

The Oregonian

Portland Makes Permanent Rule That Landlords Must Pay Some Tenants' Moving Costs

*By Gordon Friedman
March 8, 2018*

Portland city commissioners made permanent on Wednesday a program that requires landlords to pay renters' moving costs if they are evicted without cause or are forced to move because of a rent increase of 10 percent or more.

The program, a brainchild of Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, is designed to address Portland's escalating housing and homelessness crisis, in addition to other steps taken by the city council.

It had been used on a trial basis for a year before commissioners made it permanent, and included a blanket exemption for landlords that own only one rental unit. The permanent program removes that all-encompassing exemption, but adds a laundry list of new ones that will allow some landlords with a single unit and other landlords meeting certain conditions to avoid paying tenants' relocation costs.

Wednesday's vote comes after commissioners heard hours of testimony on the program last week. During that testimony, supporters said the program has helped tenants avoid big rent hikes and costly moves, while some landlords pushed back against the rules as hampering their ability to issue a no-cause eviction against bad tenants.

Councilors' re-approval of the program also included language to establish a "rental registration system" through which the city will track landlords who seek an exemption from the moving-assistance rules. Landlords will also have to report when they issue a no-cause eviction or raise rent more than 10 percent.

In explaining her "yes" vote to make the program permanent, Eudaly said housing "cannot be treated like any other commodity" and that commissioners are taking what steps they can to make renting more affordable.

In explaining his "yes" vote, Commissioner Nick Fish said Portland renters shouldn't have to worry about facing a massive rent hike. He noted the city council has worked to ease the local housing crisis by lobbying the Legislature for more authority to address housing problems head-on, secured a \$250 million housing bond and created new programs to combat high rents and homeless, among taking other steps.

"The market forces at work here are too big for any local government to contain, but we have an obligation to step up and lead in ways that we can," Fish said. "Today, we are doing just that."

The vote to make the program permanent was unanimous, and the new rules take effect immediately.

Portland City Council Nixes Pearl District Apartment Building Opposed by Neighbors

*By Elliot Njus
March 7, 2018*

The Portland City Council on Wednesday nixed construction of a 185-foot apartment tower on the shore of the Willamette River in the Pearl District.

In a unanimous vote, the five city commissioners signaled they would overturn the Portland Design Commission's earlier approval of the 17-story, 2 tower proposed by Lincoln Property Group of Dallas, Texas. They will have to cast a second, final vote next month.

The Pearl District Neighborhood Association had appealed the design commission's earlier decision.

The group had argued the building would block views of the Willamette River and the Fremont Bridge, including from the nearby The Fields Park, and it would set a precedent for future development at that scale.

And, they said, it would encroach on the Willamette River Greenway, an effort to piece together a continuous trail along the river. Opponents said the building would cast the trail in shadow and that, at just under 13 feet wide, the trail would be too narrow for bicycle and pedestrian use.

Housing activists, meanwhile, argued the city would be contributing to the escalating cost of housing by denying the project and further limiting the supply of new homes.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz, who had argued against land-use policies that would allow taller development on sites near the river, said the proposal would create a pinch point on the greenway trail and failed to include design features that showcase to the Willamette River, one of the design guidelines for the district.

She — along with other commissioners — said views from The Fields Park didn't factor in to the decision.

"I don't consider the view from The Fields Park to be at all germane to this discussion," she said. "What is of concern to me is the development itself and the greenway, because the greenway is the significant public benefit that's involved in this site."

Mayor Ted Wheeler also said he found the argument about the greenway compelling.

"I don't think the building is a bad building," Wheeler said. "However, this location, as I say, is an iconic location, and what we do here will set the standard for the rest of the development that takes place along that corridor. The one thing we can never take back is the location of the building in the greenway."

The design took advantage of several density bonuses for including housing, bicycle facilities and a "green roof" covered with vegetation to absorb stormwater. The developer also sought several exemptions from design standards, including approval for a taller but thinner tower than is allowed by right under the rules.

The building would have included 275 market-rate apartments and space for a ground-floor restaurant, as well as a public plaza on its north side.

The developers' attorney asked the council to delay its decision so the firm could bring forward a new design. The council, however, opted to uphold the appeal, sending the developer to start the application process from scratch.

Patrick Gilligan, an executive vice president for Lincoln Property Co., said Wednesday's decision came as a shock both to his and to other developers in Portland.

