



**City Of San Diego  
COUNCILMEMBER MARTI EMERALD  
DISTRICT SEVEN**

**M E M O R A N D U M**

**DATE:** May 25, 2010 **M-10-05-06**  
**TO:** Fred Maas, CCDC Chair & Frank Alessi, CCDC Executive VP  
**FROM:** Councilmember Marti Emerald   
**SUBJECT:** Public Restrooms and Drinking Water in Downtown San Diego

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Since taking office a year and a half ago, I have listened to constant and consistent comments about the lack of public access to restrooms and potable drinking water in the downtown area. The weekly reports to the City Council from private individuals who are trying to address the need by renting port-a-potties and handing out bottles of drinking water are heroic and tragic at the same time. Heroic is the time, effort, and money that has been generated solely out of human compassion and tragic because these are basic human needs that have been largely ignored by the City, the Redevelopment Agency and CCDC.

Recently, a group I have worked with in the past, the Girls Think Tank asked me to collaborate with them on a project known as "Basic Dignity, Thirst for Solutions Quest for Relief." Last Saturday I attended a kick-off rally for the project and was presented with petitions signed by more than 5,000 people who agree that we must solve this downtown basic dignity issue as soon as possible. I have pledged to work with the Girls Think Tank to address this issue in the upcoming fiscal year. I could schedule a hearing at the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee, but that would only delay the obvious solution.

The Girls Think Tank has identified a prefabricated restroom, manufactured by the City of Portland that has all of the aspects and amenities of a successful, affordable, low maintenance restroom facility that would serve the needs of tourists, visitors and the homeless population downtown. The product is called the Portland Loo and can be viewed at: [www.portlandonline.com/water/loo](http://www.portlandonline.com/water/loo) The Loo is made of stainless steel, has louvers at top and bottom for security, is solar powered and has a hand sink and potable water access on the outside of the unit. The Girls Think Tank has been in contact with many programs and agencies to promote the Portland Loo for Downtown San Diego and has received nothing but positive feedback.

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Councilmember Marti Emerald  
May 25, 2010

I request that CCDC amend its FY2011 budget to allocate funds for the installation of at least six restrooms in the downtown area by the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2011).

I am aware there is already a line item in the CCDC FY11 budget in the amount of \$900,000 for a restroom in Little Italy. I am aware that the City has been spending up to \$1,000,000 to construct restrooms for city parks; however the Portland Loo is priced at \$87,500 not including installation and shipping. The estimate for installation is \$20,000. Given this information it seems possible that we could install one Loo in Little Italy and five or more Loos throughout downtown for the same or less cost than the single constructed restroom presently in the FY11 CCDC budget.

I look forward to working with CCDC to amend its FY11 budget and complete this important project by June 30, 2011. Please let me know if my staff and I can be of assistance in making this project a success.

ME:cp

Attachments: Portland Loo and Basic Dignity materials

Cc: Mayor Jerry Sanders  
Honorable Councilmembers  
City Attorney Jan Goldsmith  
IBA Andrea Tevlin  
Girls Think Tank

# The Portland Loo

offers high durability and a unique and balanced blend of privacy and security, all at a cost that is a fraction of current stand-alone restroom models.

- Affordable
- Design deters illicit activity (CPTED)
- Durable/vandalism resistant
- Easy to service/replace damaged components
- Site almost anywhere (with water and sewer hookup)
- Designed to be open 24/7 without an attendant
- ADA accessible
- Sustainable/Solar-powered



Space available on exterior rear panels for graphics or advertising



Interior view



Exterior hand washing area



Solar panels and skylight on roof



Solar mechanics accessed through rear panel

# The Portland Loo



Office of Commissioner Randy Leonard  
and the Portland Water Bureau  
Portland, Oregon

[www.portlandonline.com/water/loo](http://www.portlandonline.com/water/loo)

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# The Portland Loo

Innovative Public Restroom Design



*A Unique Solution  
to a Universal Problem*

# The Portland Loo

## LIGHTWEIGHT.

The unit is composed of a minimum of materials. Utilizing stainless steel wall panels mounted to a slim profile steel structure means that the Portland Loo weighs a fraction of a typical restroom and can be delivered on-site as a complete enclosure.

