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4 STAR free-standing is an automatic, self-cleaning public (unisex) toilet. With an attractive combination of design and technology, it is aimed at safety and hygiene. It is a free-standing toilet facility, without modification for disabled users, for replacement of existing toilets

SEMI-AUTOMATIC BUT FULL SERVICE

The 4 Star public toilet is fitted with electronic components, such as an automatic sliding door and floor rinsing, automatic dispensers and detection system.

CONSTRUCTED FOR VERY FREQUENT USE

This 4 STAR free-standing is suitable for locations where public toilet facilities are very frequently used, such as loading and unloading bays, bus stations, parks and car parks. The 4

STAR free-standing is also available as an adapted version for disabled visitors.



4STAR IS:

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2 ALWAYS CLEAN

The technology of the 4 STAR ensures perfect cleaning, disinfection and drying of the toilet, toilet seat and the floor, while complying with the highest standard of cleaning and treatment.

3 REMOTE CONTROL AND MAINTENANCE

Thanks to the remote control, 16 different functions of the toilet can be remotely monitored 24/7, in real-time, via PC or smartphone.

4 HYGIENIC

The special nightly disinfection system ensures optimum cleanliness.

5 ACCESSIBLE

Accessible for people with a physical limitation, according to European regulations.

Basic model



Model Milaan





Model Venetië



Model Amsterdam



WITH ATTENTION AND CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The unique cleaning system in the 4STAR has extremely low water consumption (approximately 20 litres/cycle). Nightly disinfection takes place without pollutants being released into the environment. On purchasing the 4STAR, your old toilets can be recycled in our factory.

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Sex, drugs and filth plague city-sponsored public restrooms

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By **Nina Frazier** (</members/nina-frazier>) SF Public Press

— Apr 4 2011 - 9:16am

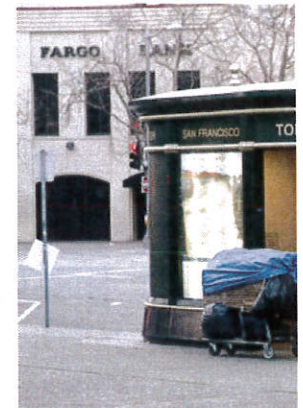
Prostitution and drug use aren't what San Francisco bargained for 14 years ago when it allowed a private company to install public restrooms across the city. But among the 25 freestanding units, several have been routinely closed for a week or more because they were regularly hijacked by junkies and sex workers.

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Even when used by legitimate patrons, the toilets have been hard to keep up to modern sanitary standards. Most of the so-called "self-



The public restroom near City Hall hours the units are havens of drug
Photo by Jason Winshell/SF Publi

cleaning” toilets are now so filthy that even after automatic cleanings, they require one to five manual scrub-downs each day.

How messy are we talking about? One indication: Homeless people in the Tenderloin say they are so repulsed by the conditions inside that they avoid using the bathrooms, preferring to relieve themselves on adjacent sidewalks, alleyways and bushes.

“They’re disgusting!” volunteered Jim Rokas, a homeless carpenter who sells the Street Sheet newspaper, as he pointed angrily at the gold lettering above the forest green bathroom pod at City Hall that reads “TOILET.”

“We call these ‘hoe-tels,’” he said. “H-O-E-T-E-L. People use these for sex, shooting up, everything!”

Drugs are commonplace in the units, as they serve as convenient, private spaces that cannot be unlocked from the outside — ideal for getting a quick fix. In more than a dozen visits to four public restrooms over the last month, a Public Press reporter found two where hypodermic needles were strewn across the floor.

There are also clear signs of prostitution at a bathroom just beyond the balcony of Mayor Ed Lee’s office — even during business hours. At the self-cleaning facility in Civic Center Plaza, just steps from City Hall, the automatic door stayed open just long enough for one man to come out and another to go in, while a woman who remained inside entertained each for up to half an hour. (Rules posted on the bathroom limit occupancy to one adult at a time, with a 20-minute maximum.)

The toilets were installed in San Francisco by the New York-based advertising company **JCDecaux** (<http://www.jcdecauxna.com/>), starting in 1996. Maintaining hundreds of public restrooms in Paris and London, the company spent \$250,000 on installation for each facility here. JCDecaux recoups the investment by selling ad space on the outsides of the bathrooms, as well as on more than 100 kiosks throughout the city. The city receives a cut of the profits — \$507,000 just in the last year, according to Department of Public Works Spokeswoman Gloria Chan.

