassed if seen by others using a public toilet. Further, the use of public conveniences is no longer regarded as an activity that needs to be placed out of sight.

The provision of public conveniences provides a form of infrastructure necessary for the enjoyment of public places and spaces by both local residents and visitors alike. The provision thereof can make a significant impact upon the comfort of both individuals and families who visit public places and their perception of a place as being desirable to visit.

International research indicates that the provision of 'quality' public conveniences attract users to an area (e.g. Town Centre, park, open space, sportsfield etc) and encourage the use of public transport (eg bus and rail) by assisting with more relaxed use or travelling. Moreover, statistics indicate that there is a direct economic benefit in the form of increased numbers of shoppers, public transport users and tourists. Facilities provided can be related to the 'attractiveness' of a retail centre, commuter mode, community or tourist area or facility being promoted, its environment and its capacity to absorb higher numbers of users.

INTENT & AIM OF THE POLICY

Aim:

The policy is intended to address the main issues impacting on the provision of public conveniences in the District.

The primary aim of the policy is to provide a framework for consistent decision making and thereby ensure that public conveniences are adequately distributed, suitably located and clearly signposted; and that they meet the needs of the community and visitors in terms of access, safety and facilities available.

Further, the policy aims to:

- Clarify the Council's role in the provision of public conveniences.
- Provide clear guidelines for the location of public conveniences.

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- Clarify the expected level of service provision of Council's public conveniences, paying special attention to special needs users.
- Identify opportunities for the Council to coordinate the provision of public conveniences with other District development programmes and projects.
- Provide a focused implementation plan.

THE CURRENT SERVICE & MANAGEMENT

The Papakura District Council currently owns and maintains a total of 25 public conveniences, 3 of which are located within the Papakura Town Centre. All the Council owned public conveniences are provided free of charge. The hours of operation for facilities differ depending on location. Those attached to Council owned facilities such as the Papakura Library and select sportfields are open within the hours of operation of the facility.

Toilets and/or changing rooms that are for sporting use only, that is facilities that can only be accessed when sports training or an event is in progress, have also been included in this policy.

All public conveniences in the District are managed under the maintenance contract with Excell Corporation. The cleaning schedules and maintenance of public conveniences are contained within the Service Level Agreement.

STATUTORY PROVISIONS

Statutes and other relevant provisions that must be considered when preparing policy and guidelines for the provision of public conveniences are described in Appendix A.

WHY DO WE NEED TO PREPARE SUCH A POLICY – THE ISSUES

As stated at the outset, there has been in the past an almost universal reluctance to discuss and address public convenience issues – particularly in relation to the number, location and standard of service. This has resulted in many instances in the ad-hoc provision of public conveniences with little overall regard for security, user convenience and needs of all sectors of the community, visitors and the travelling public.

A district-wide study was undertaken to determine the state of the existing public convenience assets, the number and location thereof, level of privacy and security and general condition identified the following key issues:

- Insufficient number of public conveniences;
- Unserviced and under serviced areas, particularly the Town Centre;
- Public conveniences not accessible outside of business hours;
- Business have stopped public access to former 'public toilets'
- Poorly located public conveniences;
- Poorly serviced public conveniences – unclean;
- No baby changing table/facility;
- Public conveniences not meeting the requirements and expectations of overseas visitors and the travelling public;

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- Some public conveniences do not have access for the disabled;
- Many existing public toilets are old and inadequately maintained;
- Some public conveniences are not safe, private or hygienic facilities, and
- Poor signposting of facilities.
- Failure to meet the needs of families.

SECTION 2: POLICY STATEMENTS & PRINCIPLES

POLICY PRINCIPLES:

These principles underpin the policy and will be used to support decision making around the location of Council owned public conveniences and their service standard.

Availability: public conveniences are appropriately located in the business district and suburbs across the city. Special attention is areas with high resident and tourist visitation numbers.

Accessibility: public conveniences are easily accessible for people with disabilities, parents with children and all residents and visitors to Papakura.

