



*Salisbury University's*  
Presidential Citizen Scholars Program

# PCS WHITEPAPER

**ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC  
RESTROOM IN  
DOWNTOWN SALISBURY**

Elizabeth A. Wash, Junior

Hayden Davis, Junior

River Myer, Junior



# MEET THE SCHOLARS



## **Elizabeth A. Wash**

Junior, Bio-medical Biology Major with Chemistry and Deaf Studies Minor on Pre-Medical Track, Class of 2024, President of Delta Alpha Pi, Laridae Editor-In-Chief, Clarke Honor's College Student Ambassador, Tri-Beta Member, DRC Student Worker



## **Hayden Davis**

Junior, Chemistry Major with a Health Sciences Minor, Class of 2024, Chemistry Lab Assistant.



## **River Myer**

Junior, History and Secondary Education Major, Geography Minor, class of 2024. Member of Omicron Delta Kappa, Phi Alpha Theta, History Honors Society, and Kappa Delta Pi, Education Honors Society. Former United Nations Millennium Fellow and Director

## **INSPIRATION**

The United Nations "recognizes the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights" (UN Resolution 64/292, 2010). When considering the potential wicked problem that we wished to conquer during our time with the Presidential Citizens Scholars program, one issue facing the Downtown Salisbury area shined above the rest, and that was the issue of an always-available ADA-accessible public restroom. We each approached this project with our own passions, each coming from a very different background, but we quickly found common ground in the idea that each and every individual should have the basic right to clean and safe sanitation.

Whether you are someone with a disability, a small child, or a local resident, everyone can benefit from a public restroom in the Downtown Salisbury area, the issue that we needed to investigate was if the community would support the installation of a public restroom.

## **SURVEY**

To gauge the community's interest in the addition of a

public restroom in Downtown Salisbury, we created an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved survey, protocol 131. This survey was then distributed through flyers and via social media posts on Instagram and Facebook. We received grant funding for \$240 dollars to advertise on Instagram to promote the survey to individuals within the Salisbury area. We reached approximately 11,548 people and got 165 direct taps on the post. Flyers were hung around the Salisbury University campus, in Downtown businesses, in government buildings, and in local restrooms.

The survey was open from the end of October 2022 until the beginning of April 2023 and received over 500 responses from local residents, business owners, college students, and tourists. Once the survey was closed, the data was then cleaned by Dr. James Fox of the Seidel School of Education at Salisbury University. The cleaning of the data process included getting rid of any survey responses that did not answer the consent question of being over the age of 18, left survey answers blank or otherwise did not provide complete and comprehensive survey results.

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## DEMOGRAPHICS

Based on the over 500 survey responses, 63.1% of responses were those of local residents, 9.2% responses were business owners, 2.7% of responses were tourists, and 25% of responses were college students.

Due to the nature of the survey, individuals could select multiple categories that described them. It was noted that out of the overall responses of local residents, 7% stated that they were both local residents and business owners, 5.2% stated that they were both local residents and college students, and 87.9% stated that they were just local residents.

## Absence of Public Restroom

The survey results indicate that 28.6% of respondents said yes that the absence of an accessible public restroom has negatively impacted their visit to Downtown Salisbury, while 67.2% responded no, and 4.2% did not respond.

## Enhance Visitation

The results stated that in the survey results, 61.2% of respondents said yes that a public restroom would enhance their visit to Downtown, while 30.9% said no, and 7.9% did not respond. One example of a comment was "Visitors to the downtown area have asked me where a public restroom is available. Always have to answer there is none!"



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## **VISITING FREQUENCY**

The results stated that in the survey, 44.5% of respondents stated that yes, they would visit the Downtown Salisbury area more frequently with the addition of a public restroom, while 46.8% responded no, and 8.8% did not respond. One example of a comment received in the survey was "I work in the area; I know our restroom is ADA-accessible to the public if need be. But most businesses aren't like that or it's a private bathroom."

## **CONCERNS**

The survey results indicate that 29.9% of respondents stated that yes, they had concerns if an accessible restroom would be

added to Downtown Salisbury, while 61.1% of respondents stated no, and 9% of respondents did not respond. One example of a comment received in the survey was "It would need to be properly monitored if it was implemented. I feel like it could become a nuisance if not properly monitored"

## **Solutions**

To address the potential issues of drug use within the restroom, we propose the use of blue light bulbs in the restroom, preventing one from being able to see their veins, and the implementation of several needle drop-off locations within the Downtown area.