“It’s a money-generating program for the city, and a service provided at low cost,” said Francois Nion, JCDecaux’s executive vice president.

But the network of city toilets isn’t as clean as city officials had first promised. What was intended to be a service for poor residents without access to basic hygiene, as well as a relief for tourists, has become a health hazard for undaunted patrons and the staff who clean and maintain them.



The inside of the restroom near City Hall, showing the manner of detritus: hypodermic needles and assorted trash. Photo by Jason Wi



Robot janitors not enough

The facilities are designed to clean themselves during a 55-second automatic cycle in which a cleaning solution is sprayed on all inside surfaces. But the bathrooms weren't designed for the job of cleaning up after drug users who leave needles and the other paraphernalia behind, or those who disable the doors by wedging them shut from the inside. The loads of garbage and human waste that end up everywhere often remain, soaked with detergent, until a human janitor bags them.

Public Works spokeswoman Chan insisted that the city was not responsible for the maintenance, cleanliness or safety of the facilities. Rather, it is written into the city's **20-year contract with JCDecaux** (<http://sfpublicpress.org/files/contract.pdf>) that the company must keep the facilities in a "clean, graffiti-free, safe, and first-class condition" by providing "the necessary personnel to assure the maintenance of Automatic Public Toilets."

As a result the facilities, which frequently go in and out of service because of mechanical trouble, trash or police activity, are shuttered by the city. For residents of low-income, high-density neighborhoods such as the Tenderloin, that means the closure of the only bathrooms available to the public at night.

Crimes hard to track

Police say they can't pay special attention to the sex and drug activities that occur in the restrooms because "there is no way to track crimes specifically at the public restroom locations," said police spokesman Albie Esparza. Instead, they respond to crimes in progress and complaints from residents.

"The Police Department is aware that these public toilets are sometimes used by persons engaged in unlawful activities," Esparza said. "Police officers do respond to calls, reports of crimes or suspicious persons at public toilets and take the action on any suspicious activities they may observe."

Community activists say the filth is equally distressing. Dina Hilliard, interim director of the **North of Market/Tenderloin Community Benefit District** (<http://nom-tlcdb.org/>), which advocates for better public services in the neighborhood, said that in their current condition, the city's public bathrooms are not a safe option.

"Those of us who know them don't want to use a bathroom like that," Hilliard said. "You don't know who is going to be inside or who is going

A worker attends to the supposedly manually cleaning the inside of the Winshell/SF Public Press.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Nina Frazier

Nina Frazier is a journalist covering the Tenderloin area on Loin Life (www.loinlife.com). She is dedicated to the neighborhood journalism class at San Francisco State University. She has reported for the San Mateo County Press on photography, video, and more. Follow her on Twitter **@NinaFra**

to greet you when they come out.”

Despite the misuse Hilliard said closing or even getting rid of the facilities would exacerbate problems: “I don’t want to see amenities removed because they aren’t being used properly.”

A dirty job

On a recent weekday, JCDecaux maintenance technician Peter Vongseni pulled his van onto the sidewalk beside the public toilet outside City Hall. Seeing the green door closed, he waited inside his van for five minutes, then walked up and gave a knock. After several minutes a bearded man in baggy black jeans and a helmet emerged, wheeling out his bike, as a middle-aged woman dressed in sneakers, dirty jeans and a faded windbreaker followed. Then they moved in opposite directions.

After working for JCDecaux for two years, Vongseni said he is practiced in this routine.

“Every time I come, there are people inside,” he said. “Today when I came there were some Chinese tourists trying to get in the bathroom, and there were three in there yelling at them to stop pushing the button.”

When Vongseni arrives each morning at the City Hall bathroom, he usually encounters broken toilet parts that need fixing, five or six drug needles and often an inexplicable amount of excrement spread everywhere.

“Every day it’s a huge mess,” he said. “There’s poop on the floor, poop on the wall.” He said the maintenance crews “get together after work and complain. We don’t know how they do it.”

Vongseni warns tourists and children not to go in the bathroom until he has been in to clean it. In fact, the sordid conditions have led JCDecaux to give maintenance workers special training on the health effects of AIDS, hepatitis B and C, and the risks of working in unsanitary conditions.

No relief in central city

The toilet at City Hall is among the most heavily used, with maintenance records clocking in just over 500 uses in two days over a recent weekend. But Vongseni said the other two public restrooms in the Tenderloin, located at McCauley and Boeddeker parks, are equally unclean.

