

'The Portland Loo' \$280,000 bathroom set for downtown Fort Wayne

by Ethan Dahlen

FORT WAYNE, Ind. (WANE) — Fort Wayne is trying to reduce the number of “Code Browns” and “Code Yellows” it has downtown.

In other words, people not making it to the bathroom in time.

“I am the recipient of that monthly report, so I get all of the photos,” said Kelly Lundberg, Deputy Director of Housing & Neighborhood Services.

“Lucky you,” chimed in 5th District Councilman Geoff Paddock while city officials laughed.

Jokes aside, the City of Fort Wayne believes a new type of public bathroom dubbed The Portland Loo is much more than a standard fare.

The company’s website describes it as a “sleek and modern kiosk” that helps prevent crime typically associated with public toilets while still providing a place to go.

And the issues it looks to tackle are also more than a laughing matter.

“This restroom can accommodate everyone, and we’re dedicated to having it clean [and] having it safe,” said Jim Atz, a community development administrator for the City of Fort Wayne.

Fort Wayne City Council approved the public bathroom with a unanimous 9-0 vote during Tuesday’s meeting.

The Portland Loo will be located along Barr Street between Washington Boulevard and East Wayne Street in downtown Fort Wayne.

The first bathroom will serve as a test while the city considers installing more. The original pitch would have seen three bathrooms hit the streets.

“At one time, we were possibly looking at purchasing three,” Paddock said. “We’re putting the blueprint forward as to speak.”

The city will bid out the project to be assembled and is expected to install The Portland Loo in late fall 2025, with the restroom being operational in late fall or early winter of the same year.

As for the bathroom itself, the city proposes to have Downtown Fort Wayne clean and sanitize the unit three times a day and provide maintenance. A phone number listed on the outside of the Portland Loo will allow users to alert the city to needed maintenance.

While the units are open 24/7 in other cities, Fort Wayne plans to have it locked during the night when cleaning staff cannot be there.