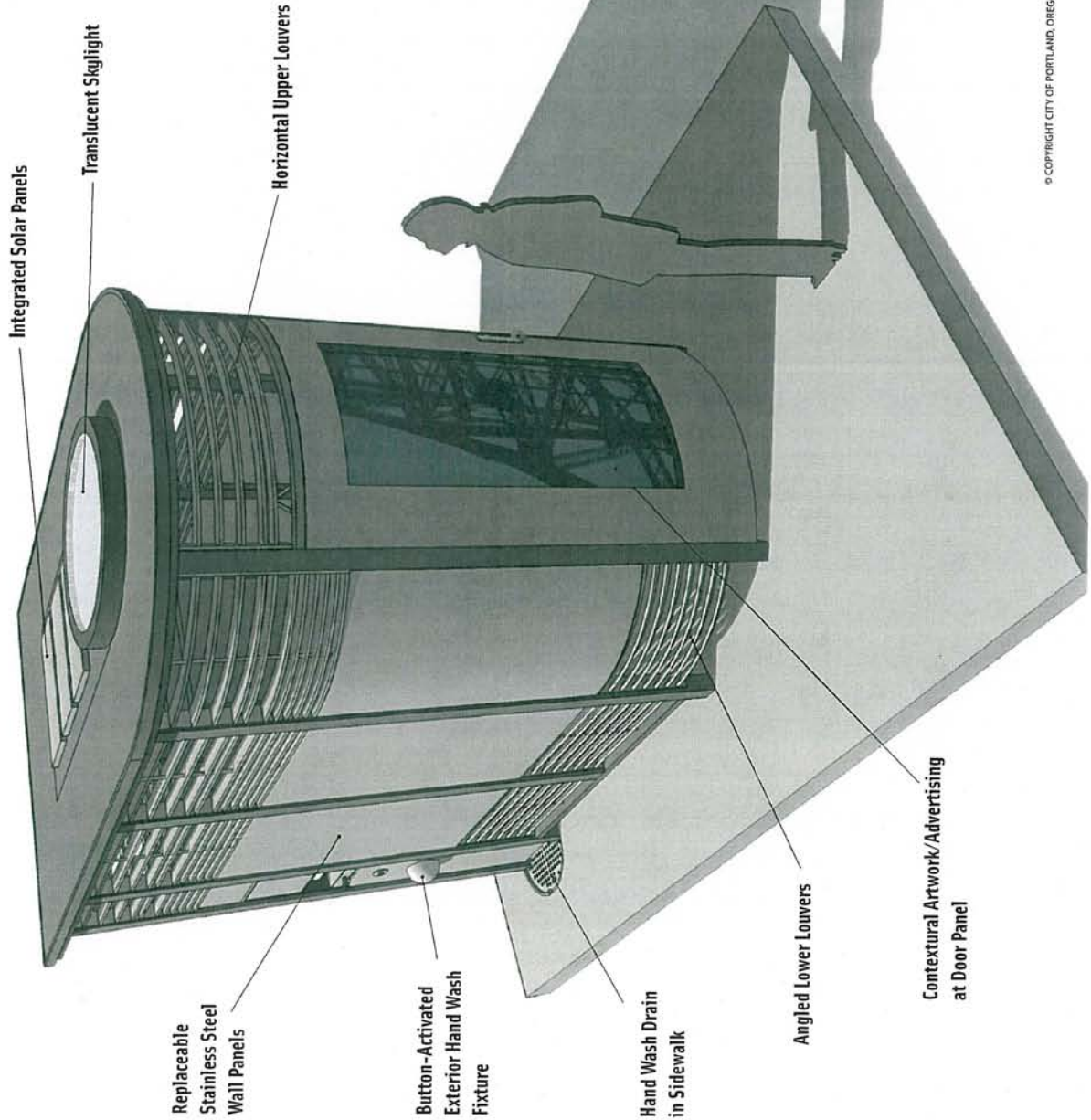
## SECURE.

Louvers at the top and bottom of the wall create an interior environment that offers complete visual privacy, while remaining as connected with the outside as possible. The lower louvers are angled to provide law enforcement the opportunity to observe the number of users within the unit without compromising privacy. The unit's hand-washing station is mounted on the exterior to promote shorter use times and to serve the general pedestrian population.

## FUNCTIONAL.

The entire unit can be off-grid and lit entirely by solar-powered LED fixtures. Or the unit can be pre-wired for 115 volt AC power. At night a gentle light washes the exterior until it is occupied, at which time the interior lights activate and the exterior lights dim, announcing that it is in use. All of the cleaning and maintenance implements, as well as electrical components and solar batteries, are housed in the cabinet at the rear of the unit.