Cleanliness and consistent quality: facilities are well maintained and offer a high standard of cleanliness and hygiene.

Free of charge: public conveniences are available without cost to the user. User charges may apply for additional services within the facility such as showers.

Safety: public conveniences and their surrounding sites are designed or upgraded using Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and are maintained to ensure spaces are safe and secure for all users.

Amenities: high quality, vandal resistant fixtures are provided in public conveniences.

Community involvement: Council will explore opportunities to develop distinctive facilities, while maintaining service standards, with the local community and business where opportunities arise.

Cost: Ratepayers money is used cost-effectively to provide and maintain public conveniences to a high standard.

POLICY OUTCOMES:

There are three outcomes desired through the implementation of this policy. These outcomes relate to:

- Public Convenience Location
- Image and Orientation
- Public Safety

Policies to support these outcomes are outlined in the following pages.

OUTCOME 1: Public Convenience Location

Comment:

Toilet location is probably the most important factor in toilet management. Design or management techniques may be ineffective, if toilet location is inappropriate. It has been the experience of many toilet providers that misuse is usually greater in locations that are away from active areas. Conversely, the public feels most confident at locations that are visible and where there is constant activity.

To satisfy this requirement, toilets should be located in the following areas:

- Where high traffic and pedestrian volume exists
- Where there are “activity generators” such as BBQs and tables
- Opposite a building or facility that provides opportunity for casual surveillance, and usually has activity around it
- Highly visible from all or most directions with open sightlines.

Policies:

Policy 1.1:

Public conveniences will be located to best serve the activities they are intended to support.

Policy 1.2:

Permanent facilities will only be provided where the activities are regular and will generate sufficient patronage.

Policy 1.3:

The size of facilities must be adequate for the number of people expected to use the public conveniences without over crowding or undue waiting times.

Performance Criteria:

The toilet is located in the most active position possible to ensure that the facility and users are most visible to the public.

OUTCOME 2: Image and Orientation

Comment:

The orientation and accessibility of public conveniences play an important role in making their use an attractive proposition. Key factors include:

- **Entrance Orientation:** In addition to determining a suitable location for a public convenience, it is essential that the entrance to the facility is oriented to the most active and visible space.
- **Access:** Access issues should be addressed at this stage and should include consideration of people with disabilities and issues for families and older persons. The approach to the site should be of a gentle grade, and not require steps. A smooth path surface is generally preferred the grade should be easy, or measures undertaken to enable access (eg ramps and railings).
- **Signage:** Signage is an important aspect of both access and orientation. Signage should be clear and should be clear and should consider people with low vision.

Policies:

Policy 2.1:

Public conveniences will be orientated to the most active and visible space.

Policy 2.2:

Public conveniences will comply with the New Zealand Standard for Public Toilets NZS 4241:1999

Policy 2.3:

Facilities must be designed and maintained to a high standard of presentation that is consistent with the public expectation of the facility.

Policy 2.4:

All facilities contain at least one public convenience that is accessible for all age groups and for people with disabilities.

Policy 2.5:

All public conveniences will be clearly identified and locatable through directional signage.

Performance Criteria:

That features and facilities relating to the design and orientation of public toilets encourage their use.

OUTCOME 3: Public Safety

Comment:

Once it has been decided that a toilet is necessary, and a suitable location has been determined, some other proximity factors should be considered. In this context, proximity refers to the conditions and features around the building. In some cases, consideration of proximity matters will influence the exact location of the toilet such as:

Lighting - It is preferable that there is adequate lighting in the general area, and in the direct access areas to the toilet and entrance. The lighting should be even and consistent, and not have brighter and darker areas.

Vegetation – The toilet should not be located close to thick vegetation. Select and/or maintain shrubs and garden bed species to a maximum of 700mm high. It is permissible to locate the toilet nearby to mature trees, provided visibility of the building is not hindered. Select and/or maintain tree species to eliminate branching and foliage below 2000mm high to maintain sightlines to building. Other selection criteria should consider tree root invasion of footings, pipes and high maintenance requirements, which may arise from deciduous trees.