For violence and security, we

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suggest hourly police patrol, security cameras, programmable electric locks, and spotlights outside of the restrooms.

For concerns with the unhoused population, we suggest offering vocational opportunities to become a sanitation worker through American Jobs Center or work for educational credits at local colleges/universities. As a general safety measure, we also suggest the installation of smoke detectors.

## **LOCATIONS**

We suggest several possible locations for the installation of the public restroom, the main one being the old courthouse

location, which was previously the home of segregated restrooms. This is a prime location, as it already has water and sewer lines present. We also suggest the restrooms are single-use, genderless, and incorporate both a baby changing station and an adult changing station to accommodate all needs. Our final suggestion is that the old courthouse location is used to create a commemorative plaque to acknowledge the history of segregation and turn a once-exclusive landmark into an inclusive one.

## **Porta Pottie Price Analysis**

In the year 2021 only, one event planner spent over \$6,000 dollars in Porta Potties across

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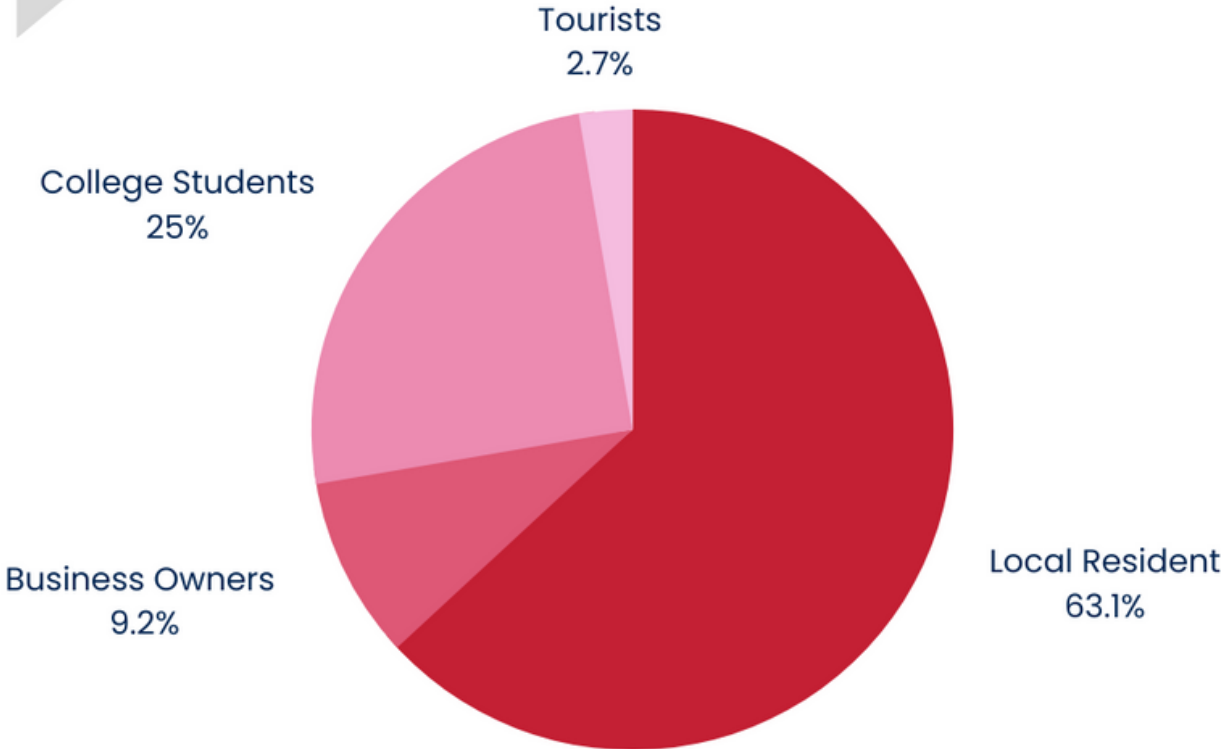
all of their events. This does not account for the price spent by all other event planners or from individual events that occur Downtown. The typical range for Porta Potties is \$75 - \$100 per day, with Accessible ones ranging from \$125 - \$150 per day, and hand washing stations ranging from \$125 - \$150 per day. There are typically 2 - 4 Porta Potties needed for small to medium events and 40 - 50 Porta Potties needed for large events. These prices can greatly add up and prevent smaller committees from being able to put on events in the Downtown area.

