

4-15-2014  
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### **Portland, OR: The Portland Loo**

In 2006, Portland Commissioner Randy Leonard initiated the development of The Portland Loo, an innovative kind of public bathroom that stays open 24-hours a day and is powered completely through solar energy. Currently, the City of Portland has a Loo in place in 4 separate locations.

The Portland Loo was developed through a partnership between the City, community group Public Hygiene Lets Us Stay Human (PHLUSH), designer Curtis Banger, and Portland law enforcement officials. The first Loo was installed in December of 2008 in Old Town Portland.

Due to the collaboration that went into development of the bathroom, The Portland Loo addresses public health, public safety, cost, portability and other concerns. The bathroom is made of durable stainless steel and intentionally includes louvers at the bottom so that public safety officials may see the feet of individuals inside and prevent illicit activity in the Loo. Each bathroom is ten feet by six feet in size, and contains a hand sanitizing station on the outside. The bathrooms are maintained twice a day by a local organization called Clean and Safe, which is an initiative of the Portland Business Alliance and Central City Concerns. The program employs formerly homeless and substance-dependent adults in a 6-month work and employment skills training program.

Since the implementation of The Portland Loo, city officials and community members have seen a decrease in public urination and defecation, and have not seen an increase in crime in or around the new bathrooms. Evaluation has shown that The Portland Loo has seen a lower share of negative incidents, drug paraphernalia, and alcohol bottles than many of the permanent public toilets in Portland that are open for only 10 hours a day. Additionally, feedback from community members once a Loo is installed has been overwhelmingly positive.

The Loo is an effective method for providing clean and convenient bathroom facilities for both homeless individuals and other community members. Providing a 24/7 public bathroom reduces the need for homeless people to resort to public urination or defecation and helps prevent the criminalization of this basic human need.

Each Loo costs Portland about \$57,000 to manufacture and about \$1,200 per month to maintain, making it an affordable option, particularly given the immense benefits it provides to homeless and housed people and the reduction of court and law enforcement costs due to fewer public urination and defecation offenses. The Loo can be installed at any location with a connection to a water source and a sewage line. The City of Portland is currently selling units of The Portland Loo for use in other cities at \$99,000 each. Profits will be used to maintain and build upon the Loo system in Portland. As of June 2011, four cities have shown initial interest in purchasing a Loo.

For further information, please refer to [www.portlandloo.com](http://www.portlandloo.com), or contact Anne Hill, City of Portland, at [Anne.Hill@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:Anne.Hill@portlandoregon.gov).