

## The Oregonian

### Portland commissioner Steve Novick to question police budget for Drugs and Vice Division

*By Maxine Bernstein*

Commissioner Steve Novick is working to convince his colleagues to cut half of the money budgeted for Portland Police Bureau's Drugs and Vice Division, arguing that other city services demand higher priority - such as disaster preparedness and pedestrian safety.

He's been granted a 30-minute slot during council budget work sessions Tuesday afternoon to make his case.

Novick argues that at least \$1 million should be taken from the \$3.9 million set aside for the vice unit.

Novick argues that the division is engaged in the "failed 40-year effort to interrupt the supply of drugs," and the city shouldn't waste too much money in that effort.

According to the Police Bureau's crime analysis unit, Portland police drug arrests have increased 5 percent between 2008 and 2012. Those figures are from arrests made agency-wide, according to the bureau.

While arrests for cocaine and methamphetamine are considerably lower than in recent years, preliminary data for the first five months of 2013 indicate arrests for methamphetamine possession are up by more than 50 percent compared to the same period in 2012, heroin arrests are up by 6 percent, but cocaine arrests dropped by about 30 percent.

Most drug arrests have occurred in Central Precinct districts: at Waterfront Park, South Park Blocks, Northwest Sixth Avenue and Glisan Street, Northwest Sixth Avenue and Flanders Street, Northwest Sixth Avenue and Everett Street, Southwest Sixth Avenue and Morrison Street, O'Bryant Square, Northwest Sixth Avenue and Davis Street, Northwest Sixth Avenue and Hoyt Street, Pioneer Place, Northwest Sixth Avenue and Couch and Union Station.

The two frequent drug arrest locations in North Precinct are the Lloyd Center district and the Hollywood transit station, according to the bureau. In East Precinct, it's the Gateway Transit Station.

Although overdose deaths decreased in Multnomah County in 2012, heroin-related deaths remained at a historically high level, with 80 in 2012, the bureau reported.

The bureau will argue, as it does in its crime analysis memo, that arrest and overdose death statistics for 2012 show a "continued increase in drug usage in the City of Portland."

But Novick counters that street-level dealing that affects neighborhood livability is addressed by other units within the bureau's three precincts. He also points to an annual national survey of police chiefs and sheriffs, in which 82 percent said the national war on drugs has not been successful in reducing the use of illegal drugs.

And, Novick pointed to the Police Bureau's own crime analysis conclusion on drug activity and arrests in Portland: "Law enforcement can only touch a small percentage of the drug market that exists in Portland, and consequently is limited in the effect it can make on improving addicts lives."

The Washington Post reported on Sunday that there's a "strategic shift" from the anti-drug war, with lower-level drug users increasingly being viewed as addicts with a treatable illness.

The council work session on Portland's Drugs and Vice Division spending will be held from 12:30 to 1 p.m. Tuesday.

## **Portland Bureau of Transportation searching for new bike and pedestrian manager to replace transit guru now at Portland Streetcar**

*By Andrew Theen*

Portland is turning to travel writing-style prose to woo a new manager of the city's bicycle, pedestrian and public transportation programs.

Dan Bower, a long-time city employee, officially left the Portland Bureau of Transportation on Monday to begin his new role as executive director of the Portland Streetcar.

PBOT posted a formal job listing last week to fill the position city leaders specifically created for Bower two years ago. The Active Transportation Division Manager gig comes with budget responsibilities, a staff of nearly two dozen and a high-profile seat at the city's transportation table both locally and regionally.

"This is an incredibly attractive job that should lure applications from seasoned, national caliber talent," said PBOT spokesman Dylan Rivera. To raise the profile, the job posting also includes a recruitment brochure with flowery language, a sampling of Portland's frequent mentions on national top ten lists and a wide-ranging narrative of the city's transit system.

"Big city excitement and small town charm make Portland, Oregon, a favorite destination in the West," the brochure reads.

The city is in "a magnificent setting along the sparkling waters of the Columbia and Willamette Rivers," according to the brochure.

The document goes on to describe the city's transportation network as award winning and "the envy of many cities across the nation."

PBOT cites a history of private streetcar infrastructure as shaping Portland today. "Bestowed this inheritance," the brochure reads, "Portlanders continually reshape and refine their streets in a constant effort to maximize the transportation network's social and economic contribution to civic life."

The document goes on to tout the "pace of investment in diversification" of the transit options, citing the Portland Aerial Tram, streetcar loop, bikeway network, light rail and "an influx of new sidewalks."

Bower's replacement will be responsible for growing biking, pedestrian and transit use in the city. The division's budget is \$4 million, according to the brochure.

Sunday Parkways, Safe Routes to School, the future implementation of a bike share program and education projects fall under the active transportation position's jurisdiction.

The job posting closes on April 21 at 4:30 p.m.

Estimated salary for the management position ranges from \$90,516 annually to \$122,508 per year.

## **As city money revitalizes Cully Boulevard, locals work to prevent gentrification**

*By Casey Parks*

The food carts seemed like a harbinger.

