

The Oregonian

Portland street fee: Even with delay, City Council approves last minute changes to charter amendment, fee

By Andrew Theen

Even as the Portland City Council voted to delay a discussion and vote on a proposed street fee Wednesday morning, the Rose City's elected officials managed to work in a few more last-minute changes.

On Tuesday Commissioner Steve Novick and Mayor Charlie Hales confirmed a report from The Oregonian earlier this week that the street fee vote would be delayed.

But in a press conference later on Tuesday, Hales pledged to move ahead with a charter amendment discussion this week. Hales said the November ballot would "put the iron straps" on the city, requiring money raised from the street fee go toward transportation issues.

But on Wednesday, Hales delayed a vote on the charter amendment for another week

The changes introduced on Wednesday, though, seem to strengthen the proposed charter amendment in response to some questions from both inside and outside City Hall. The Oregonian first reported Hales' charter amendment proposal last month.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz introduced the latest changes, which would require at least 8/10 of money raised go to "transportation maintenance and transportation safety improvements." The previous version of the charter amendment, which will eventually appear on the November ballot, simply said "the majority of funds" would go to that purpose.

Novick, who oversees the transportation bureau and helped propose the street fee alongside Hales, said he's amenable to the change. The City Council will take testimony on the proposed charter amendment next week.

Novick introduced several changes to the proposed street fee ordinance as well, despite the fact the proposal is tabled until November.

The changes add the possibility of pursuing some sort of financing plan other than a street fee, at least for businesses. While it's not specifically in the ordinance, Novick's chief of staff Chris Warner said the commissioner is also "conceptually" open to the idea of other funding proposals for the residential portion as well.

The most recent incarnation of the street fee plan, based on an amendment introduced by Fritz at a public hearing last Thursday, starts the fee at \$6 per month for homeowners in July 2015. The fee would eventually rise to \$12 per month, with discounts for low-income residents and apartment dwellers.

"There's no alternative that I think you will see a huge ground swell of support for," Novick said Wednesday. He's opened the door in public statements in recent days for a discussion about a potential sales tax or income tax to raise money for street improvements.

Novick said Wednesday he's open to "combinations of options" as well.

At a Tuesday press conference, Hales said whatever the alternative might be, it's got to apply to everyone and raise enough revenue to make a significant difference.

Warner said that figure is likely in the ballpark of \$50 million annually in revenue.

Read all of The Oregonian's street fee coverage [here](#).

Slowdown on street fee a wise call to seek public support: Editorial Agenda 2014

By The Oregonian Editorial Board

The decision this week by Portland Mayor Charlie Hales and Commissioner Steve Novick to postpone a council vote on a transportation maintenance fee is wise and buys five months of public engagement – essential in having citizens and businesses embrace any measure that could make it yet more expensive to live and work here.

The fee, first aimed at residences and later at businesses, came forward too fast, promised unintended consequences and was to have been complemented by a deficient "trust-us" city charter amendment ensuring the money would be spent right. By hitting the pause button, Hales and Novick signaled the city could work harder to win the public's buy-in and remove riddles from any proposed charter amendment – if it even finds one necessary.

Now the hard part. Hales announced the formation of two work groups: one to analyze how all fees, among them sewer and water charges as well as any transportation measure, affect low-income residents; and the other to hear from businesses and government entities on how a use-based transportation maintenance fee could be equitably structured and implemented. Meanwhile, forums on a transportation maintenance fee are popping up, the next on Friday at the City Club of Portland and featuring the fee's author, the tenacious Novick.

Novick, who oversees the Bureau of Transportation, was and remains in a tight spot, evidenced by a blog post he published midweek in which he concluded: "By the way ... I am committed, and I think the same goes for the Mayor, to keep working on this until we get a solution. If we adopt a proposal, and it gets referred to the voters, and defeated, neither the Mayor nor I is going to give up for another six years. We'll come right back with another proposal. We don't have an economic future if we allow our roads to crumble."

No doubt. And everybody gets it: The roads of Portland ensure the safe, reliable movement of people and goods, both necessary to a functioning and prosperous city. Not lost on the public, however, is that everybody pays – some possibly too much and others possibly too little – and that City Hall is in charge of making the collection and spending of all public funds fair, frugal and keyed to only those purposes for which they were raised.