## **Conclusion**

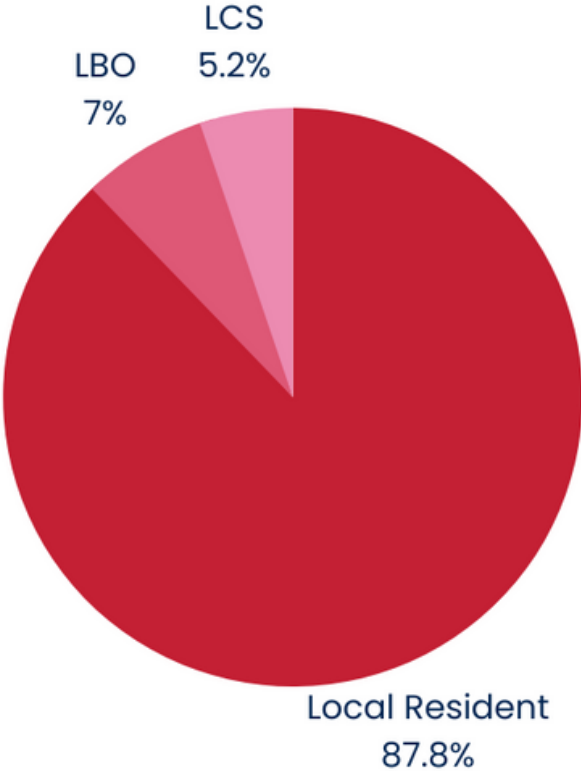
In conclusion, the Downtown Salisbury area could benefit

from the creation and installation of a public restroom. With letters of support (included below) from developers, county leaders, and city leaders, and over 500 survey results, this furthers our mission and goal of our research to prove the much-needed need for a public restroom in the Downtown Salisbury community. As we conclude over three semesters of work dedicated to the Downtown Salisbury community and to the work of an always-available ADA-accessible public restroom, we urge the city and community leaders to consider the data and wants of the community, and proceed with the installation of a public always-available ADA-accessible public restroom.

