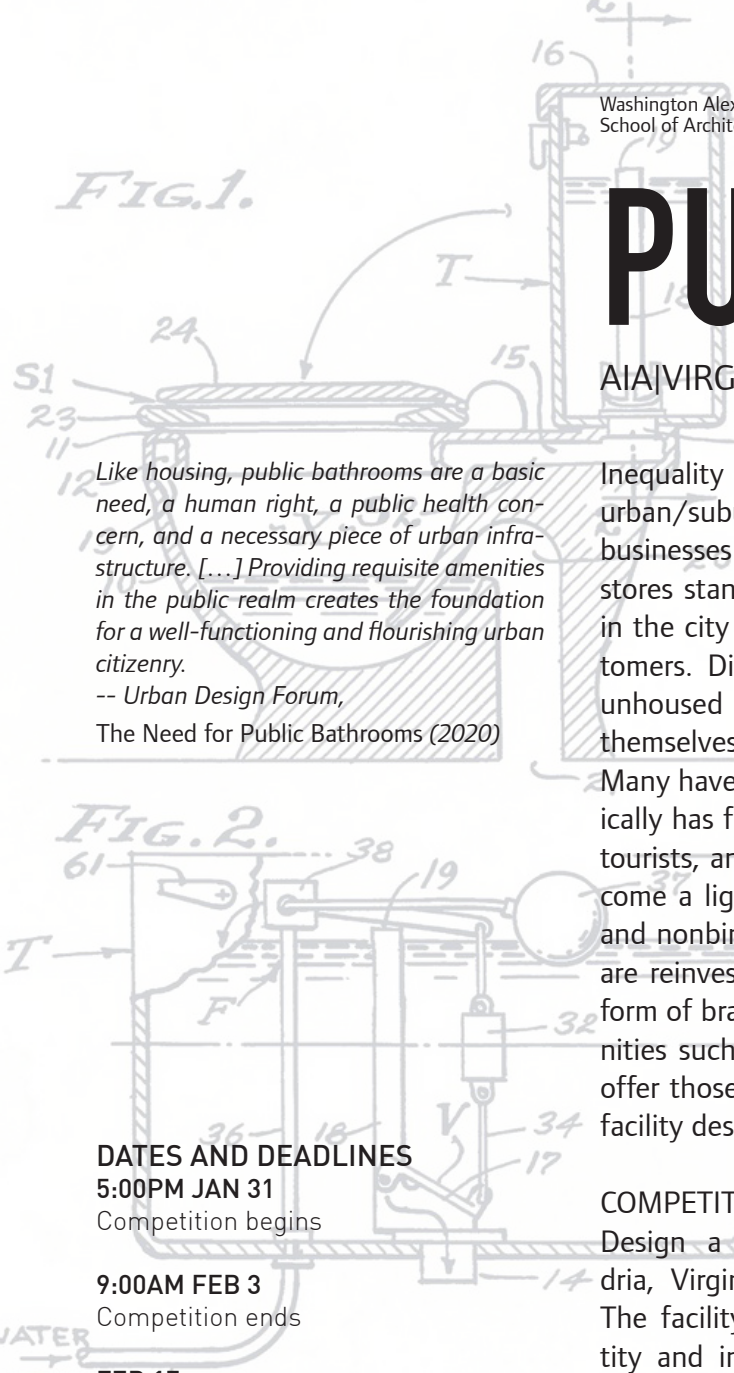


PUBLIC TOILETS

AIA/VIRGINIA PRIZE STUDENT COMPETITION 2025



Like housing, public bathrooms are a basic need, a human right, a public health concern, and a necessary piece of urban infrastructure. [...] Providing requisite amenities in the public realm creates the foundation for a well-functioning and flourishing urban citizenry.

-- Urban Design Forum,
The Need for Public Bathrooms (2020)

Inequality in access to public toilets has taken on an increasingly urban/suburban divide. In suburbia, bathrooms in privately owned businesses such as gas stations, fast-food restaurants, or big-box stores stand in for public toilets. In contrast, fewer establishments in the city allow access to toilet facilities, particularly for non-customers. Disparate constituencies such as cab or delivery drivers, unhoused individuals, or those with medical conditions often find themselves in urgent need of toilet facilities while away from home.