The fair part has yet to be worked out, and Portlanders deserve a final say on any revenue-producing fee of this magnitude by voting on it.

Meanwhile, any charter amendment saying "a majority" of the funds raised by a transportation fee would be used "only for transportation purposes" is a non-starter. The meaning of "majority" is squishy, as any amendment pegging a "majority" at 80 percent or even 90 percent of the funds raised only leaves open to speculation where the remainder would go. City Hall, desperately trying to restore public credibility over its spending, must do better. Debated language of the measure goes to the council next week. Even so, changes to the charter in the name of accountability seem at this point like so much energy spent in the wrong place.

The right place is tightly scribed: to figure out how to raise and spend money fairly to fix and maintain roads. In that sense Novick is correct in opening the public conversation to other revenue-generating measures that could include a bump in the gasoline tax, a sales tax, a vehicle registration fee – anything as long as folks pay up and the roads get fixed. Novick's polling earlier this year had keyed too narrowly on the maintenance fee, which revealed tepid support and likely triggered his and Hales' initial rush to seek council approval.

Portland needs its roads fixed. It will find itself able to do so by trusting voters and business-keepers who have had every opportunity between now and November to learn how our transportation money already is spent and, in the event more is needed, will be spent.

Portland Development Commission would forgive \$2 million in Armory Building loans under proposal

By James Reddick

A decade after Portland Center Stage secured a complex city-backed \$28 million financing package to relocate to the Pearl District's historic Armory Building, the Portland Development Commission will vote today on a proposal to forgive \$2 million of the non-profit's debt.

As a security, the PDC receives a stake in the property, which is now valued at \$26 million, should the company default on its loans. The theater is still on the hook for the remaining \$3.2 million loan provided by the PDC.

The \$2 million grant by the city's economic development agency stems from a July 2003 agreement in which the commission agreed to "public investment" in the project. But four months later, the city and the nonprofit returned to the negotiating table to amend the terms of the agreement.

Eric Iverson, general counsel for the PDC, said that Portland Center Stage originally asked the commission to change the \$2 million public investment to a zero-interest loan in order to get access to a federal initiative called the New Markets Tax Credit Program, which didn't allow for local grants. Now the restrictions of the NMTC Program have expired, providing an opportunity to revise the terms, Iverson said.

"The proposal is to go back to the July (2003) rationale, so we've restructured the form of the loan to accommodate," Iverson said.

According to PDC Chairman Scott Andrews, the November 2003 conversion of the public investment into a loan was merely a technical maneuver to secure federal funding.

"It was never expected to be paid back," he said. "We should certainly follow through on what was agreed to when the loan was put together."

But in the November 2003 arrangement, it is written explicitly that "neither of the PDC loans is a grant to, or an equity investment in, the project."

The Armory Theater Fund, which will own the building, has been able to raise significant funding through its "capital campaigns," including approximately \$17 million towards ownership of the building. The theater company has reduced an original \$10.6 million private sector loan to \$1.6 million.

But concerns remain about what will happen with the \$3.2 million the nonprofit still owe to the city. The PDC's proposal recognizes that there is a risk that the company "may not be able to raise sufficient funds over the next ten years... to repay the (private sector) loan and/or PDC loan."

Mitigating these risks, agency staff said, is the group's track record of fundraising and the PDC's lien on the property.

Chris Coleman, longtime artistic director for Portland Center Stage, said that the public's contribution to the theater is justified by the venue's engagement with the city.

"I would say the transformation of the building into a new home has been a huge win for this company and for this community," he said. "Investing in cultural anchors is good public policy."

The PDC's Andrews agreed, citing the impact of the Armory on surrounding development.

"It's the kind of catalytic development that we like to fund because it brings a lot of private investment behind it," he said. "It really goes back to a day when there was no Brewery Blocks and the Pearl District was just beginning to look like a potential success."

Since its move, the theater company's attendance has increased by 80 percent, and it estimates that its economic impact has nearly doubled since 2005 to \$13 million in the 2012-2013 season.