## Overall Demographics

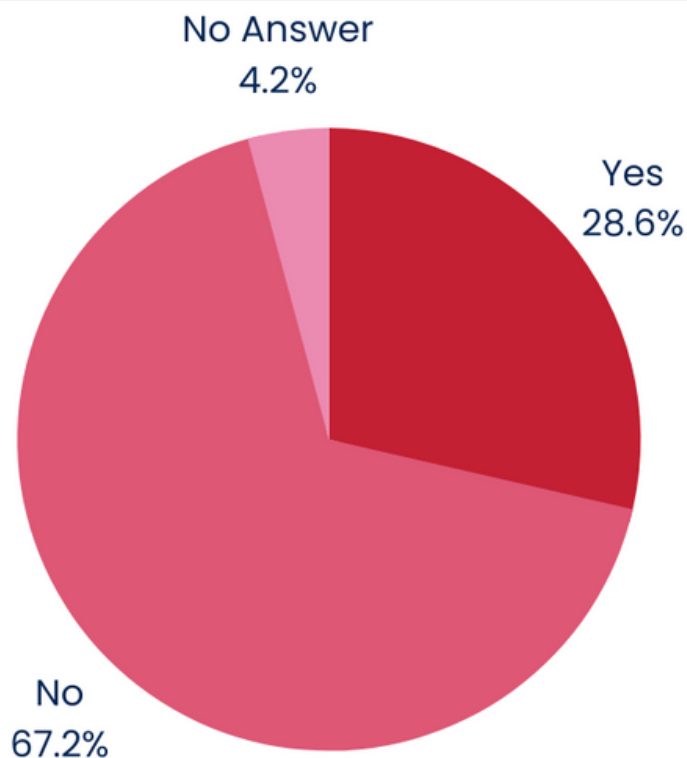


## Demographics of Local Residents





**Has the absence of an accessible public restroom negatively impacted your visit to Downtown Salisbury?**

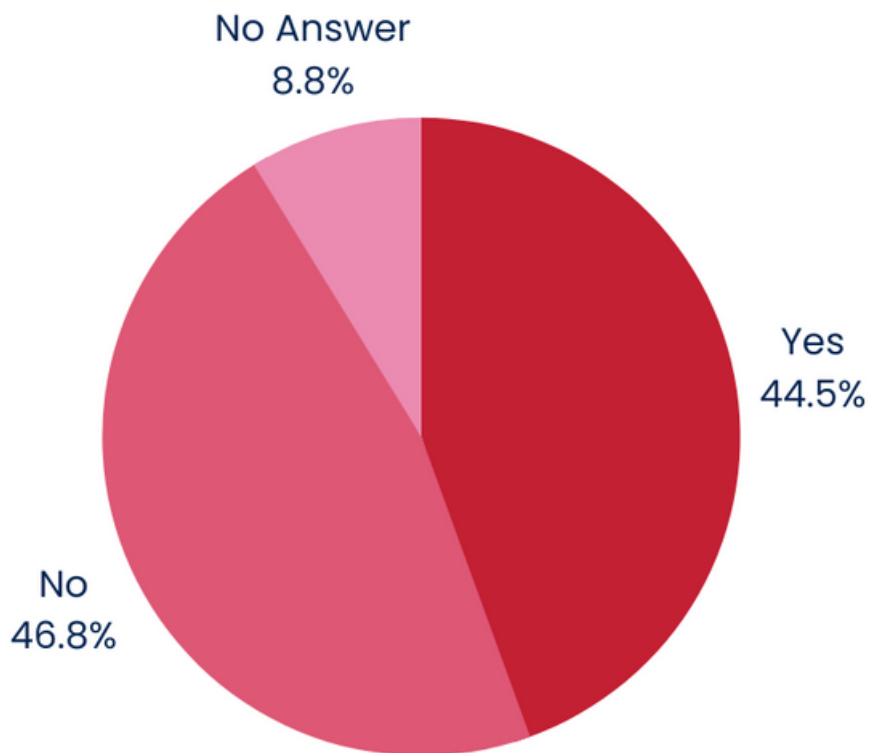


*"When friends with disabilities come to visit, our possible activities can not include downtown Salisbury or any events there. They have to have access to a restroom."*

*"There are no public restrooms, let alone ADA accessible ones in downtown, so if I need to use the bathroom, that means I have to leave and will spend less time than I would like in this area."*

*"As a senior, the lack of a publicly available restroom Downtown makes me unwilling to visit for any length of time, or to walk there from my home (1 mile away)."*