Loitering Cues – It is inappropriate to 'legitimate' opportunity for people to wait around toilets. Built features that can support loitering including seating, notice boards, public telephones and car parks.

Policies:

Policy 3.1:

All public conveniences will be adequately lit to provide for their safe use.

Policy 3.2:

Vegetation around public conveniences will be managed in a manner that maximises visibility, accessibility, and usability.

Performance Criteria:

That features and facilities in the proximity of the intended toilet location support access, visibility and safety.

APPLICATION OF POLICY

The policies provide a overarching framework to guide the provision of public conveniences. This section outlines how the policy is intended to be applied.

Guidelines to determine the number, location and type of public conveniences

An adequate number of facilities will be provided in the District, Town Centre, key recreation areas and tourist sites. Needs assessment for sites will be determined by research examining:

- identified community need, including the need of particular groups such as the elderly and children,
- the proximity and usage rates of existing facilities,
- the population/demography of an area (age, gender, cultural makeup),
- other services in the area such as shops, schools and other community facilities.

Provision is cost effective

Facilities will be built or relocated where physical access and usage is optimal. When planning refurbishment, relocation or the establishment of a new public convenience, Council will look at the potential for:

- partnerships with other providers,
- partnerships with local business and communities - to develop distinctive public conveniences that are attractive and add value to the local community while providing a service that meets the policy standard,
- the co-location of Council services - for example new public conveniences located close to community facilities to encourage greater community ownership and use of facilities and possibly reduce reactive maintenance costs,

Ensuring public conveniences are located appropriately in specific sites

These guidelines should be used to assess all potential sites to identify appropriate locations and what the requirements of a particular site will be.

Site Assessment: The following information should be collected by the Asset Manager or contractor prior to the assessment of any site:

Site information

- Number of existing and projected site users
- Age of users
- Frequency of use, peak and quiet times
- Needs of specific groups such as people with disabilities, elderly and children

Site history

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- Safety audits
- Local police crime data
- Formal Incident and anecdotal reports

Advice from stakeholders

- Community groups
- Maintenance and cleaning staff

Siting Guidelines

The following factors should be taken into consideration when siting new or upgraded facilities:

Public convenience sites will be safe and secure

Council will use the principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) to plan, design and place new and relocated facilities to reduce opportunities for crime. This will:

- Increase community ownership and usage of public spaces where public conveniences are located
- Increase the visibility of public conveniences
- Manage access to sites so that opportunities for crime are minimized
- Manage the space and facility — ensure that facilities are clean to a high standard, well maintained and repairs are performed quickly.

Encourage use of the space

Relocate public telephones, notice boards, street furniture to the immediate vicinity of the public convenience.

- Visibility of the building — locate near to adjacent pedestrian paths, roads and facilities with entrances facing onto active spaces and consider the surrounding vegetation.
- Accessibility of building
- Provide footpaths around and to toilet
- Provide clear directional signage — consider signage in Braille
- Ensure easy access for those with restricted mobility and people with disabilities.

Provide appropriate lighting

Provide high mounted and vandal resistant lighting that is consistent with the light levels around the building so users do not have to move in and out of different light levels

Provide external lighting when the toilets are open for use (lighting when the toilet is closed can attract people and vandalism)

Refurbish, replace, relocate or disestablish?

Decisions on whether to refurbish the existing facility, demolish and relocate the facility, demolish and build a new facility on the existing site or demolish and not replace the facility should be made as part of the review of all facilities and the development and prioritisation of a new Asset Upgrade Programme. Refurbishment should only be considered if the location and structure are still suitable.

DESIGN & MANAGEMENT

There is a close relationship between design and management. Design choices should be made that allow for easy cleaning and management. Design and material choices need to ensure that the life requirement of the structure can be realised.