Despite the organization's success as a cultural institution, the proposal raises new questions about the PDC's willingness to forgive loans. The Oregonian reported in August 2011 that the commission had

written off \$9.6 million in debts since 2000. Most recently, the agency wrote off \$6.7 million of debt for the luxury hotel The Nines.

The five-member PDC board is set to vote this afternoon on the proposal.

Allowing short-term rentals in apartments, condos is 'on the table' as Portland City Council delays vote

By Elliot Njus

The Portland City Council put off its decision on whether to legalize short-term rentals in private homes, but in the meantime it will discuss whether to broaden the proposal to include apartments and condos.

City planners have proposed legalizing the practice of renting out one or two rooms within a private home for less than 30 days. Websites like Airbnb have popularized such peer-to-peer rentals by offering a platform to advertise, take reservations and collect payments from travelers, but it remains illegal under the city's zoning code without an expensive permit.

The city's proposal would let residents rent out rooms in their primary residence with a \$180 permit renewed every two years. They would be required to let the city inspect the home to verify the bedrooms meet the building code and notify neighbors of their plans.

Although they didn't ultimately vote on the proposal, the council made three tweaks:

After an initial inspection by the city's Bureau of Development Services, residents could self-certify that the rooms still meet the city's requirements when they renew the two-year permit. The bureau would re-inspect on the fifth renewal.

In addition to smoke detectors, residents must install carbon monoxide detectors to get a permit.

The Bureau of Planning and Sustainability would report back on short-term rentals in 2016.

But more changes may come in a few weeks, when the council holds a work session June 24 followed by another hearing July 2.

Expanding the proposal to include homes in multifamily buildings, like condo and apartment buildings, is "on the table," Mayor Charlie Hales said.

Multifamily buildings were included in the city's original proposal. The idea was dropped because it creates a conflict with the state's building code, which would hold the buildings to the same safety standards as hotels if they're used for short-term rentals. Most apartment and condo buildings wouldn't measure up.

Airbnb has lobbied for the rules to include units in multifamily structures, which make up a significant number of the website's Portland listings. Molly Turner, a lobbyist for the company, framed it as an issue of equity for renters and lower-income homeowners. Airbnb has also said home inspections aren't necessary.

Public testimony leaned heavily in favor of approving the rules before the hearing was cut off. Nearly 80 people had signed up to testify.

Many who spoke have rented out rooms, and a large contingent wore stickers promoting the "sharing economy."

Some neighborhood groups repeated the concerns they've aired in previous hearings: that short-term rentals invite commerce and a revolving door of strangers into residential neighborhoods.

The Portland Tribune

Council open to sales and business taxes for streets

By Jim Redden

The City Council opened the door Wednesday to a sales tax or tax on business profits — or both — to help fund transportation projects.

The council also delayed until next week its vote on a measure that would restrict funds raised by a new street fee or other new transportation revenue source. The proposed measure, which would appear on the Nov. 4 ballot, was amended to dedicate 80 percent of the new transportation revenue to maintenance and safety projects. Previously, the measure called for a majority of the money to be dedicated to maintenance and safety.

The council already had delayed a vote scheduled for today (Wednesday, June 4) on a new residential street fee. The vote on the residential fee was postponed until Nov. 12, when the fee or the other new revenue resources will be considered for businesses, governments and nonprofit organizations, including schools and churches.

Although the original proposals called for a Transportation User Fee, City Commissioner Steve Novick proposed allowing an advisory committee working on the proposal to consider other revenue sources, including a sales tax or tax on business profits.

The rest of the council accepted the idea and included it in a resolution requiring the council to consider all of the revenue sources by Nov. 12. The resolution passed, with only Commissioner Dan Saltzman voting no.

The last-minute changes were just the latest in a series of changes to the proposed street fee, which was originally scheduled to be adopted in its entirety on Wednesday, June 4. But Mayor Charlie Hales and Novick, who developed the proposal, began changing the schedule after the first public hearing on it last Thursday.

Most of those who testified at the May 29 hearing were either against the fee, wanted it submitted to the voters for approval, or both. Many said they had not heard anything about it before the hearing.