**If there was an accessible public restroom in Downtown Salisbury would you visit the area more frequently?**

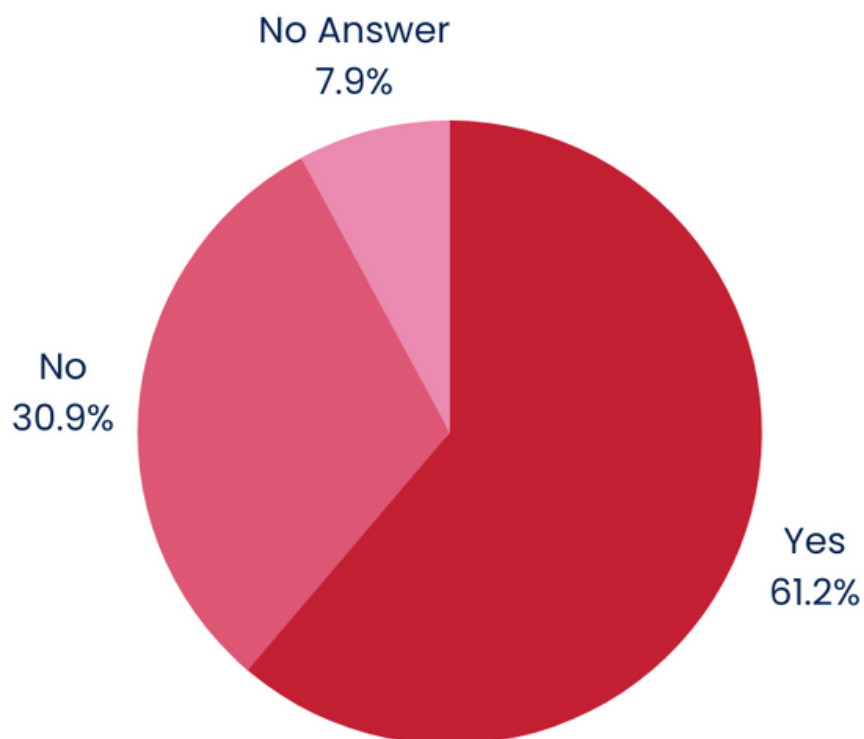


*"Sure! I don't go downtown that much, but I think having an accessible restroom would really boost the attendance of event-goers. Parents who bring kids for treat street, or someone with a disability who is participating in third Friday, would benefit greatly. I would definitely encourage more people to visit downtown if it was more accessible."*

*"I'm often afraid of going to new places because I don't know if it would be accessible to me during a flare. I would be more likely to go to Downtown Salisbury if I knew it was accessible"*

*"I would attend the third Friday events more frequently. I would be more inclined to attend music events, etc. knowing there was a public facility. I would stay longer at events."*

**Would the addition of an accessible public restroom enhance your visit to Downtown Salisbury?**



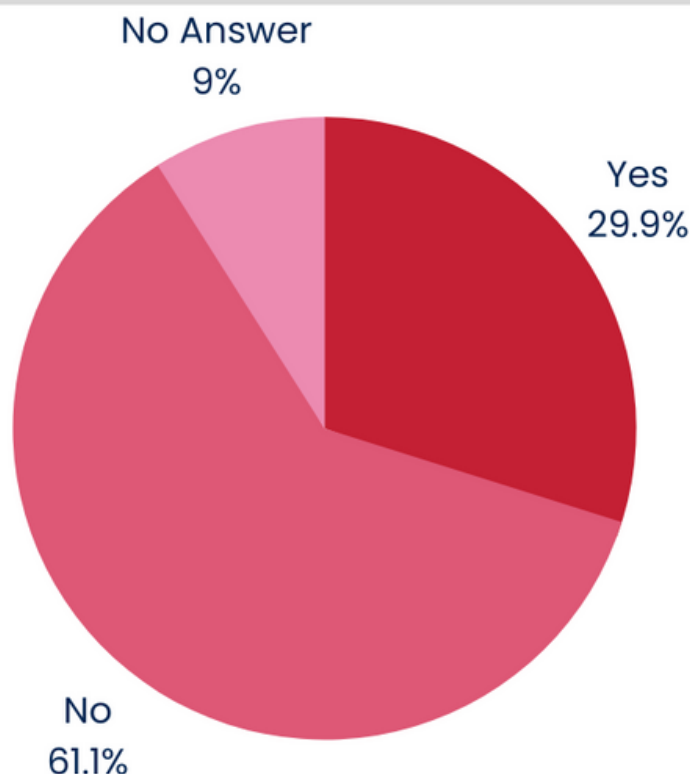
*"I would be able to go places independently rather than relying on an able body person helping with access needs."*

*"It would facilitate the ability for my partner and I to enjoy walking around downtown together."*

*"Having a place to go will make a world of a difference and reduce anxiety for when you have to go and there's nowhere to go."*

*"I think that having always available public restrooms in general is a great idea so that people don't find themselves in an emergency situation with no restrooms."*

**Do you have any concerns if an accessible public restroom were to be added to Downtown Salisbury?**



As shown above, 29.9% of respondents had concerns about the addition of a public ADA-accessible restroom in Downtown Salisbury. Of this 29.9%, many of the qualitative concerns that people communicated through the survey leaned toward an expression of bias. We do not believe that these concerns should discourage the City from installing a Public Accessible Restroom. A few examples which display bias against those experiencing homelessness and the stigma of drug abuse are:

*"Who will keep it clean? Concerned about safety in there. Will it just be used for drug deals/hits and the homeless population."*

*"We have a huge homeless population that would render these unusable."*

# Accessible Public Restroom in Downtown Salisbury



20 May 2022

Presidential Citizens Scholars  
Institute for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement  
c/o Salisbury University  
1101 Camden Avenue  
Salisbury, MD 21801

To Whom It May Concern,

I write to express my support for the Presidential Citizen Scholars' IRB proposal to conduct research regarding the accessibility of public restrooms in Downtown Salisbury. Collaborating with students and faculty members at our namesake university brings me great joy. Through working together, we help make Salisbury an even more welcoming place that all of us can be proud to call "home."