Many have pointed out the way in which public toilet access historically has facilitated participation in public life for women, workers, tourists, and many others. More recently, bathroom access has become a lightning rod for controversies over the inclusion of trans and nonbinary people in the public sphere. Today, cities like Tokyo are reinvesting in the public toilet, or the "comfort station," as a form of branding and placemaking, often including additional amenities such as bike racks, benches, shade. Most importantly, they offer those in need a safe, clean, comfortable, and often beautiful facility designed with provocative forms, materials, or graphics.

DATES AND DEADLINES

5:00PM JAN 31

Competition begins

9:00AM FEB 3

Competition ends

FEB 17

Schools submit 10 finalists each

FEB-MARCH

Judging by AIA Virginia

MARCH 17

Winners announced

MAY 2025

Winners and faculty representatives participate in a Conversation hosted by the WAAC

NOV 2025

Winners recognized at AIA Virginia Awards celebration

COMPETITION

Design a public toilet for the local municipality of Alexandria, Virginia in the vicinity of the King Street Metro Station. The facility should serve to support and further the city's identity and image, creating an environment that elevates the program into an architecturally significant design. It must accommodate three to five visitors at a time and include a custodial service room. The design should consider the needs of the following:

- The differently abled
- Infants, young children, and their caregivers
- The full spectrum of gender identity
- Environmentally sustainable features and/or technologies
- Potential suitability for prototyping

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

- Plan, section, and perspectival or axonometric view
- Site plan with diagram(s) explaining site location selection and situation

SITE CRITERIA

Students must locate their public bathroom facility on the site of the King Street Metro Station, bounded by King Street, Daingerfield Road, Diagonal Road, and the Metro tracks. The site includes both the metro station and a large bus depot. The facility must be sited on street level outside on the plaza in front of the Metro entrance, or may be located on the ground floor of the station underneath the platform in the freely accessible zone before the turnstile gates to the station. See attached documentation for more detail.

WEB RESOURCES

<https://tokyotoilet.jp/en/>

<https://www.archdaily.com/904061/public-bathrooms-examples-in-plan-and-section>

<https://www.re-thinkingthefuture.com/designing-for-typologies/a2995-20-innovative-public-washrooms-around-the-world/>

<https://urbandesignforum.org/the-need-for-public-bathrooms/>

<https://www.archdaily.com/897689/plan-and-design-accessible-bathrooms-for-all-with-this-ada-design-guide-for-washrooms>

FOR FURTHER READING

Koolhaas, Rem and James Westcott, eds. *Elements: A Series of 15 Books Accompanying the Exhibition Elements of Architecture at the 2014 Venice Architecture Biennale*. Vol. XI: Toilet. Venezia: Marsilio, 2014.

Molotch, Harvey, and Laura Norén. *Toilet: Public Restrooms and the Politics of Sharing*. New York: NYU Press, 2010.

Wald, Chelsea. *Pipe Dreams: The Urgent Global Quest to Transform the Toilet*. New York: Avid Reader Press, 2021.

Fisher, Marc. "Can't afford a smartphone? That's going to cost you," *Washington Post*, December 4, 2024

RULES OF THE COMPETITION

1. The charette is held at each school simultaneously, so that all competitors receive fair and equitable treatment. The program will be released at 5pm on Friday and submissions are due to your school at 9am Monday morning.
2. Faculty and staff are not allowed to provide critique or review of any student work before or during the competition.
3. Work is to be performed individually rather than in teams.
4. This is a two-tier competition. The first-tier competition is with each school participating. Each school will conduct an independent jury to select no more than ten (10) winners to be sent to the AIA Virginia interschool competition. AIA Virginia will select a highly qualified jury for the final, second-tier competition. The jury will award up to three prizes and may confer honorable mentions.
5. Prizes are awarded by AIA Virginia at the second-tier competition only. The prizes are as follows:
 - First place prize \$3,000
 - Second place prize \$1,500
 - Third place prize \$1,000

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Competition boards must be 24x36 (landscape or portrait). Competition boards must be digitized, and submitted to your school digitally by the competition deadline. Be sure to save your board as a minimum 300 dpi PDF with a maximum size of 15 MB. Schools may further require the submission of hard copy for initial judging. Please follow the submission instructions provided by your school.

COPYRIGHT AND PUBLICATION OF DESIGNS

Any submission made by a competitor agrees with free reproduction and exhibition of his/her competition design for the promotion of the competition and its results. Images of the winning designs will also be published by AIA Virginia on its website and in its newsletter. The competitor retains the copyright in the architectural design and other materials submitted.