Several witnesses criticized the council for the last-minute changes, saying they made it impossible for the public to follow the process. However, others said they agreed the city needs more money for transportation projects.

Hales and Novick began developing the fee proposal after the release of several city audits saying much of Portland's street system was in poor condition and continuing to deteriorate. The audits said the city needs to spend an additional \$75 million on maintenance to make any improvement in their condition.

Hales and Novick discussed the proposed fee at numerous public forums and before several business communities in recent months. But they did not present their proposal until a week before the first public hearing, which was also the start of the Memorial Day weekend and the Portland Rose Festival.

The most recent proposals would have created a residential street fee beginning at \$6 a month for the first year, \$9 a month for the second year and \$12 a month after that. Discounts for low-income homeowners were also included. Several residents and low-income advocates testified such fees were too high.

The fee for businesses, governments and nonprofits were based on the number of motor vehicle trips they generated, as set forth in a manual prepared by the Institute of Transportation Engineers. Several small business owners disputed the estimates for their operations, however, and associations of larger businesses also questioned them.

Portland City Council delays action to regulate Airbnb operations

By Steve Law

Portland city commissioners agreed Wednesday to delay voting on new city regulations governing Airbnb and similar short-term rentals, as there are too many unresolved questions to move ahead.

Some 1,600 Portland residents list their properties for possible short-term rentals with Airbnb, an Internet-based system that connects prospective renters with hosts.

But right now, those Airbnb hosts, and those signed up with other short-term rental companies, are largely operating illegally in Portland. Technically, they're supposed to register as bed and breakfasts, which requires a \$4,130 fee and can take eight to 10 months.

None do so.

Only a couple dozen bed and breakfasts have registered with the city.

The Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission approved a new set of regulations in late-April that would enable those renting one or two rooms of their primary residence to pay \$180 for a license and home inspection, and thus become legal in the city. The fee and inspection would be required every two years.

The new system also could boost city coffers, as the city could begin collecting lodging taxes from hosts.

But the 78 people signing up to testify Wednesday illustrated there are still many outstanding issues to resolve.

Some Airbnb hosts find having a city inspector in their home every two years is too intrusive, as well as the \$180 fee.

Several testified that hosting via Airbnb helps them pay the mortgage and remain in their home.

However, Andre Baugh, chairman of the city Planning and Sustainability Commission, raised questions about the impact on housing affordability if many people are tempted to stop renting their homes to long-term tenants, because renting on a short-term basis is more lucrative. One woman testified that she gets \$170 a night renting her home.

Molly Turner, who works for San Francisco-based Airbnb, asked the city to expand the proposed regulations to allow people in condos and apartments to be hosts, as those wouldn't be allowed under the proposed ordinance.

There also are questions about people renting more than two bedrooms, and whether the city needs to start regulating vacation rentals as well.

It was clear from testimony that many current Airbnb hosts would continue to operate illegally under the ordinance.

Steven Unger, who owns the Lion and the Rose Victorian Bed and Breakfast in the Irvington neighborhood, suggested the city require that hosts be the primary resident for at least nine months, as San Francisco's ordinance requires. The proposed Portland ordinance only requires the host to live in the house at least six months a year. Neighbors are concerned that means the owner won't be on site to monitor Airbnb guests.

Several neighborhood association leaders pleaded with the City Council to delay action, and that wish was granted.

A City Council work session will be held at 2 p.m. Thursday, June 24. There also likely will be another public hearing so more residents may testify.

The Mercury

Jamming on the Brakes

Novick and Hales Pull Back Street Fee on Eve of Vote to Weigh Major Changes

By Denis C. Theriault

COMMISSIONER STEVE NOVICK was on message the morning of Monday, June 2, answering questions about whether his and Mayor Charlie Hales' plan to muscle part of a street fee through Portland City Council two days later was still proceeding apace in the face of great controversy.

"Steady as she goes," Novick emailed.

His hardy rhetoric was enduring, even after a brutal five-hour public hearing the week before, and even after a weekend that included increasingly stinging media coverage and calls and emails from aggrieved residents and business owners.

But it wasn't bulletproof. At the same time, according to sources in city hall, Novick and Hales were seriously mulling over a major announcement—putting the fee on ice, pending further discussion. And a day later, those whispers were confirmed.

