

The Portland Tribune

City Hall Update: City Forecloses on Four Zombie Homes

*By Jim Redden
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Plus, Portland traffic fatalities are down slightly so far this year and PSU is getting a PREPHub (see below to know what that means).

The City Council voted on Aug. 8 to foreclose on four zombie homes owned by chronically negligent landlord Norman Yee.

The delinquent properties will be sold at auction unless Yee pays off the 13 city liens against them, which total \$67,673.02. He currently owns 10 properties in violation of the city code, with complaints against them going back to 2004. There have been 142 police calls on the properties so far.

The council reformed the foreclosure process to speed up auction sales under former Mayor Charlie Hales. Since then, 68 properties have been proposed for foreclosure by the Bureau of Development Services, and 17 have been approved by the council.

The city has recovered \$1.96 million on 44 of the properties, and many have been fixed up or replaced with new homes.

Traffic fatalities down

Traffic fatalities are running slightly below 2017 levels, after several years of increases that reflected national trends.

As of Monday, 21 people had been killed in crashes in the city this year, compared to 25 fatalities during the same time in 2017.

It is too soon to say whether this represents progress in the City Council's efforts to eliminate all fatal and serious injury crashes by 2025 through its highly publicized Vision Zero program, however. Crash rates vary from year to year, and 2017 started off with a marked reduction from the previous year.

PREPHub coming to PSU

The City Council has approved a partnership with Portland State University, Portland General Electric and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to create a pilot PREPHub (Emergency Preparedness Hubs) project at PSU.

PREPHubs are a new kind of infrastructure designed to operate entirely off-grid during a disaster, providing crucial services that include power, communications and emergency first-aid supplies. Residents can go to the public neighborhood spaces for such things as seeking assistance and recharging cell phones. PGE will provide power to them from the electric grid and from energy storage devices, supplemented by solar arrays and pedal power.

The first PREPHub is expected to be completed on the PSU campus in 2019. The council voted on Aug. 8 to contribute up to \$90,000 to the \$360,000 project.

The Daily Journal of Commerce

Portland's Green Loop Coming Together

By Chuck Slothower

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The city of Portland is wrestling with how the Green Loop will look and what it will require even as major projects that will front the route through downtown and the Central Eastside Industrial District move ahead with development and design work.

The approximately six-mile oval route would go through downtown – likely along Southwest Ninth and Park avenues – the Lloyd area and the Central Eastside Industrial District. The Green Loop would cross the Willamette River at Tilikum Crossing at its southern end and the Broadway Bridge at its northern end.

On a recent Sunday in July, 33,000 people took to the proposed Green Loop route to walk and ride as part of the city's Sunday Parkways promotion. City officials say residents are eager for attractive routes that they can safely travel with cars kept at a distance.

Yet many details remain to be solidified. The Green Loop may look different in different areas. Signage, traffic features and more have not been decided.

Development of the Green Loop could involve crossing improvements to key intersections, small “parklets,” streetscape design and landscape additions, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability senior planner Mark Raggett said at an Aug. 2 Design Commission briefing.

The Green Loop would feature barriers between bike lanes and vehicle traffic. The concept aims to encourage more people to walk and bike in Portland's core. It comes amid other governmental projects such as Tilikum Crossing and Sullivan's Crossing that downshift vehicle priority.

The city is looking at “one concept, many forms – one continuous design but with an ability to place-make and sort of have your own district brand or what have you,” Lora Lillard, a Bureau of Planning and Sustainability urban designer, told design commissioners.

“We haven't had the opportunity to talk to the public about what those things are,” she added.

Perhaps the most impactful change for developers will be 12-foot setbacks along 75 percent of property lines adjacent to the Green Loop. The setback requirement applies only to new developments, not existing buildings. And it would apply only on the west side, where it would continue the aesthetic of the Park Blocks. The setbacks would create “eddies” of different widths along the Green Loop, planners said.

That's a major point of discussion for developer Walt Bowen's proposed 35-story mixed-use tower on Block 216. If built, the tower would front the Green Loop on Southwest Ninth Avenue between Washington and Alder streets.

“We expect that our project will be an excellent partner to the Green Loop,” Bowen stated in an email response to questions. “Our ground floor is set up to provide 100 percent of the Ninth Avenue frontage with the kind of pedestrian-focused space that will play well with the Green Loop both before and after it is developed.”

The project team will seek a modification of the setback requirement, according to Bowen.

“We envision this segment of the Loop to be a vibrant node along its path, an energized eddy in its stream of pedestrian and bike activity,” he stated. “We'll be seeking a modification to the

setback requirement to make that happen. The amended code allows for modifications to the setback, recognizing that every block face along the Loop will have unique circumstances and conditions that need to be addressed.”

The setbacks are intended to create room for landscaping, perhaps including large, native deciduous and conifer trees.

“You really need a lot of space to be able to provide a lot of shade,” Lillard said.

Other developments planned or under construction near the Green Loop include Provenance Hotels’ and NBP Capital’s Woodlark Hotel project in the West End, and American Assets Trust’s four-block Oregon Square in Lloyd.

“We just think activating the streetscape with pedestrian and bicycle traffic is certainly good for us,” said Wade Lange, American Assets Trust’s vice president and regional manager.

The city hasn’t yet landed on a route through the Lloyd area. But Lange said more ground-level activity would help the retail spaces that the city’s guidelines typically require on the ground floor.

“What it means for our development, it’s too early to say how it will interact with it, but I think it brings a good vibe into the neighborhood,” he said.

The Green Loop would also pass by the Portland Art Museum, which is planning a \$50 million, three-story structure to link its two buildings. The museum’s director, Brian Ferriso, took part in early discussions regarding the Green Loop. The project is currently before the Historic Landmarks Commission

The project team is designing the project with the Green Loop in mind, Ferriso said. The landscape architects are Portland’s Walker Macy and Andrea Cochran Landscape Architecture of San Francisco. The design architect is Vinci Hamp Architects of Chicago, and Portland’s Hennebery Eddy Architects is the architect of record.

“It’s such a good opportunity for our downtown area, and to connect our city in various ways,” Ferriso said. “The museum is absolutely thrilled it would be fronting our facility, and we’re looking forward to integrating it with our museum campus.”