"We honestly thought that we were playing by all the rules," Gilligan said. "It was a big shock, and it's very frustrating. And I think a lot of people are watching."

The company has not decided whether to pursue a redesigned version of the project, he said. "We've got some soul-searching to do."

The developer could build a wider structure up to 100 feet tall, which would also block the view from the park, without seeking any exceptions to the rules. The building's designers said they shifted to a tower to reduce the impact by blocking only a portion of the view of the bridge.

New land-use rules approved by the council, but not yet implemented, could allow a taller building by right once they're finalized.

A new application could also be subject to the city's inclusionary zoning policy, which requires private developers to set aside rent-restricted units for low-income residents in large apartment and condo projects.

The Portland Tribune

Council: Renters Yes, Apartment Tower No

By Jim Redden

March 7, 2018

Portland City Council tackles two controversial issue on Wednesday, with renters winning and a developer losing.

The City Council made two unanimous housing-related decisions on Wednesday that some might argue contradicted each other.

In one, the council expanded and made permanent a renter protection policy adopted in February 2016 intended to address the affordable housing crisis.

In the other, it tentatively turned down a proposal to build hundreds of more apartments in the Pearl District. Although they would have been in a high-end 17-story tower, economists argue that increasing the total supply of housing will help bring costs down.

The renter protection policy requires landlords to pay relocation costs ranging from \$2,900 to \$4,500 to tenants subject to no-cost evictions or who choose to move if their rents are raised more than 10 percent a year. The council revoked an exemption for landlords who own just one rental unit, except in limited circumstances. The revised policy is effective immediately.

Mayor Ted Wheeler and other council members said they rejected the proposed design for the Fremont Place Apartments because it infringes too much on the Willamette Greenway that is intended to run along the west side of the Willamette River throughout the city. At some points, the width is much narrower than what the council approved in the South Waterfront neighborhood.

The neighborhood association had appealed the approval of the project. Some nearby neighbors testified it would block their views of the Fremont Bridge. The council did not seem particularly moved by that argument. A final vote on the project will take place next week.

Used Syringes Litter Portland as Needle Exchanges Grow

By Nick Budnick

March 8, 2018

City and county officials plan to increase drop-box sites for easier disposal, but details unclear.

The number of syringes exchanged under a Multnomah County-funded program jumped to 5.5 million last year, up from 2016's record of nearly 4 million.

Meanwhile, the number of used needles picked up on downtown sidewalks by Portland Clean and Safe workers has climbed from nearly 17,000 to 28,000 in one year.

And yet, nearly 30 years after needle exchange first began in the county — and as neighbors increasingly complain of the health risks of used syringes littering sidewalks, parks and neighborhoods in greater Portland — there remains only one publicly run open-air drop-box for disposal in the county, near the west side of the Burnside Bridge.

In part, that's because a second box on the Vera Katz Eastbank Esplanade was stolen late last year. But even had that not happened, other cities have pursued more ambitious programs with positive results.

Local officials from the county, the city of Portland and the Metro regional government are now looking to change the situation, discussing a plan to significantly increase the number of drop boxes around the county. But details of the discussion remain a closely guarded secret — so much so that while county officials have been pushing the initiative for months, Mayor Ted Wheeler and the Portland Business Alliance's Downtown Clean and Safe District say they aren't ready to say much.

"The city is in discussions with the county, Metro, TriMet and Clean and Safe to determine if there is a way we can better coordinate to reduce biohazardous waste caused by discarded syringes," said a Wheeler spokesman, Michael Cox. "Though talks are preliminary, we are exploring more syringe disposal boxes distributed across our community as part of the solution."

Drug use skyrocketing

The reason for the county's skyrocketing syringe-exchange market is simple: an increasing number of heroin and methamphetamine users. About two-thirds of the users of the county needle-exchange report unstable housing or homelessness.

The head of Portland Police Bureau's drug and vice division, Captain Mark Kruger, says heroin is more plentiful than ever, based on anecdotal information and national surveys. Meth, meanwhile, is cheaper than it's been in years.

The way things are going, "needles are going to replace the rose as the city of Portland's signature plant," Kruger remarked, speaking only for himself.

County officials, working with the nonprofit Outside In, have gone to great lengths to distribute special portable containers for easy collection and disposal of "sharps." Under the needle-

exchange program, users turn in bunches of used needles in exchange for roughly the equivalent number of clean ones.