[www.portlandonline.com/water/loo](http://www.portlandonline.com/water/loo)



# PORTLAND LOO SPECIFICATIONS

## DESIGN

- Attractive design fits well in any environment.
- Louvered panels allow for surveillance by the community.
- Heavy-duty components and hardware insure long life and durability.
- Exterior handwashing station deters illicit activity.
- Tight tolerances in the design and fabrication of components. Matching replacement panels and doors can be ordered from the factory and easily field-installed.
- ADA compliant.
- 100% Solar-powered capability.

## CONSTRUCTION

- All wall panels, doors, and roof are made from a heavy gauge 304 stainless steel.
- Structural grade, stainless steel, vandal resistant bolts and screws.
- Penitentiary grade toilet fixtures.
- All surfaces finished with a graffiti-proof coating.
- Heavy duty Best Access Systems door hardware.
- Solar electrical system uses the highest quality and latest technology components.
- Electric light sensor, interior motion detector, and long lasting LED lighting makes for a durable, fully automatic lighting system.
- 3 roll, lockable heavy steel tissue dispenser.

## MAINTENANCE

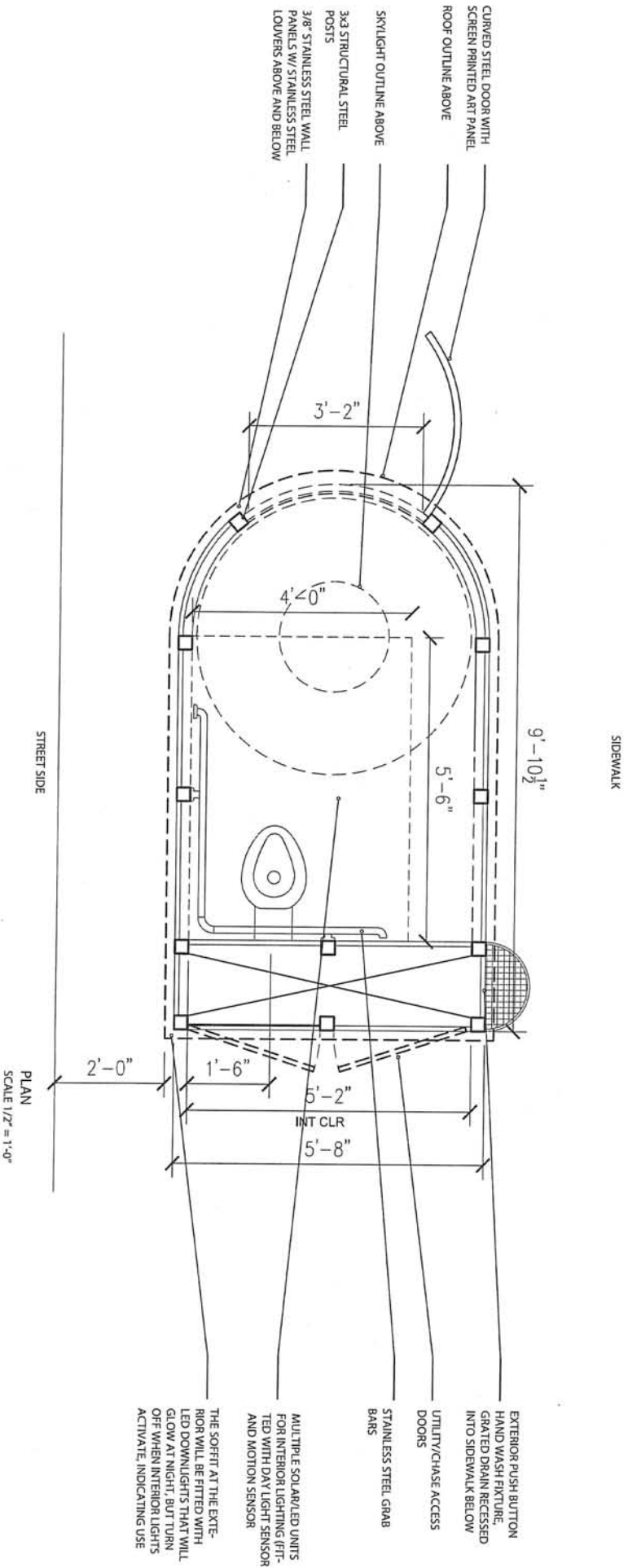
- Basic daily janitorial cleaning is all that is required.
- Electric solar system requires two annual adjustments of the charging system and wiping off the surfaces of the solar panels for a total annual labor commitment of twenty minutes.
- One annual application of lubricant to the door hinges and door hardware.