Wedge between a small fenced-in children's playground and the New Century strip club on Larkin and O'Farrell streets, the McCauley Park facility is frequently trashed. At 11 a.m. on a recent weekday, a pair of pink-striped children's underwear was found stuffed beneath feces in the metal toilet bowl. The restroom receives about 70 flushes a day, and despite being serviced four to five times daily, it is constantly abused.

Because of the number of complaints of illicit activities after hours, the city ordered JCDecaux to close the McCauley Park restroom between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.

"It helped a little bit, but I think it's an out-of-sight, out-of-mind mentality," said Adam Solarzano, director of operations for JCDecaux. "The cops could help us, but they don't."

The other bathroom, at Boeddeker Park at the corner of Eddy and Jones streets, just opposite the Tenderloin Police Station, stayed closed for three weeks over February and March due to construction. It then reopened — only to see a return to its state of misuse.

Other public toilets, like the one at Castro and Market streets, are also messy affairs. But with a more police patrols nearby, the mess is kept to a minimum. Esparza said that while the police are aware of crimes committed inside the facilities, the bottom line is that "there is no special policy for policing Tenderloin public restrooms" and no plan to increase patrols.

Seeking solutions

JCDecaux said the city approached the company recently with several ideas to keep drug and sex activities out of the units.

The city's food-service providers have recently begun talks to **extend bathroom hours at soup kitchens** (<http://sfpublicpress.org/news/2011-03/road-waste-are-food-service-providers-really-to-blame-for-feces-in-the-tenderloins-stre>), at the city's expense.

Another proposal involves installing blue lights inside the bathrooms. That would deter drug users from locating veins, a prevention technique popular in Europe. Another is to close the restrooms at Boeddeker and McCauley parks at night, even though they are the only after-hours facilities in the neighborhood.

But Tenderloin advocate Hilliard said that eliminating those facilities would be counterproductive.

"You cannot just service the 9-to-5 part of a person," she said. "It's a public-health issue for the neighborhood. You can't claim to be servicing people who are homeless and not provide this amenity for them."

*This is the second of two articles about hygiene options for San Francisco's homeless. See Nina Frazier's story from last week: **Are food service providers really to blame for human waste in the Tenderloin's streets?** (<http://sfpublicpress.org/news/2011-03/road-waste-are-food-service-providers-really-to-blame-for-feces-in-the-tenderloins-stre>)*

pdf:

 **Department of Public Works 1997 contract with JCDecaux for bathrooms in San Francisco.**

(<http://sfpublicpress.org/files/contract.pdf>)

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COMMENTS

We had the same problem in the City of Portland. Public restrooms attracting criminal activities, the city restricting their hours, and still people need to go to the toilet 24 hours a day! APTs like the San Francisco models cost a lot of money and were not designed with crime prevention in mind and the bricks and mortar models were too large for the urban street and unsafe too. The City convened designers, law enforcement, advocates, residents and businesses to design an affordable, accessible, sustainable, safe urban toilet. We did it! Fabricated in Portland, and patented by the City, the Portland Loo (www.portlandloo.com) was installed in 2008.

Subsequently, three more Loos have been installed in a variety of neighborhoods with more to follow. Victoria BC recently bought one



The public restroom near City Hall gets plenty of use. During business hours the units are havens of drugs and prostitution, and often filthy. Photo by Jason Winshell/SF Public Press.



The inside of the restroom near City Hall before cleaning contains all manner of detritus: hypodermic needles, condoms, excrement and assorted trash. Photo by Jason Winshell/SF Public Press.



A worker attends to the supposedly automatic cleaning equipment before manually cleaning the inside of the restroom. Photo by Jason Winshell/SF Public Press.

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Portland Loo, a public toilet that skips to the head of its class

The Oregon city has successfully tackled several urban issues with its solar-powered, not-that-private public toilets. Now other cities smell a winner.

August 29, 2012 | By Kim Murphy, Los Angeles Times

PORTLAND, Ore. — Pity the lowly public toilet, a redolent reminder of the failure of the best minds in urban planning to address the most fundamental of daily necessities.

Millions have been invested in the facilities for collective relief. Often, they have become targets for graffiti, trash-can fires, furtive needle activity, commercial lovemaking, emergency baths, laundries for the homeless, and repositories of castoff diapers.

Go to any city in America and ask whether it has fixed the public toilet problem, and most any city in America will hold its nose.

Except Portland.