Toilets should be specified and constructed in accordance with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), Equity (access and usability) and Efficiency (cost over time) principles.

The following guidelines have been compiled to support these aims.

The guidelines present information on location, design and management. Information contained within these guidelines has been developed following extensive national and international benchmarking on public toilet design and management. The approaches of authorities who are experiencing success in this field are quite similar, especially in relation to the location and design of public conveniences. This experience has been particularly drawn upon. In addition, a series of audits of public toilets was undertaken in the greater Auckland area to assess local practice. These audits revealed examples of leading design and management practise. This leadership has been drawn upon, and is highlighted. The knowledge gained within Auckland and elsewhere has been synthesised to develop the following "best practice" Guidelines.

Location and design

To facilitate effective public toilet management, authorities have found two factors to be especially important. Effective toilet management is usually realised when location is appropriate, and design is thoughtful of durability and public safety.

It has been the experience of authorities the world over that unless location and design are carefully considered, behavioural and management problems can be endemic.

For these reasons location and design are particularly emphasised in these guidelines.

Application

The guidelines have been designed to suit the following situations:

- New stand alone toilets
- Toilets located within a building
- Redesign and refurbishment of existing toilets

Within the guidelines, elements are presented that are generic to toilet design and management. Where relevant, specific guidance is presented for different circumstances (as per above scenarios).

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Performance Criteria

That features and facilities in the proximity of the intended toilet location support access, visibility and safety. When a toilet is first considered, the number of cubicles (capacity) and gender designation should be determined. These aspects should again be considered with public safety and future management in mind. The required capacity is very influential in design selection. Toilets should be aesthetic and present an attractive to prospective users. In the past very basic and utilitarian designs have been selected. Toilets should be integrated within nearby built character.

Relevance: The following guidance applies most directly to toilets located in stand-alone or external situations. There are however, relevant issued for interior toilets.

Configuration alternatives

There are three (3) common ways in which toilets are configured:

Enclosed cubicles or building, wash facilities outside

Self-contained cubicles

Enclosed building with common access (This design is not considered safe and not detailed in this document).

Enclosed building, wash facilities outside

The design intent of this form is to be removed the requirement for an enclosed communal space. The features of this design are:

- Visible cubicles
- A form of screening is often applied to provide discretion for users
- Visible and external wash facilities
- Some means of securing the facility

The benefits of this design are the visibility of the structure and the accountability of users.

Self-contained cubicles

The emerging preference around the world is for self-contained cubicles that face active space. The features of this toilet design are:

- Toilet and wash facilities are within the one cubicle
- Individual cubicle lighting
- Door locked from the inside
- Door opens outward onto open space

The safety benefits of this design are that there is no need for shared space, and for the users there is a certainty of occupancy.

SECTION 3: IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME

Funding Issues:

In the current the Long Term Council Community Plan, the Council has allocated \$60,000 per annum for the development of new public conveniences. However, the cost for a base unit is around \$65,000 and with installation costs, the total cost of a public convenience can be around \$100,000.

The implementation programme outlined below is premised on the assumption that the Council wishes to address one issue each year for the next five years and will therefore make provision for this in Progress Papakura (LTCCP 2006-16).

Implementation Programme:

	Site:	Reason:
2005/06	Roselands Shopping Centre	The Council has recently gained ownership of these toilets. Given the contribution these toilets make to the offering in the Town Centre, there is an urgent need to replace the toilets with a facility that meets the design criteria in the Policy.
2006/07	Ray Small Park	The construction of the skate park and the relocation of administrative functions of the touch competition have created a strong need to develop a new public convenience at the Elliot Street end of the Park.
2007/08	Town Centre	The installation of a public convenience in the vicinity of the corner of Great South Road and Broadway will complete the recommended distribution of facilities throughout the Town Centre.
2008/09	Coles Crescent (Village Green)	This toilet has the dual purpose of supporting the recreational use of the Village Green as well as being commonly used by visitors. As such, the toilet needs to be upgraded and re-orientated to meet the standards in the Policy.
2009/10	Bruce Pulman Park	As Bruce Pulman Park unfolds as a recreational hub for the District, the greater the need to provide public conveniences that are available outside scheduled recreation activities.