## INSTALLATION

- Portland Loo comes fully assembled and tested from the factory.
- Factory-provided template makes installation of the base plate column mounts fast and accurate.
- Leveling is simple and precise.
- 1 water supply and 1 sewer connection are all that are required to make the Portland Loo operational.

# PORTLAND LOO

## DIMENSIONS /FEATURES



**The Portland Loo** | A Unique Solution to a Universal Problem

[www.portlandonline.com/water/loo](http://www.portlandonline.com/water/loo)



(FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

## ***Basic Dignity Campaign Launches May 22*** **Goal of More Bathrooms Downtown Echoed by New Grand Jury Report**

Nonprofit, labor, and faith-based leaders call for Basic Dignity in America's Finest City. San Diego urged to adopt the *Portland Loo* to meet demand for 24/7 public bathrooms.

SAN DIEGO, CA (May 21, 2010) – Just days after a grand jury report issued by San Diego County finds that more outdoor toilets are needed in downtown San Diego, the Basic Dignity Coalition kicks off its long-planned campaign with the same goal. **Basic Dignity: Thirst for Solutions, Quest for Relief** launches May 22, 2010, 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. in Balboa Park (6th Avenue & Laurel Street).

“We are gratified that the grand jury has made official what our coalition has been stating. To meet public health standards, as well as to respect the basic dignity due to all people, San Diego must take responsibility and increase the number of public bathrooms open 24 hours a day. The need is particularly acute in the East Village, an area with many homeless services and a large homeless population,” said Rachel Jensen, a downtown attorney, President of the Girls Think Tank and a co-director of the Basic Dignity Coalition along with longtime homeless advocate David Ross. Ross is set to receive an award at the event.

This week, a **San Diego County grand jury released a report entitled *Homeless in San Diego***, concluding that homelessness has reached the "tipping point" and "not only is the problem a blight on our community, it is a blight on our humanity." The report says that the City of San Diego could be liable for an "outbreak of illness caused by unsanitary conditions" and that additional toilets would "reduce fecal deposits and urine odors" downtown. Ross says that his two temporary "porta-potty" locations downtown have been used some 300,000 times since their placement in 2008.

Ross added, “Several years ago, another grand jury on homelessness in San Diego came to similar conclusions. I sincerely hope San Diego's leaders finally take decisive action – then we can proudly call ourselves residents of America's Finest City.”

The Basic Dignity event raises awareness and funds to support temporary toilets and long-term solutions and brings the community together for food, fun, live music, and speakers including **Lorena Gonzalez**, head of the San Diego & Imperial Counties Labor Council; **Reverend Madison Shockley** of Pilgrim United Church of Christ; **Scott Silverman** of Second Chance; and San Diego City Council Member **Marti Emerald**. Radio host Jon Elliott is the master of ceremonies. A \$15 suggested donation provides lunch for the donor and for a person experiencing homelessness. Over 5,000 petition signatures affirming a universal right to water and bathrooms will be unveiled at the event and presented later to the San Diego City Council, along with a request for San Diego to consider acquiring

the *Portland Loo*, a self-contained stainless-steel, solar-powered public bathroom pioneered by Portland, Oregon, and available for less than \$110,000 each including installation, compared to an estimated cost of \$900,000 for the construction of a conventional bathroom.

The Basic Dignity Coalition formed last year, spearheaded by Girls Think Tank (GTT) and David Ross. Organizations and individuals are invited to consider joining the Basic Dignity Coalition. Meetings are held at 6 p.m. on the first Thursday of the month at 655 West Broadway, 19th floor. Girls Think Tank is a 501(c)(3)-nonprofit organization that inspires and organizes its members and the public to advance basic human dignity. David Ross is known as The Water Man for his work distributing water and providing portable toilets on the streets of San Diego. Ross, along with Gerry Limpic and Bill Sharp founded The Isaiah Project to support Ross's efforts. For more information, visit [helpthewaterman.com](http://helpthewaterman.com).

Corporate sponsors of the Basic Dignity campaign launch event include Nika Water, Centerplate Catering at the San Diego Convention Center, Terra restaurant, Suzie's Farm, and Robbins Geller Rudman & Dowd LLP. Nonprofit sponsors include the American Civil Liberties Union of San Diego & Imperial Counties, Center on Policy Initiatives, Common Cause - San Diego, Empower San Diego, Feeding America San Diego, Home Again/Plan To End Chronic Homelessness, National Lawyers Guild - San Diego Chapter, Regional Task Force on the Homeless, San Diego Coalition for the Homeless, San Diego Rescue Mission, and The AMIKAS Project.

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