Here, where just about everything is greener, hipper and more carbon-neutral, it was only a matter of time before someone came up with a sustainable urban toilet. It's called the Portland Loo, and it may be the first toilet so popular it has its own Facebook page.

The solar-powered, 6-by-10 1/2-foot street-corner cabin, ingeniously stripped of much of its plumbing and privacy, has been installed at six locations around Portland, from the city's dodgiest centers for the homeless to an upscale waterfront where stay-at-home moms take their children to play.

So well has it eased into the urban landscape that Portland is looking to build and market Loos across the continent, hoping the profits will allow for the construction and maintenance of more at home. San Diego, Vancouver, Houston, Baltimore and Seattle all have expressed interest. The first official export was installed in Victoria, British Columbia, in November.

"I'm convinced Portland is the only city in the U.S., and maybe the world, that celebrates the opening of bathrooms," City Commissioner Randy Leonard said at the dedication ceremony for the city's fifth Loo, as students from a nearby school, whose art adorns the exterior wall, sang "Skip to My Lou."

"We get calls all the time," said project spokeswoman Anne Hill. "There's a proven track record here: It's in, and it's working. And there is no other solution out there that's been successful."

Portland officials say the Loos buck many of the conventions of public toilets: They are not installed in out-of-the-way spots where no one will see them. Rather, most are placed along sidewalks in full public view.

They are not self-cleaning, but are made of prison-grade steel with plumbing so basic that they are almost impossible to damage, and a twice-a-day check by maintenance staff seems to keep them in good working order.

The only water faucet is on the outside, making customers less likely to linger for hair-washing or laundry.

Perhaps most important, they aren't all that private. Louvered slats from foot level to knee level and again just above head level make activity inside somewhat visible, and audible, to passersby.

"We can see your trunk, but not your junk," the Portland Loo Facebook page posted recently, adding, "Bwahahaha."

"As you approach a Loo, you can see what's happening inside," Hill said. "If it's 2 in the morning and there's two sets of feet in the Loo, law enforcement has cause to knock on the door and say, 'Why are there two sets of feet in the Loo? Two of those feet need to come out.'"

To enter the Portland Loo with a mission in mind is to understand the Zen of utilitarian human biology. Function is all. There are no mirrors, no lavender sachets, no paper towel holders, no sink. Just four walls, a small dispenser of hand sanitizer and the reason you came: the steel, prison-grade toilet. The sounds of people chatting and laughing outside waft in disconcertingly between the slats. One feels the urge to act quickly and quietly, and move on.

The project was the brainchild of Leonard, who watched several years ago as former Mayor Tom Potter championed the idea of spending \$200,000 a year to keep a restroom in City Hall open overnight to service the city's homeless.

The problem, as Leonard saw it, was that most of the homeless hung out in Old Town, a mile away. Who, he wondered, was going to walk two miles round-trip to use the bathroom?

Leonard sat down at a table with the city's Central Precinct police captain and a community activist from what would become the citizens group PHLUSH, or Public Hygiene Lets Us Stay Human. They pored over designs from other cities, especially in Europe, and architectural designer Curtis Banger came up with a peekaboo toilet powered by two solar panels on the roof and with graffiti-washable panels. The cost: \$60,000 to install plus \$1,200 a month to maintain.

The first installation, in December 2008, was near the Greyhound bus station in the Old Town-Chinatown area, or as Leonard puts it, "ground zero for homelessness in Portland." The sixth, near the Portland Art Museum and Portland State University, opened this month.

City officials in Los Angeles and San Francisco say they are generally happy with the automated, self-cleaning toilets provided under contract with the French company JCDecaux, which installs and maintains them in exchange for advertising rights.

But some cities have had problems with trash building up and rendering the self-cleaning mechanisms useless. The units can also be magnets for prostitution and drug use.

"Paris never smelled like this," San Francisco Chronicle columnist C.W. Nevius complained last year of the city's 25 automated, self-cleaning toilets, suggesting the city think about the Portland Loo when the contract comes up for renewal in 2015.

Lance Oishi of the Los Angeles Bureau of Street Services said officials had to shut down one of the city's 15 public toilets, near skid row, when a pimp set up shop there. But since the suspect's arrest, the unit is heading back toward normal operations. He said hygiene complaints had been alleviated by requiring the contractor to visit each toilet at least twice a day.

Meanwhile, downtown San Diego is relying on 10 public restrooms — only two of them open all night — and a handful of portable toilets. The city is hoping that redevelopment funds will come through to buy four Portland Loos, a purchase initially authorized by the City Council in 2010 but delayed by California's continuing public budget troubles.