On Tuesday, June 3, Novick and Hales officially declared that any votes on their "transportation user fee"—and the millions a year it would raise for paving and safety projects—will now wait until November. Nudged by their swing vote on the five-person council, Commissioner Amanda Fritz, they realized they needed more time to make changes and assuage the public—and maybe even restructure the entire idea.

"The last street free proposal in 2008 was derailed by a lobbyist filing a referendum petition," Novick said in a statement. "This one has been temporarily delayed due to concerns voiced by small business owners and low-income people and advocates. We are in a hurry to get to work, but if we're going to be delayed, it's for the right reasons."

The pell-mell rush toward this week's vote had been all about electoral math: Figuring lobbyists would revolt and send the fee to voters, Novick and Hales wanted the thing on the higher-turnout fall ballot, where it might get a better ride.

But the weeks of outrage and uncertainty—with complaints over a rushed public process swamping a vital debate on the dire straits of our transportation system—suggested that any political convenience would be canceled out by a fluoride-style backlash. And that realization only sharpened in city hall in the days before the delay was announced.

"Doing it right trumps the mechanics of doing it conveniently," Dana Haynes, the mayor's spokesman, told the Mercury. "November might have seemed convenient, but we probably didn't have all of our ducks in a row."

The announcement almost immediately dampened some unusually personal tensions on a council facing its first landmark, citywide policy push after 18 months.

First, Commissioners Nick Fish and Dan Saltzman had annoyed Novick and Hales by publicly announcing, weeks ago, their opposition to a council vote. Novick, earlier this spring, withdrew his endorsement of Commissioner Dan Saltzman after Saltzman questioned not only whether the fee should go before voters, but also whether a fee was needed at all.

More recently, Fish and Novick lightly sparred over email and social media—trading back-and-forth references to Casablanca—after Fish raised procedural questions at the end of last month's public hearing.

Fish immediately applauded both Hales and Novick for pulling back. (Saltzman didn't return a message seeking comment that was left with his chief of staff.) Fritz also cheered the delay and the chance to

make changes—even as she confirmed, for the first time, that whatever emerges this fall still won't head to voters unless they gather signatures and refer it to the ballot themselves.

"I'm now convinced a referral by the council is not in the best interest of finding a good solution," she says. "I am very happy we're spending more time getting to a proposal that, if it is referred by voters, will be a lot better."

Tuesday's announcement was the latest and loudest hiccup for the street fee proposal—something that's been receiving increasing heat since Novick first began shopping it back in April, after it emerged as the top, if tepid, choice in a telephone poll.

What looked like final details didn't formally emerge until May 22, two days after voters put down an attempt by industrialists to seize the city's water and environmental services bureaus.

Plans for an \$8 to \$12 monthly fee for residences had become plans for an \$11.56 monthly fee, with discounts offered for low-income Portlanders and apartment dwellers. And we learned that some small businesses—along with school districts, regional governments, nonprofits, churches, and city bureaus—might pay thousands of dollars a year, based on calculations for how many trips they generate.

The fee—expected to take effect on July 1, 2015—would have raised up to \$50 million a year, with the money split between paving projects and safety projects. (To fully catch up on deferred road maintenance, the city would actually need to spend \$91 million a year for the next 10 years.) And, as Novick and Hales delighted in pointing out, the fee would have put Portland on par with 28 other Oregon cities that also have some sort of street fee.

But that was cold comfort for critics. Lobbyists like the Portland Business Alliance demanded a slowdown, and others watched warily.

Hundreds of business owners bombarded city hall with questions and rage and heartfelt angst that their monthly fees might force them to shut their doors. They argued with the city's numbers, and they felt hurried and blindsided by the push to vote this month. Groups like Central City Concern and Home Forward, the region's public housing agency, warned that six-figure fee payments could eat into funding for housing and homelessness programs.

Dozens of people brought the same message to city hall last Thursday, May 29, for what had been scheduled as the only public hearing on the final street fee proposal.

Novick and Hales made one major concession on the eve of that hearing. They announced a five-month delay to do more work on the nonresidential fee—declaring a November 14 deadline to pass both halves or drop the idea altogether.