Officials also note that biomedical waste disposal boxes have proliferated in public bathrooms downtown. And they say the benefits of preventing unsafe needle sharing pay off in preventing a costly human toll. But they hope to do more to tackle the problem of waste disposal that stems from injection drug use.

County commissioners say they hoped to already have finalized plans for more drop boxes, and they aren't sure exactly what the holdup is.

But the players at the table show the potential reach of such a plan — including TriMet with its many transit stations.

Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson said city fire stations could be part of the solution, and are reportedly being discussed as drop-box locations. The main question, she said: "Is there a way that we can leverage the public buildings and the public property that we have."

Meanwhile, the county still hasn't implemented plans to expand the number of its own drop boxes to five, which was approved 10 months ago.

"There's been neighborhoods that have reached out about wanting to have disposals in a park in their neighborhood, but there hasn't been any decisions yet," Vega Pederson said.

And whether the plans under negotiation go far enough to satisfy neighborhood activists in places like St. Johns, Montavilla, Lents and Richmond remains to be seen.

"We are drowning in the needles put out into the community by Multnomah County," said a letter complaining about the health department program that was sent to Commissioner Sharon Meieran by the Goose Hollow Foothills League last month. "Our residents are picking up hundreds of needles each week," the letter states. "Our neighborhood has experienced a shocking increase in unsafe and unsanitary levels of needles since MCHD started this program ... while keeping drug addicts safer, MCHD is risking the health of thousands more with this program.

"Our neighborhood is also filled with bloody cotton balls and feces-covered wipes that were given out at Outside In," added the letter, which was signed by Tracy Prince, the league's vice chair. "It is humane and necessary to hand out these items, but MCHD should put a plan in place so that these items aren't disposed of in our neighborhoods."

One study in Baltimore found that three drop-boxes were used often for syringe disposal. Though they did not result in a measurable decline in littered syringes in a two-year span, the study found that more than 10 percent of the syringes disposed of were infected with HIV, showing the health benefit.

Another study in Montreal looked at the effects of 12 drop-boxes over five years and found a significant impact on the reduction of used syringes littering the area.

For Multnomah County Health Officer Paul Lewis, the solution sought by the county is proven.

"To me the answer is multiple low-barrier options for discarding medical waste, and right now we don't have that," he said. "We just need multiple locations where it's easy to get rid of stuff for free."

Lewis said that there is no known case of a pin-prick from a used syringe leading to transmission of HIV. In contrast, he says, he says needle exchange prevents unsafe needle sharing. That keeps pregnant women who are users from transmitting disease to babies in the womb — a more common way of infecting children.

But what is the long-term solution for Portland's injection drug problem?

County officials say the push to restrict prescription painkillers is a good start, but will take years to have an effect on addiction rates.

Kruger, the Portland drug cop, said that personally, he thinks more accountability for drug users could be a "hammer" to ensure they get into drug treatment. But he said the supply of drug-treatment options just is not there.

Meieran doesn't think sanctions are the answer, but agrees a lack of treatment options is a major problem. An emergency room doctor who has focused on drug addiction and the opioid epidemic, Meieran said she regularly sees people in the ER who are ready to give up drugs or drinking. "I have to be the one to sit there and tell them that ... perhaps in six to eight weeks something will open up."

Willamette Week

Portland City Council Votes to Overturn Approval for 275 Apartments That Would Have Blocked Views of the Fremont Bridge

*By Rachel Monahan
March 7, 2018*

People with waterfront views protect their skyline for now.

Maybe Portland doesn't need more housing, after all.

City Council voted unanimously this morning to overturn a decision to approve a 17-story building in the Pearl District that would rise near the Fremont Bridge. The vote is preliminary; a final vote will be taken in four weeks' time.

Neighborhood activists, many with views of the bridge from their windows, had opposed the building on the grounds that it would block the views from their own buildings and the park.

City Council sided with the Pearl District Neighborhood Association, which had appealed an approval of the project, though council members said it wasn't about the views.

"I completely do not buy any of the arguments we've heard around views," Mayor Ted Wheeler said. "There will be development in that area. It designed for development. It's planned for development."

(Commissioner Amanda Fritz, who had the longest list of objections to the project, even warned the project's opponents that she and they had lost the fight over height and views already in the city's plans for raising the height limits.)

But Wheeler voted against approving the project and presented his own reasons for doing so—protecting the bike and pedestrian path along the Willamette River known as the Willamette Greenway.

