



The City of Seattle

## Pioneer Square Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649

Street Address: 600 4th Avenue, 4th Floor

PSB51/26

### Staff Report

Board meeting March 18, 2026

Board Members Please Note: The citations from the District Ordinance, Rules for the Pioneer Square Preservation District, and Secretary of the Interior's Standards listed below are for your consideration in addition to any other citations you find relevant in considering each application.

**031826.4 Certificates of Approval**  
**031826.41 Public Bathrooms in the Public Right of Way**  
1<sup>st</sup> Ave (1<sup>st</sup> Ave S and S Charles St)  
and  
2<sup>nd</sup> Ave (2<sup>nd</sup> and Washington St)  
Applicant: Lauren Corn SDOT

**Proposed:** Installation of public bathrooms (2 per location) in the public right of way for one year

**Staff report:** Alterations to the public right of way require a Certificate of Approval. Public bathrooms have previously been approved, though the previous proposal for a public bathroom in the right of way requiring water and sewage hookups was costly and funding was never secured. This proposal does not require plumbing. The Guidelines do not have specific guidelines for public bathrooms so the Board might consider relevant portions of guidelines for Street furniture and Secretary of Interior Standards 9 and 10. Some lessons learned from previous failed bathroom installations where to have features that prevent people from using the facility for other than unintended uses, be kept clean, prevent damage. Guidelines suggest that amenities should be placed so that it doesn't obstruct pedestrian flow or obstruct views into storefronts (There should be space between the facility and the storefront for pedestrian flow) or damage historic resources and that balance not distracting from the character of the district but be recognizable as a public restroom. Staff had a conversation with the team about images

**Administered by The Historic Preservation Program  
The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods**

"Printed on Recycled Paper"

for the wrap. Initially a historic photo from a post card was suggested, as the colors blended well with the district and followed the lead from the wraps on the garbage cans which use historic photos. However, when the mockup showed a large graphic of a toilet over Pioneer Square staff suggested that the optics of that image may be of concern. Previously there was a proposed poop emoji blow up proposed for Pioneer Square that the neighborhood had concern would make a mockery of Pioneer Square. There is also the reputation of Pioneer Square needing public bathrooms but also the failed bathroom attempts that might have contributed to an unfortunate optic of Pioneer Square being a bathroom with a toilet graphic over a photo of Pioneer Square. Staff suggested a more close up image of details from Pioneer Square might make it custom to Pioneer Square without the unfortunate optics. SDOT is submitting this as a completed application with a limited time for procurement and installation before FIFA and want the application to be approved at the March 18 meeting.

During the discussion the Board should discuss the following.

How does the proposal support or not the goals of the District?

Does the Board find value in the flexibility of a moveable facility rather than a permanent structure? Does the Board see a movable facility more as a street amenity rather than a building? Are there benefits to the District provided by the product proposed that would not be included in a other solutions ie app use, maintenance contract, 10 minute time line, anti graffiti,no plumbing?

As a temporary installation, and a new feature does the Board think the materials colors are acceptable? Does the Board find that the alternative material, compared to materials usually used to construct permanent buildings are acceptable given the purpose of the facility and the duration of the installation?

Are there features that were added that make the proposed bathroom facility more compatible than the standard product or other temporary portable bathrooms?

How is pedestrian flow accommodated by the location?

Considering this is a pilot project, does the Board want to add a stipulation that the applicant will report back to the Board after installation on the evaluation of how it is going so far? Is 4-6 months a good time range?

Does the Board want to add a stipulation that if bathroom facilities are considered for a long term installation beyond the pilot, that the applicant begin discussions with the Board with adequate time to explore data and

feedback from the pilot, potential improvements and potential design improvements, but no less than three months in advance of a desired extension or replacement.

The ARC review requested additional information including images of other location where it is installed, especially in an historic setting, simulations of the installations at the site confirmation if it is possible to change the color from white to the green panel on the wrap for the base color. During the meeting SDOT agreed to do follow-up updates on the implantation and data collected and to provide method so that people could also contact SDOT directly.

Public comment was received in writing and verbally. Many supported the installation, while two thought it was not compatible with he District or the guidelines.

**Draft Motion:**

I move to recommend granting a Certificate of Approval for installation of public bathrooms (2 per location) in the public right of way as shown on the site plan for one year as a pilot program. The wrap will be image # All per the applicant's submittal.

*If the Board desires to add these stipulations:*

The applicant will report back to the Board (4-6 months) from installation on the evaluation of how it is going.

If bathroom facilities are considered for a long term installation beyond the pilot, that the applicant begin discussions with the Board with adequate time to explore data and feedback from the pilot, potential improvements and potential design improvements, but no less than three months in advance of a desired extension or replacement.

The Board directs staff to prepare a written recommendation of approval based on considering the application submittal and Board discussion at the March 18, 2025 public meeting and forward this written recommendation to the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

**Code Citations:**

**Seattle Municipal Code**

23.66.030 Certificates of Approval required

A. Certificate of approval required. No person shall alter, demolish, construct, reconstruct, restore, remodel, make any visible change to the exterior appearance of any structure, or to the public rights-of-way or other public spaces in a special review district, and no one shall remove or substantially alter any existing sign or erect or place any new sign or change the principal

use of any building, or any portion of a building, structure or lot in a special review district, and no permit for such activity shall be issued unless a certificate of approval has been issued by the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

### **23.66.100 Creation of district, legislative findings and purpose**

A. During the City of Seattle's relatively brief history, it has had little time in which to develop areas of consistent historical or architectural character. It is recognized that the Pioneer Square area of Seattle contains many of these rare attributes and consequently is an area of great historical and cultural significance. Further, the regional sports stadiums, constructed in and near the Pioneer Square area, and the traffic and activities that they generate have resulted in adverse impacts upon the social, cultural, historic and ethnic values of the Pioneer Square area. To preserve, protect, and enhance the historic character of the Pioneer Square area and the buildings therein; to return unproductive structures to useful purposes; to attract visitors to the City; to avoid a proliferation of vehicular parking and vehicular-oriented uses; to provide regulations for existing on-street and off-street parking; to stabilize existing housing, and encourage a variety of new and rehabilitated housing types for all income groups; to encourage the use of transportation modes other than the private automobile; to protect existing commercial vehicle access; to improve visual and urban relationships between existing and future buildings and structures, parking spaces and public improvements within the area; and to encourage pedestrian uses, there is established as a special review district, the Pioneer Square Preservation District. The boundaries of the District are shown on Map A for 23.66.100<sup>1</sup> and on the Official Land Use Map.

### **Rules for the Pioneer Square Preservation District**

#### **XI. STREET FURNITURE**

The cast iron and wood benches located in Pioneer Place Park and Occidental Park are the standard for the District. Approval to install benches will be determined by need and availability. All other elements of street furniture will be reviewed by the Board as to their specific **compatibility within the Preservation District**. This review will be extended to all bus shelters, bollards, signal boxes, mailboxes, pay phones, trash receptacles, newspaper stands, and vending carts which are both permanent and mobile. Pay phones, mail boxes, trash receptacles, and newspaper stands shall be located in the sidewalk zone adjacent to the curb, in line with street trees and light standards to **reduce impediments to pedestrian flow and to avoid obscuring visibility into street level retail storefronts**. (7/99, 7/03)

---

<sup>1</sup>Editor's note(s)—Map A is codified at the end of this chapter.

## Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

**Issued: March, 2026**

Genna Nashem

Pioneer Square Preservation Board Coordinator