Rachel Jensen, co-founder of the San Diego homeless advocacy group Girls Think Tank, which has pushed for the Loos, said the decision was reached after activists and city leaders met with homeless representatives and realized the urgency of the sanitation issue.

"We took a poll. Essentially we asked, what are the most pressing issues facing the homeless community that we should act on here? And they said bathrooms," Jensen said.

"For a population that is by definition not housed, we thought the first priority would be housing, and it wasn't," she said. "They said, 'Until we have somewhere to go to the bathroom, we're not even human. We're like animals.'"

Portland's Loo hasn't been without controversy. Residents near Jamison Square Park fought bitterly against the toilet there until it went in, after which opposition seemed to melt away. A group of conservative taxpayers this year filed suit against the city, arguing that the toilets were costing more than the city claims and that city water funds aren't meant to be spent on an international toilet marketing campaign.

PHLUSH co-founder Carol McCreary, on the other hand, says the city hasn't built enough new Loos. She says it's also time for Portland to venture further: The group is encouraging city officials to look at comfort stations in La Jolla and Venice Beach that feature private cabins and unisex outdoor hand-washing facilities.

The idea is to move past the traditional, multi-stall concept of men's and women's rooms, which often leave women waiting in line, fathers confused about where to take their young daughters and transgender people simply nervous.

"When I was a kid, men and women didn't go to the same hairdresser or the same gym. But that's all changed. We think most Americans would be quite comfortable washing their hands, even grooming, next to a person of the opposite sex," McCreary said. "Why not?"

kim.murphy@latimes.com

Murphy was recently on assignment in Portland.

GOV & POLITICS

\$100,000 'Portland Loo' Coming to Downtown San Antonio



CAMILLE GARCIA

MARCH 11, 2016



UPDATED OCTOBER 7, 2016

City Council unanimously approved a contract with a Portland-based fabrication company to purchase a stainless steel public restroom on Thursday in an effort to combat public urination and relieve pressure off of downtown businesses.

The \$97,700, stainless steel structure is "extremely durable" and easy to maintain, said John Jacks, interim director of the Center City Development and Operations Department.

"It's a unique solution to a universal problem," Jacks said, unlike any other public restroom in town, this one will be open 24 hours a day in a highly-trafficked downtown location yet to be determined.

If the "Portland Loo" works out, the City might look into purchasing more, he said. The manufacturer Madden Fabrication gives a 30% discount per unit.

The structures have been installed in 20 locations across the U.S., mostly in Oregon.

Councilman Mike Gallagher (D10) noted that some, including talk radio hosts, have balked at the price of the loo.

The long term maintenance cost of a more traditional facility would be much higher, Jacks said, with the Portland Loo, the City is essentially paying maintenance cost up front. The 9x18-foot structure is designed to be easy to clean and hard to break.

"All of the wall panels are replaceable," and graffiti resistant he said. "If one was damaged, the panels could be replaced." Inside, guests will find the basics: a toilet and a motion sensor LED light. No mirror.

"(This) discourages someone from hanging out in it, which is a problem with most restrooms," Jacks said. It is possible for law enforcement to see inside to check if anyone is sleeping or conducting other illegal activities as there are small windows at the very bottom to see an occupant's feet.

"It still gives enough privacy to a person using it," Jacks said, like any other bathroom stall.

Outside, the public will find a small hand-washing station and a panel on the door where you can install art or display event/map information.

Councilman Roberto Treviño (D1), whose district covers downtown, traveled with Jacks last year to Portland to examine the loos. Treviño said the bathrooms could be customizable and include a public art component.

The City could spend anywhere between \$30,000 to \$60,000 for installation once a location is selected. It's expected to be installed in May.

The CCDO is currently investigating where the best spot is to put it, Jacks said. "It needs to be in a place that has high (pedestrian) traffic" and access to water and sewer utilities.

The bathroom will likely be checked on and cleaned twice daily, Jacks said, depending on where it's located. Cleaning materials are located in a locked panel on the back, but since it's stainless steel, it can essentially be hosed down.

The San Antonio Police Department will need to be part of the conversation, Treviño said. Police officers will need to know how it works and how to provide security.

He also defended the cost of the new loo. "This is an industrial grade product. It's well built. It's built like a tank," he said.

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**Top image: The "Portland Loo" by Madden Fabrication. Photo courtesy of the City of San Antonio.*

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