The work of PACE and the Presidential Citizen Scholar program (PCS) continues to uplift our local community through lecture series, programing, and projects that serve to further the connection between the City of Salisbury and Salisbury University. I am pleased to support this PCS research proposal as it represents yet another way in which we are challenging students to make our City their own, helping to stop the brain drain, and encouraging our next generation of leaders to become stakeholders within our local community.

The objectives of this research study will be beneficial to Downtown Salisbury as it will allow for members of the public and local business owners to provide feedback regarding the availability of accessible public restrooms in the heart of our City. From day one, constituent service has remained one of my Administration's primary priorities as we look to fully embody the notion that "All are welcome here" while responding to the concerns of our residents, tourists, and local business community. While we have multiple publicly accessible restrooms throughout our Downtown corridor in prominent locations - including in our Downtown Salisbury Visitor Center, Government Office Building, Wicomico Public Library, and Circuit and District Courthouse complexes - I look forward to learning from the scholars' findings as they investigate whether these facilities are adequately meeting public demand during major events throughout our vibrant Downtown.

I am pleased to support this proposed IRB study, and I look forward to supporting Salisbury University's Presidential Citizen Scholars in their academic pursuits and research endeavors.

Respectfully,

Jacob R. Day  
Mayor

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Office of the Mayor  
125 N. Division St., #304 Salisbury, MD 21801  
410-548-3100 (fax) 410-548-3102  
[www.salisbury.md](http://www.salisbury.md)

Letter of support from Jacob R. Day, former Mayor of the City of Salisbury and current Secretary of Housing and Community Development with the State of Maryland. Our project also received support from Jack Heath, former City Council President and current Mayor of the City of Salisbury.

# Accessible Public Restroom in Downtown Salisbury



February 13, 2023

Dear Presidential Citizen Scholars of Salisbury Universities Cohort 2023,

I would like to express my support as a collaborator on SU IRB (Institutional Review Board) project #131 regarding community research about public, accessible restrooms in Downtown Salisbury, Maryland.

As a business owner and stakeholder in Downtown Salisbury, I strongly support the installation of a public, ADA-accessible restroom. The lack of a public, ADA-accessible restroom has prevented Downtown Salisbury from becoming the true "heart" of Delmarva. The installation of a publicly accessible restroom is vital to increase accessibility and inclusiveness within our Salisbury community. This would benefit residents, our small business owners, developers, the government, and everyone who calls Salisbury Maryland home. We should all be a part of breaking down the institutional inequity and inaccessibility that faces our society today, and that begins with the installation of a public, ADA-accessible restroom.

Being a collaborator on this project will allow the students to utilize my knowledge on construction and development in urban areas, to better understand the costs and potential issues with building a restroom in an urban community.

I look forward to working with these students and seeing the impact this project will have on our downtown community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joey Gilkerson".

Joey Gilkerson, Principal  
Gillis Gilkerson

150 W. MARKET ST. STE. 200 | SALISBURY, MD 21801

410.749.4821 | WWW.GGIBUILDS.COM

Letter of support from Joseph Gilkerson, Principal at Gillis Gilkerson Development Company and NAI Coastal Commercial Real Estate, and Commercial Real Estate Development Specialist in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

## Local Management Board

**Chairperson**  
*Kim Miles*

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*Mandel Copeland*  
*Ernest Davis*  
*Nicole Griffin-Winder*  
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*Crystal Toomer*  
*Roy Brewington*

**Director**  
*Jaime Riley*

**Staff**  
*Timothy S. Palmer*  
*Kwaniqua Hernandez*  
*Ashley Collins*



Dear Presidential Citizen Scholars of Salisbury Universities Cohort 2023,

I would like to express my support as a collaborator on SU IRB (Institutional Review Board) project #131 regarding community research about public, accessible restrooms in Downtown Salisbury, Maryland.

