

## Bog Apple NYC discovers stand-alone toilet pods

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Faced with closed restrooms, vandalized facilities and lavatory deserts, New Yorkers and visitors to the city alike confront a host of hurdles to relieve themselves when out and about.

In its latest efforts to combat this problem, the Big Apple has turned to a Portland-based company that designs modular public conveniences it claims are city-proof.

The products, dubbed "Portland Loos," are the brainchild of Madden Fabrication and have garnered something of a cult following around the versatile, kiosk-like facilities which the company says are far cheaper than traditional toilet buildings.

Such public toilet pods have already been installed in 250 locations throughout the United States.

New York has pledged to build 49 new public bathrooms by 2029 to combat the lack of toilets across the five boroughs.

Currently, there are approximately 1,100 public conveniences for the megacity's 8.4 million people, according to official estimates.

### - 'Simple but durable' -

The city will spend \$150 million on building new restrooms and renovating 36 existing sites.

At the \$200,000 unit installed in the Bronx's Joyce Kilmer park, two blocks from Yankee Stadium baseball park, bystanders eyed the new fixture with interest.

One man accidentally activated the hand dryer, part of a sink fitting located on the outside of the booth.

A spokesman for the company described the design as "simple but durable," with the basin placed outside in order to keep people moving and avoid a "hotel effect."

"Hell yeah, we haven't had a bathroom in this area in forever," said lifelong Bronx resident Carlos Lopez, describing discrepancies in public restroom access between lower-income and wealthier neighborhoods.

For the five trial units ordered, New York insisted on a higher grade of stainless steel and other modifications to meet strict planning rules.

Street photographer Elijah Dominique, who lives near the park, said public bathrooms were especially important for unhoused people.

"We've got a lot of homeless people in this area," Dominique said.

"Those are the people who really need these bathrooms. It's good for them -- and for us too so that we're not stepping in (waste) on the sidewalks. Nobody wants that."