"This location is an iconic location," says Wheeler. "What we do here with the first development will set the standard The one thing that we can absolutely never take back is the location of the building in the greenway."

It was a remarkable objection from the mayor, given that Wheeler has repeatedly said he supports making design review less onerous. The city's Design Review Commission had approved the building in this case, and the Pearl District Neighborhood Association had appealed the decision, raising multiple technical objections.

City Commissioner Nick Fish had also laid out his objections, particularly criticisms of the narrow width of the greenway. He said he favored the greenway in South Waterfront, where the city requires as much as 100 feet width including shrubs.

"This particular greenway is wholly unsatisfactory," says Fish. "It narrows to a small entry point where you have to navigate between a wall and a planter. That is not a successful greenway."

But the Fremont Place Apartments project is subject to a 25-foot requirement for the greenway. (That will change as soon as May under the Comprehensive Plan that has been approved by Council, but it is not the standard the project was subject to.)

The Design Review Commission had allowed the project what's called a modification, to extend the building above the third floor into what's technically considered greenway space.

Fish's chief of staff Sonia Schmanski said the "greenway criteria, like most, are subjective"—which gives City Council wide latitude in blocking development.

Commissioner Dan Saltzman also mentioned the greenway, and Commissioner Chloe Eudaly did not offer an explanation for her vote.

It's not clear what the developers will do at this point.

"We obviously are extremely frustrated and disappointed," says Patrick Gilligan of the development firm Lincoln Property Company.

"We went through multiple design review hearings, worked tirelessly with staff, worked with the neighborhood, made numerous adaptations along the way, and spent substantial resources on this project—which is currently a surface parking lot. For it to have gone through all of those processes and get shot down by council today is extremely disheartening. We are currently examining our options at this point going forward."

The Portland Mercury

A New Report Shows Highway Widening Won't Solve Portland's Congestion Woes

By Dirk VanderHart

March 7, 2018

And as a Tolling Plan Rushes Forward, Some Officials Want to Know Why ODOT Won't Research a World Without New Construction Projects

ON SOME DAYS, Portland's stretch of Interstate 5 suffers from what engineers call "hyper-congestion," a near-complete breakdown of traffic that cuts the freeway's efficiency roughly in half. The plan to add two auxiliary lanes to smooth the road's path through the Rose Quarter wouldn't change that for long.

Farther east, Interstate 205 has some of the same problems during peak travel times, and similar expansion plans for that highway won't be enough to lastingly stop the daily crawl, either.

In fact, according to a firm hired by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), none of the dozen highway-widening projects that are currently being planned in and around Portland by state officials would be enough in coming years to stem the increasing congestion choking Portland highways.

“Baseline, significant congestion will exist in 2027 on the I-5 and I-205 study corridors, even with all the improvements” currently envisioned, reads a new analysis from Montreal-based engineering firm WSP. “This congestion impacts not only speed, but also the number of vehicles that the facility can accommodate, with consequential impacts upon quality of life, economic vitality, and vehicle emissions in the region.”

That’s a notable thing to read in a report commissioned by ODOT, which is a relentless champion of highway-widening projects. But it’s not surprising. In the face of vocal opposition to the plan to widen I-5 in the Rose Quarter, the agency has been forced to acknowledge that adding lanes won’t ultimately ease the city’s commuting woes.

Now some local leaders are asking a follow-up question. As officials study the concept of fighting congestion—and potentially curbing auto use—by tolling portions of I-5 and I-205, some want to know if tolls could aid commuters even without the state dropping billions on new highway lanes.

“What would be the impact of tolling all roads everywhere, assuming roads look like what they look like now?” Metro Councilor Craig Dirksen asked at a February 28 meeting of the state’s 25-member Value Pricing Advisory Committee, which is slated to recommend a scheme for tolling by the end of the year. “That’s a scenario that needs to be considered.”

“I think that’s a worthwhile look to have,” said another committee member, Multnomah County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson, a short while later.

Gerik Kransky, policy director for the active transportation advocacy group the Street Trust, also pushed the concept.

If ODOT follows their lead, Portland could get a sense of how tolling, by itself, could ease the city’s traffic woes. Anti-highway activists suggest such information would offer valuable context when deciding, say, whether a \$450 million widening project makes sense.

The analysts hired by the state seem to bolster that point, saying tolling could have a meaningful impact without widening local highways.