And Novick and Hales, along with Fritz, offered another concession after the hearing began. Instead of charging the full residential fee starting next summer, it would be phased in over three years, from \$6 to \$9 and then \$12.

Now, of course, both pieces of the fee have been pushed back until November—a discussion that began in the hours after the hearing, sources say, and lingered all through the weekend.

And when the fee and its two pieces come back, neither is expected to look the same.

Tuesday's announcement promised more public forums on the fee—and hinted at the potential for some deep structural changes.

Novick and Hales say they'll convene a pair of "working groups" to sift through concerns. One will be charged with ironing out kinks in how the fee would apply to businesses and other nonresidential uses.

The other will "look at the street fee as well as fees for other city utilities, including water and sewer, to see how well low-income residents are being served and how widely discounts can be applied," according to a city statement. Utility discounts are generally difficult to obtain for apartment dwellers, whose water bills are paid by their landlords. (A low-income apartment dweller would have paid about \$2 less a month, under the original street fee plan.)

It's possible both work groups could toss out some bold ideas.

Novick, as the Mercury reported on Friday, May 30, has already floated devising a discount for businesses whose profits fall below a certain threshold. He's also discussed, in a blog post that went up about when the delay was announced, the relative merits of income or sales taxes—ideas that didn't poll as well as the street fee.

Fritz was clear she really wants to consider converting the residential fee into a "tax," so it can be more progressive and allow for income exemptions.

"I'd like to see that on the table," she told the Mercury.

Haynes, Hales' spokesman, said nothing's been ruled out yet—but that nothing's been ruled in, either. It's too early to say what might emerge, he says, and what might pass muster with the public and the rest of the council.

But no matter how the details evolve, Haynes says, the mayor isn't ready to send the fee to voters first.

"We don't vote whether or not to have a police and fire department," Haynes says, "and we don't vote to pay our utility and water fees."

Hales and Novick also say they'll soldier on, even if lobbyists do step up and knock down whatever plan comes forward—as threatened at the public hearing. Hales tried and failed to pass a fee in 2001, and then-Commissioner Sam Adams tried again in 2008. Novick says he won't wait that long to try again.

He also says he can't help but wonder if backing off from November—to build more support at the risk of facing a more conservative springtime electorate—might wind up a mistake. Novick offered a pair of examples: Portland Public Schools lost with a bond measure in May 2011, only to win in November 2012. And Fritz, running for re-election in 2012, did stunningly better in November than May.

"It's possible we might regret this," Novick says. "If we wind up on a May ballot and we lose by two points, then I'm going to be thinking, 'Dammit, we should have gone ahead.'"

Going It Alone City Bureaus Aren't Using New "Cleanup Contractors"

By Dirk VanderHart

WEEKS LATER, Trena Sutton says she's still shocked.

Back in mid-May, the East Portland homelessness advocate began getting urgent reports of campsite crackdowns on the Springwater Corridor.

She arrived at a section of the trail just west of SE 82nd, she says, to find Portland Parks and Recreation crews chopping down trees and shrubs that hours earlier had obscured homeless campsites. Campers had been given state-required notice, Sutton says, then were told to leave. She alleges what belongings they couldn't carry were covered with the fresh-cut brush.

"There were people coming to me crying," says Sutton, a volunteer staffer at the Clackamas Service Center on SE 80th. "It's basically a scorched-earth policy: Just don't leave anything they can live on."

It is, of course, perfectly legal for the city to enforce its anti-camping ordinance, and clearing campers off the Springwater is nothing new. But bureaus are supposed to be changing how they carry out those efforts.

In April, Mayor Charlie Hales' office announced the city had inked a new contract with Pacific Patrol Services (PPS), a Portland-based private security firm. Under the agreement, bureaus can notify PPS about illegal campsites. The contractor then serves notice and dismantles problem sites, freeing up strapped bureaus to carry out other work ["Sweeping Up," News, April 9].

And there's an added benefit to the plan the mayor's office introduced. Under the agreement, PPS has to fill out detailed "inventory reports," chronicling with photos and written descriptions what it confiscates, and giving the city a centralized record of that property.

