



Top 10 questions about the Portland Loo in downtown Nelson

1. Why did the City of Nelson install a Portland Loo Public Restroom?

Ever since the City's public washroom, at what is now Touchstones, was removed as part of the renovation of that building, many Nelson residents and business owners have lobbied to reestablish a downtown public washroom. Based on this request, City Council wanted to ensure that when the underground water and sewer utility work for Hall Street was being done, that a site was plumbed to allow for a public washroom. A downtown washroom will serve residents and visitors alike, and will take some of the burden off local businesses that make their washrooms available to the public at considerable expense.

2. What is a Portland Loo?

The Portland Loo is a simple, sturdy, flush-toilet kiosk fabricated in Portland, Oregon. Built from heavy gauge stainless steel, the Loo is easy to maintain and can take a lot of abuse. The Loo has a small footprint, allowing it to be located on sidewalks in high-traffic areas. With a tight parking situation in our downtown it was important not to take up parking spots or impact vehicle sight lines. It has been designed specifically to deter vandalism and inappropriate, illegal activity. Louvers on the top and bottom of the Loo allow law enforcement officials to verify if the unit is occupied while still providing privacy for users. The hand washing area is located on the outside of the building. For more info, visit www.theloo.biz.

3. Were other options considered?

Although staff did not do a full costing of constructing a washroom, they did research alternatives. There simply was nowhere to put a washroom other than right on the street, so a traditional washroom building was not feasible. Staff noted that the Town of Smithers chose a Portland Loo for many of the same reasons Nelson did and they estimated their cost to build a regular washroom would have been \$150,000. Our staff estimate that Nelson's costs would be similar.

4. What are the advantages of the Loo over a conventional washroom building?

There are three main advantages. First, the Portland Loo has an anti-crime design that has proven successful in cities across North America. Second, it can be installed on a sidewalk, meaning the washroom doesn't need a downtown lot which just isn't available in our downtown. Third, we anticipate that the Loo's anti-graffiti design and lack of space heating will result in lower long-term operating costs.

5. How much does it cost?

The Portland Loo cost approximately \$140,000. City staff did the installation. The long-term operating and maintenance costs for the Loo has been demonstrated to be lower than for a conventional public washroom building (LED lighting and lack of need for space heating minimizes electricity demand).

6. Where is the money coming from?

The cost of purchase and installation was in the 2017 Capital Budget. This was funded from the City's downtown reserve fund where a small portion of parking meter revenue is targeted to be reinvested in the downtown. Other projects this reserve funds include things like the downtown sculptures. The annual cost of maintenance and operation will be included in the City's operating budget. Private businesses have long felt they were shouldering this cost.

7. Why didn't the City shop local?

The Loo is patented, which prevents local manufacturing of the design. The City could have chosen to solicit design proposals from local fabricators, however implementing a unique design for the first time comes with a greater degree of risk. The Portland Loo has been through several prototypes to address design issues and is a product with both a proven track record and a warranty.

8. Have other communities installed this type of washroom?

Yes, the Portland Loo has been installed in over a dozen cities across the United States. Here in Canada, they have been installed in Smithers, Victoria, Nanaimo and Esquimalt. In 2012, the Langley Street Loo in Victoria was voted "Canada's Best Restroom."

9. What about cold weather?

The Portland Loo comes with a cold weather kit that allows operation down to -15 degrees Celsius. Based on use, the City will determine what times of the year it will remain open. With our climate it should be able to be open year round, if this is deemed necessary. During the

busy summer tourist season, the Loo will be open at 7:00am and closed at 11:00pm in conjunction with other washrooms in our parks.

10. Why Hall Street?

A key consideration with selecting a location for a downtown washroom is the accessibility of city underground utilities, as they require a hook-up to both water and sanitary sewer. Locations such as at Ward and Baker are more challenging as our water and sewer are very deep and not accessible. It was also much more cost effective to create a connection when the water and sewer mains were being replaced on Hall Street as opposed to digging the street up specifically to install a washroom. Based on the success of this washroom, other locations will be considered. The other key consideration was to have it in a visible area to avoid it becoming a place where criminal or other unwanted behavior would occur.