“There’s nothing about the projects not being [built] that would change the fact that pricing would do well,” MSP engineer Chris Swenson told officials at last week’s meeting. “If it’ll do well with those projects in, it will do well with those projects out.”

But as of now, it looks like the calls will go unaddressed. At the meeting, ODOT officials said such an analysis was outside of the committee’s purview, and that the group is forced to proceed under the assumption that all the planned highway projects will be built.

“We don’t have it within the scope of our work to remove projects from the regional plan,” ODOT Project Manager Judith Gray said at the meeting.

Other officials were openly hostile to the idea of instituting tolls without also expanding area highways.

“There’s a growing acceptance that congestion pricing may relieve congestion, but it’s not the ultimate answer,” said Clackamas County Commissioner Paul Savas. “If the public sees a toll, they want to see a benefit.”

The issue is one of many sticking points confronting the value pricing committee, which since November has been toiling in relative obscurity—especially considering the immense impact its work could have in the region.

Depending on the recommendations that come out of that group, the state could toll every lane of both I-5 and I-205 from the Columbia River to where the two highways meet in Tualatin. That’s an option favored by the City of Portland.

Alternately, the state could settle on a far more limited approach—or none at all. Other concepts under consideration include tolling a single bridge (the Abernethy, where I-205 crosses the Willamette River), constructing tolling lanes on a larger stretch of I-205, tolling all existing lanes on a segment of I-5 through downtown, and tolling a lane of I-5 in each direction just south of the Interstate Bridge.

“What we’re really looking at right now is: Is this feasible?” Sean O’Hollaren, the advisory committee’s co-chair and a member of the Oregon Transportation Commission, said at the February 28 meeting. “If so, what does it look like?”

The conversation around tolling is complex, with traffic engineers’ obsession with efficiency butting heads with environmentalists’ concerns about cars’ carbon emissions. Both positions potentially collide with equity advocates’ insistence that economically disadvantaged drivers could be disproportionately affected by any pricing scheme.

The push and pull also ropes in geographic concerns. Vancouver officials look at the issue far differently than their Portland counterparts, who are at odds with those in Clackamas County.

Because of all this, precious little is known about what sort of tolling system—if any—the state might move forward. The value pricing committee has just three meetings left, yet still doesn’t know where or how it will toll, what the cost will be, how carbon emissions would be affected, and what steps the state would take to assist low-income residents.

The sheer magnitude of those unknowns has officials pleading for more time.

“I am writing to respectfully request that the Oregon legislature slow down the process and allow for more public input,” Dirksen, the Metro councilor, wrote on behalf of a committee of regional officials in a February 16 letter to legislators. “This is a new concept and people need time to understand the benefits and potential impacts of congestion pricing.”

State Sen. Lee Beyer, a key lawmaker on transportation issues, has since suggested that such a delay is unlikely. ODOT, it seems, shot down that suggestion, too.

“In consultation with ODOT,” Beyer said, according to the Portland Tribune, “we were told they do not perceive a need for delay on the value pricing study at this time.”

Portland's Renter Relocation Policy Is Now Permanent— And Stronger Than Ever

By Dirk VanderHart

March 7, 2018

The city's controversial renter relocation law is here to stay.

After kneading out disagreements over the policy, the Portland City Council this morning unanimously expanded and made permanent the requirement that landlords pay between \$2,900 and \$4,500 in tenant moving expenses in some instances.

As expected the new, permanent statute now ropes in landlords who only rent one unit of housing, a major demand of tenant advocates. And the law now requires landlords to report to the city when they pay tenants relocation expenses, or when they plan to claim one of the remaining exemptions in the bill—a move Mayor Ted Wheeler says will help the city track how the policy is working.

In a somewhat recent development, the law even had the unanimous vote required to pass on an "emergency" basis, meaning it goes into effect immediately. Commissioner Amanda Fritz had retained serious doubts about forcing single-unit landlords to abide the policy, but her position changed when City Council agreed to add one additional exemption to the law: Now, landlords who issue a fixed-term lease to a tenant with an explicit understanding that the unit will be converted or sold at a certain point are free of having to pay relocation fees.

The relocation ordinance kicks in when a landlord issues a no-cause eviction (including refusing to renew a lease) or forces a tenant to move with rent increases of 10 percent or more.