More than two months into the contract, though, the city has tapped PPS to carry out cleanups just four times. And it's clear city bureaus aren't reaching out for the service as much as they might.

Take Portland Parks and Recreation, which oversees much of the Springwater.

Spokesman Mark Ross largely confirmed Sutton's account of the May cleanups. The parks department posted signs on Friday, May 16, he says, giving notice that several camps near the path were illegal and would be cleaned up. Crews returned the following Monday to cut "non-native" plants near the sites, forcing out two people who'd already been formally banned from the parkland.

"In this case, the campers took their belongings (except for debris and refuse) and left," Ross wrote in an email. "We have not needed to use PPS because, unlike other bureaus, [Parks and Recreation] has the capacity to clean most campsites using our own staff. We anticipate possibly utilizing PPS in the future to clean large camps in remote areas, ones that are beyond the capacity for our own maintenance crews to clean."

PPS hasn't been cut completely out of enforcement on the Springwater. The Portland Bureau of Environmental Services sent contract crews out to the trail twice in May, the city says.

The Portland Office of Management and Finance (OMF), which holds the cleanup contract, receives inventory reports from PPS once a month, according to spokeswoman Abby Coppock. It hadn't obtained accounts of three calls in May by deadline, and could offer only cleanup dates.

The fourth call occurred on April 29, when police pointed PPS to a small park at NE 102nd and Weidler. But when the crew arrived, it found only miscellaneous debris, not a campsite. The contractor spent about an hour at the site, according to its report, but under the terms of the contract, that hour would have allowed PPS to charge for a full day's work—\$703.24.

"We are working with them on a more workable costing structure and have not been charged anything yet," says OMF spokeswoman Kelly Ball.

In the days after the cleanup contract was announced, some homelessness advocates had reservations. Private security officers and homeless people are often in conflict, and people like Street Roots Executive Director Israel Bayer stressed PPS staffers need training to handle sensitive cleanup situations.

The selective use of the contract raises new questions about how comprehensive and useful PPS' cleanup records will be. In explaining the plan to the Mercury in early April, mayor's office spokesman Dana Haynes said the contractor's involvement would help centralize data around campsite enforcement, giving the city a resource to look to when people complained their belongings had been confiscated. It would also help ensure city bureaus handle cleanups in roughly the same way.

"That's the kind of coordination we haven't done really well in the past," Haynes said at the time. "It's not going to be crystal clear and perfect, but we're really going to try."

But bureaus are still opting to handle campsite enforcement themselves, according to Marc Jolin, executive director of homeless outreach organization JOIN.

"Bureaus are looking at PPS, and in some instances doing their own work," says Jolin, whose organization is notified when a bureau posts notice at an illegal site. "There have been places where the Portland police are continuing to engage people. They're being intentional about that."

Even as cops and other bureaus use contractors sparingly, advocates and homeless people say homeless sweeps have been prevalent in recent days.

"It has to do with the [Grand Floral] parade," said Brad Gibson, 55, who was spending time outside of homeless rest area Right 2 Dream Too on Tuesday, June 3. Asked whether it was police or private security officers carrying out enforcement, Gibson said: "All of the above. Pick 'E' every time."

Hall Monitor

A Pair of Missed Milestones

By Denis C. Theriault

BY NOW, based on the wishful thinking of the past few months, Portland City Hall ought to have marked a pair of major and incredibly consequential police reform milestones.

A much-contested reform deal between the city, the Portland Police Association, and the US Department of Justice—calling for new training, tighter use-of-force policies, and speedier misconduct investigations—seemed destined to receive US District Court Judge Michael Simon's approving signature back in April.

Which is about when the city had aimed to start vetting some of the (hopefully) highly accomplished applicants vying to do the difficult work of overseeing those reforms. The posting for the position—officially billed as a "compliance officer/community liaison" (COCL)—optimistically placed the job's "anticipated start date" as sometime this month.

But actually, so far (and maybe unsurprisingly), neither of those things has been checked off the city's list. As a result, one of the most important promises of federal police reform—real civilian oversight—remains unfulfilled and in a troubling state of limbo.