APPENDIX: SITE INFORMATION

The project site is the King Street Metro Station in Alexandria, VA. The station is located in the westernmost part of Old Town.

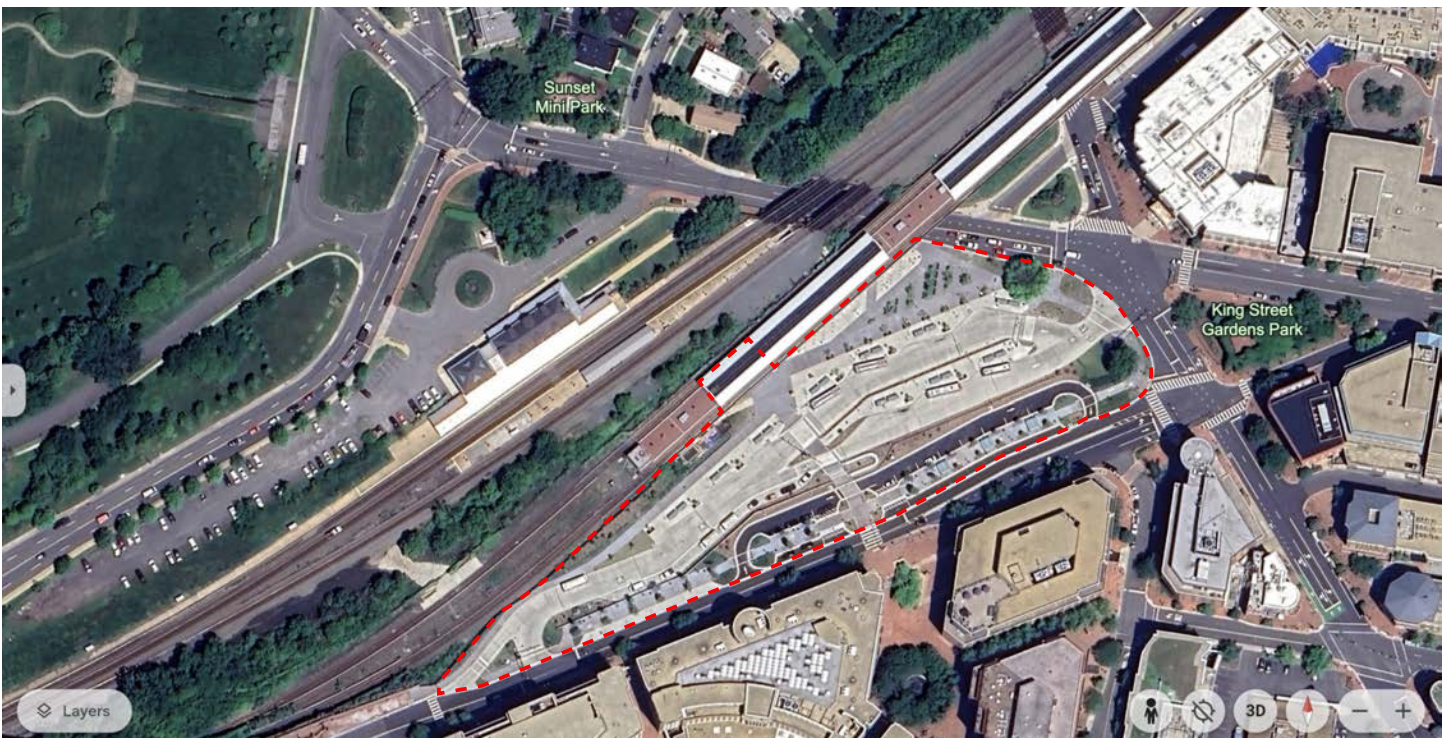
More information about the King Street Metro Station, include a Google Streetview walk-through of the station can be found here:

<https://www.wmata.com/rid-er-guide/stations/king-st-old-town.cfm>

A basic site plan drawing will be provided in .dxf format.



Student projects may be located anywhere on the site encircled in red (below). The existing drives and bus docks must be kept clear. Students may remove or reconfigure any site furniture or landscaping, such as benches and trees, though bus shelters must remain. Students may also locate their proposals underneath the tracks in the public areas of the station before the turnstiles (which may require reconfiguration of the gates), or they may build into the embankment along the southern edge of the tracks.



Site drawings of the overall metro site area and a detailed plan of the station, shown below, are provided in PDF and DXF format.