Since the law was first suggested by Commissioner Chloe Eudaly in February 2017, landlords have complained that it's led to property owners selling their rental units, thereby decreasing the amount of rental housing stock in the city. Tenant activists say the law has dramatically cut down on no-cause evictions. To date, there's been little hard data that backs up either assertion, but that didn't stop council from extolling the law.

"Today we are making a successful new program permanent," said Commissioner Nick Fish.

Fritz had a more measured tone. "I'm concerned that some landlords will raise rents by 9.9 percent every year or sell the unit or turn it into an Airbnb," she said. "I don't see any of those being in the best interest of renters." She added, though: "We know it has limited no-cause evictions. We know that is has been crucial for some people."

The bolstered law council passed today still includes loopholes, including a pass for landlords who want to move immediate family members into a unit, landlords who rent out the other half of a duplex that they also live in, and people who are renting their primary residences for three years or less.

Commissioner Dan Saltzman had proposed doing away with an exemption on affordable housing providers written into the law, but backed off today. Instead, he said he'd allow a narrow exemption for cases where low-income tenants' income changes enough to force them to pay more for a unit, or when the amount of their rent subsidized by the government increases.

The council didn't take up other concerns over the law, including a worry that landlords could simply jack up fees associated with a home, or eliminate certain "concessions" attached to the unit that effectively hike rents. In testimony on the law, tenant advocates had reported huge increases in utility payments, pet fees, or parking fees—none of which count as rents under the

ordinance. Eudaly also voiced concern about the loophole for landlords moving in family members, which she said could be subject to abuse.

Wheeler, the city's housing commissioner, promised to bring those issues before the city's new Rental Services Commission, and report back to council with recommendations.

Wheeler also took a weird rhetorical stand at the hearing. When Fish suggested an amendment putting an emergency clause on the ordinance—which, again, made it go into effect immediately—Wheeler voted "no." The mayor said he'd heard concerns from the Portland Housing Bureau about how difficult it would be to implement the changes immediately.

Wheeler could have easily made that stance count by also voting against the ordinance itself—a 4-1 passage would have eliminated the emergency aspect. Instead he voted "yes."

"We are providing clear and definitive leadership," Wheeler said. "I certainly have a difference of opinion regarding the emergency clause. We're going to have to work very, very quickly to notify landlords of these changes."

While the new changes go into effect immediately, the renter relocation law isn't completely out of the woods. Landlords are currently challenging the law in the Oregon Court of Appeals.

The Daily Journal of Commerce

Portland City Council Rejects Pearl District Proposal

By Liz Sias

March 7, 2018

In a tentative vote, the Portland City Council unanimously upheld an appeal to deny the proposal for the Fremont Apartments, planned in the Pearl District between Northwest Naito Parkway and the Willamette River. The council will hold a final vote at 11 a.m. on April 4.

TVA Architects' design, with several modifications, received the Portland Design Commission's approval in December with a 3-1 vote. But the Pearl District Neighborhood Association (PDNA) appealed that decision, and got its opportunity to present arguments at a public hearing before the council in February.

"Because this is an iconic location, and because this building will set the standard for that location, I want us to set that standard very high," Mayor Ted Wheeler said.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz, who previously served on the city's planning commission, said the proposed building's height and its impact on views of the Fremont Bridge from Fields Park were not relevant to her decision. She brought up several concerns, including the height of the rooftop mechanical equipment, the reduced width of vertically-hung bicycle racks and the narrow width of the greenway by the building.

Overall, she said, plans do not meet city criteria with the modifications requested.

Wheeler and Commissioner Nick Fish agreed that the greenway in the proposed design would be too narrow.

"What we do here with this development will set the standard for the rest of the development that will take place along that corridor," Wheeler said. "It is my belief that we need to aggressively protect the greenway."

Fish mentioned the emerging greenway in the South Waterfront District as an example of a wider one, with dedicated spaces for bicyclists and pedestrians.

“You can make a very persuasive case that the fact that the buildings are set back further enhances the experience of the neighborhood, of the residents, and of the whole feeling of the emerging neighborhood,” Fish said, adding that the greenway in the Fremont Apartments design is unsatisfactory because of the narrow “choke point” at the southern end. “As someone who likes to ride his bike down by the river ... that is not a successful greenway.”

Wheeler noted that any development along that corridor will likely be tall.

“We are a growing city; there will be more height and there will be more density,” he said. “I believe this design team and this development team has the capacity and spades to be able to deliver a building that will meet their objectives as well as meet the community objectives and be celebrated for many, many generations to come.”