Simon was all set to approve the reform deal this spring, provided he got his way on one seemingly small point: the right to compel annual updates on the reforms in his courtroom.

But instead of cheerily saying yes, the city and its rank-and-file police union have refused Simon's request. And, despite the weeks he gave them to bargain over a plausible alternative, they've been unable to strike a deal. Now Simon will decide next month whether to hold his nose and accept the deal anyway—or cast the whole thing down.

But that's still better than the slow-going selection process for the COCL post. Despite plans to air three finalists way back in April, the city is still combing through applicants and doesn't appear remotely close to reaching a list that small.

Sources say modest tensions, kept very quiet, have arisen between police accountability advocates.

Though the police reform deal emphasizes improving police treatment of Portlanders with mental illness, mental health advocates, so far, say the hiring process has favored advocates more interested in addressing racial profiling. Those complaints have convinced Commissioner Amanda Fritz to lengthen the vetting process.

"We've not had mental health communities at the table," Fritz says. "We're not going forward until they are."

But maybe worse, sources say, is the caliber of the current applicants. They point to cities like Seattle, which hired a nationally respected police consultant to oversee its reform process, and they ruefully note that no one similarly decorated has applied in Portland. Sources also say the pool tilts more toward experience with racial issues than mental health.

Twelve résumés have been pulled for further screening. Fritz says she's confident the city will cull that list down to three, and then one.

Mental health advocates appreciate Fritz's efforts.

"Amanda is trying to find an easier path to make this work," says Jason Renaud of the Mental Health Association of Portland.

But those advocates aren't so sure it will work—they're worried it's going to be too little, too late.

The Daily Journal of Commerce

Portland City Council will wait to vote on street fee

By Jeff McDonald

Portland City Council has delayed until November its vote on a controversial street fee after concerns were raised about how it would affect low-income residents and small businesses.

Also, the council on Wednesday pushed back until June 11 a vote on a charter amendment that would lock into place the use of revenues collected from the street fee. The amendment, if approved, would then be referred to voters on the Nov. 4 ballot.

In the meantime, a work group will be convened to assess ways to improve the street fee plan before the council's scheduled vote on Nov. 12.

"A lot of people said they were concerned," Mayor Charlie Hales said of the decision to delay the vote. "It's time to work on some of the particulars."

Hales blamed Congress for failing to index federal gas tax increases since 1993. The 18.4-cent gas tax, which provides for highway improvements, would be closer to 30 cents per gallon if it were indexed for inflation, he said.

The city often has had to choose either maintenance or new sidewalks, Hales said.

"We know this will have an impact on everybody, but it will hurt worse if we wait," he said.

Under a plan pitched last week by Commissioner Amanda Fritz, the street fee would be phased in over three years starting in July 2015. Single-family households would pay monthly fees of \$6 the first year and then \$9 and \$12 in ensuing years, according to Fritz's plan. Low-income and multifamily residents would pay less over that time.

Businesses' fees would be calculated via a formula based on business type – likely trips generated per month and square footage occupied.

Revenues generated by businesses would be scaled to match those by residents over the three-year period. The city estimates that it would generate \$127.8 million in revenues over three years.

To calculate the amount that a business would owe under the proposed street fee, visit www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/smsf_calculator.cfm.

The Portland Business Journal

Portland takes next step in Google Fiber bake-off

By Andy Giegerich

Portland may have moved another step closer to attracting Google's high-speed network.

Portland's City Council unanimously approved lease agreements for the "fiber huts" used to run the Google Fiber offering. The Portland area is a candidate for the much-sought service.

The Oregonian reports that while the vote "is an incremental step as Google evaluates whether to build in Portland ... the company signaled it was an important milestone" because it indicates the city's serious about working with the behemoth search engine company.

Google had announced in February Portland is a candidate for its Fiber network. Seven other cities are seeking the service.

Google Fiber, which is available in three cities, offers Internet speeds that are 100 times faster than current online offerings.

The “huts” are 30-square-foot structures that hold the telecom equipment needed to provide the services. Each of the huts provides the backbone needed to serve 20,000 homes.

The City Council is set to consider granting Google a franchise agreement for the service at its June 11 meeting.