Note that there are additional needs to develop and refurbish public conveniences on sportsfields. It is assumed that the costs for these projects will be captured in development projects for the reserve for the Council to consider as it prepares Progress Papakura (LTCCP 2006-16).

Asset Management Programme:

The Condition Rating results also identified a number of existing public conveniences, particularly on sports fields, that require improved maintenance. A

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programme to bring these facilities up to the standard established in the Policy will be submitted for the Council to consider as it prepares Progress Papakura (LTCCP 2006-16).

SECTION 5: APPENDICES

Appendix #1

STATUTORY PROVISIONS

Statutes and other relevant provisions that must be considered when preparing policy and guidelines for the provision of public conveniences are described below and include:

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2002

Section 123 of the Local Government Act 2002 places an obligation on the Council to assess sanitary services in its district and outlines the process to be followed in undertaking such an assessment. The first assessment was completed as part of the Council's deliberations on the Annual Plan 2005/06.

RESERVES ACT 1977

Under the Reserves Act the provision of public conveniences is not mandatory but is allowed for as a general public amenity. Any relevant management plans for local or regional reserves should be consulted as they may contain specific provisions relating to public conveniences.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT 1991/DISTRICT PLAN

The Papakura District Plan does not specifically provide for public conveniences. The following parts of the Plan are relevant:

- Nature Conservation Zone – Rule 7.4.2 of Section Two, Rural Papakura, permits buildings accessory to outdoor recreation provided a suitable method of effluent disposal is available. Subject to any requirements of the Reserves Act, public toilets clearly fall within that rule.
- Reserves and Community Uses Zones – It is less clear that public conveniences are permitted activities in these zones. However, when rule 8.8.2 of Section Three, Urban Papakura and the definition of 'recreation' are considered, the intention of the Plan appears to be that they are permitted subject to any requirements of the Reserves Act.
- Other zones – A non-complying activity resource consent is likely to be required.
- The disposal of human waste, especially in the vicinity of waterways, is an issue of concern to tangata whenua and is a matter the Council must consider under section 6(e) of the Resource Management Act, regardless of whether or not public conveniences are permitted.

BUILDING ACT 2004

A public convenience of any size is a 'building' within the definition of 'building' (section 8) and therefore a building consent will be required. The New Zealand Building Code applies to the construction of public conveniences. The needs of people with disabilities must be provided for (section 118).

HEALTH ACT 1956

Part 2 of the Health Act deals with the powers and duties of local authorities in relation to public conveniences:

- Public conveniences are works for the purpose of the Public Works Act 1981 and so land can be required compulsorily to erect one (section 27).
- The Minister of Health may require the Council to provide sanitary works (which includes public conveniences) (section 25). If so required, the Council may raise a loan to pay for the works.
- A local authority must take all proper steps to secure the abatement of any nuisance likely to be injurious to health (section 23). A 'nuisance' is created where any sanitary convenience (which includes a public convenience) is in such a state or is so situated as to be offensive or likely to be injurious to health (section 29(a)).

FIRE SAFETY AND EVACUATION OF BUILDINGS REGULATIONS 1992

These Regulations apply to public conveniences wherever situated. The Council is required to provide for a means of escape from fire and to manage the means of escape by, among other matters, ensuring that doorways are kept clear of obstacles at all times (see clauses 4 and 5 of the Regulations).

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (RATING) ACT 2002

Any land used by a local authority for sanitary conveniences is fully non-rateable in terms of Schedule 1 Part 1 Clause 4(d) of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002.

NZ STANDARD FOR PUBLIC TOILETS

Although not of legal force, NZS 4241:1999 relates to public conveniences / toilets. The Standard contains comprehensive information and advice on most aspects of public toilets.