As a community leader in Wicomico County, I strongly support the installation of a public, ADA-accessible restroom. The lack of a public, ADA-accessible restroom has prevented Downtown Salisbury from becoming the true "heart" of Delmarva. The installation of a publicly accessible restroom is vital to increase accessibility and inclusiveness within our Salisbury community. This would benefit residents, our small business owners, developers, the government, and everyone who calls Salisbury Maryland home. We should all be a part of breaking down the institutional inequity and inaccessibility that faces our society today, and that begins with the installation of a public, ADA-accessible restroom.

Being a collaborator on this project will allow the students to utilize my knowledge on vulnerable populations and will allow the researchers to solve problems that are present in the community.

I look forward to working with these students and seeing the impact this project will have on our downtown community.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jaime Riley".

Jaime Riley  
Director



125 N Division Street Room 101 • Salisbury MD 21801 • 410.546.5400 • FAX: 410.546.3100

Letter of support from Jaime Riley, Director of Wicomico County's Local Management Board and the Wicomico Partnership for Families and Children.

## REFERENCES

M. Dunn, personal communication, 2023

J. Fox, personal communication, 2023

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C. Henry, personal communication, 2022

H. Lankford, personal communication, 2023

S. Miller, personal communication, 2023

E. Modlin, personal communication, 2022

J. Riley, personal communication, 2023

B. Sanders, personal communication, 2023

L. Soper, personal communication, 2022

UN Resolution 64/292 (UN, 2010)

R. Weaver, personal communication, 2022

W. White, personal communication, 2022



# Accessible Public Restroom in Downtown Salisbury

## THANK YOU!

Elizabeth A. Wash, Hayden Davis, and River Myer would like to extend our appreciation to the following people who have given significant time and energy to support our Presidential Citizen Scholars Capstone Project over the past three semesters. Thank you for your support and guidance!

### COMMUNITY LEADERS

Jack Heath (Mayor of Salisbury)

Jamie Heater (Executive Director of Salisbury Arts & Entertainment District)

Laura Soper (Director of Business Development)

Brett Sanders (Director of Housing and Community Development)

Jaime Riley (Director of LMB, Wicomico Partnership for Families and Children)

Palmer Gillis (Gillis Gilkerson)

Joey Gilkerson (Gillis Gilkerson)

Steve Miller (Director of Wicomico County Recreation & Parks)

William White (Transportation Manager)

Heather Lankford (Acting Director of Wicomico County Public Works)

Mike Dunn (President of Greater Salisbury Committee)

### SU CAMPUS LEADERS

Dr. Carolyn Lepre (SU President)

Eli Modlin (SU Chief of Staff)

Dr. Sandy Pope (SU PACE Director)

Sara Heim (ShoreCorps)

Judith McClure (ShoreCorps)

Timothy Brennan (Public Relations)

Gina Boobar (Exec. Admin. Assistant)

Matthew Hicks (IT Support)

Dr. James Fox (Department of Education Leadership)

Dr. Andrew Martino (Dean of the Honors College)

Lauren Hill (Assistant Dean of the Honors College)

Donna Knopf (Executive Admin. Assistant)

Alexia Rawlings (PACE)

Debbie McMahon (Admin Assistant)

Ryan Weaver (PCS Director)



The Institute for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement (PACE) is a resource center where the SU community, local government, nonprofit and public groups can access knowledge and information. PACE draws on the interdisciplinary expertise of SU faculty, students, staff, and community partners. As a nonpartisan contributor, the Institute organizes projects and programs that are customized to fit the particular needs of the Eastern Shore community. For more information about PACE, visit [www.salisbury.edu/pace](http://www.salisbury.edu/pace) (or email [PACE@salisbury.edu](mailto:PACE@salisbury.edu)).



The PCS Program prepares students to be community leaders through civic scholarship and community action. Over three semesters, Scholars meet with members of the community to identify and research an issue that will culminate in a Capstone Project. Scholars are supported through Salisbury University's Institute for Public Affairs and Civic Engagement (PACE) and the Office of the President. SU's highest purpose is "to empower students with knowledge, skills, and core values that contribute to lifelong learning and active citizenship in a democratic society." This elite program builds on SU's highest purpose by offering students of all majors and disciplines the opportunity to engage in the life of the community, develop habits of democratic citizenship, and become experienced civic leaders. The PCS Program operates under the direction and guidance of Ryan Weaver, PACE/IDIS Lecturer ([rvweaver@salisbury.edu](mailto:rvweaver@salisbury.edu)).