For years, the "gentleman's club" Skinn occupied the triangle carved by the junction of Cully Boulevard, Prescott Street and 60th Avenue. Now a gluten-free cafe cart had opened, advertising coffee and carrot cake.

The carts at Cully's strangest intersection are just the most obvious changes percolating in the neighborhood bound by Northeast 42nd and 82nd avenues. City leaders plan to spend \$1 million upgrading the diverse neighborhood over the next few years.

Business owners meet regularly to design a neighborhood vision. Artists have opened studios. And later this year, the owner of the Moon & Sixpence plans to convert a smoke shop into a restaurant serving wood fired pizzas.

As the tide of change nears their shores, Cully residents agree on one vision: They don't want to become the next Alberta. They want to avoid the gentrification that urban renewal has caused in other Northeast Portland neighborhoods.

Can Cully, where half the residents are people of color and the median income is \$10,000 below the city average, be different? Can a group of business owners and residents revitalize the neighborhood without pushing people out?

"I don't know," said Lisa Rohleder, who has owned Working Class Acupuncture for 12 years. "But we should try."

The long shot

Planners once thought Cully would be the area's next great suburb. Before city leaders annexed much of east Portland, Cully was the city's edge.

"This was the country," said Tonda McFerrian, a hairdresser who has cut hair on Cully and Killingsworth since 1980.

When then-Mayor Sam Adams and Portland Development Commission leaders created the Neighborhood Prosperity Initiative in 2012, they set the neighborhood on a different track. Adams hoped the initiative, a kind of micro-urban renewal that gives community members the money to make improvements, would turn Cully into a revitalized extension of the urban core.

That plan looked like a long shot. The boulevard, Cully's main drag, still felt very much like a suburban thoroughfare, with several auto shops and a five-block-long cemetery comprising much of the real estate. Most of its other lots were zoned to hold housing one day.

The corridor lacked the cute old buildings that helped draw developer to other since-revitalized streets. The neighborhood wasn't annexed until the mid-1980s, and much of Cully still lacked basic amenities such as sidewalks and paved streets.

Adams' initiative created the community group Cully Boulevard Alliance to spend \$1 million in city money over seven years.

The alliance started with the same blueprint other groups have used to turn gritty neighborhoods into revitalized hot spots: They offered storefront improvement grants to help business owners fix up their shops and encouraged artists to take advantage of Cully's cheap real estate.

Residents liked the changes -- "They were glad to see anything artistic this side of the cemetery," said potter Kristy Lombard -- but some worried hipsters would soon notice Cully too.

As inner Northeast fills up, Cully is becoming cooler and more appealing to people looking for real-estate bargains. Will positive changes in Cully lead to higher rents and property values? Will revitalization push existing residents to the city's new fringes?

Cully leaders are working deliberately to prevent that. When city leaders rezoned most of the boulevard for commercial uses in 2012, everyone who testified said they supported the effort only if the city actively monitored the neighborhood's changes. If data showed the area's upgrades were pushing housing costs up and current residents out, people said, the city should readapt the zones.

Portland State University students even came in and created a 50-page anti-displacement plan for the neighborhood.

Then the alliance set out to find locals to open new businesses. Longtime Cully resident Merri Compton opened that gluten free cart.

And the Native American Youth and Family Center offered business classes to help Corinne Phillips open her Pretty Petals, a flower shop that also sells dreamcatchers. The alliance bought her an awning. Community development corporation Hacienda helped Magaly Chimez take over the Yucateca store through its workforce training. The alliance paid to install windows in Chimez' new place.

When other neighborhoods turned over, they attracted hip eateries such as Gravy and Little Big Burger. Cully's new restaurant is being built by a local resident.

Restaurateur Kevin Dorney is turning a smoke and pipe shop at Skidmore and Cully into a cafe that will sell wood-fired pizzas. Dorney made his name running the Moon & Sixpence in Hollywood. That bar has a stable clientele, but it's not trendy.

"Everybody who knows me will tell you I'm not hip," Dorney said. "I still listen to CDs."

Challenges remain

With five years left in the initiative, challenges remain. The neighborhood still has higher than average crime rates, especially when it comes to theft.

Those aren't enough to push out John Eddy, the brassy-mouthed tattoo artist who has inked Cully residents for 20 years.

"I don't know that I would live anywhere else," Eddy said. "Everybody knows me."

His little plot is changing, though. Eddy won a grant this year to install a new sign out front. A Cully neighbor built it.

And just outside Eddy's window, in the triangle where Prescott, Cully and 60th meet, those food carts have opened. A Wing and a Prayer sells barbecue, Bizzi's Buzz sells coffee and gluten-free pastries.

Both got a taste of the grittier Cully this winter when a thief stole their copper-lined electric plugs.

Eddy will keep an eye out, he says -- "If I see them, they're going to collect a beating." -- because that's what neighbors do in close-knit communities. They look out for each other, whatever the future brings.

## **The Portland Tribune**

### **Saltzman puts 'workforce housing' on agenda**

*By Jim Redden*

After being in charge of the Portland Housing Bureau for about a year, Commissioner Dan Saltzman is considering expanding its priorities from primarily low-income housing to include so-called workforce housing for moderate-income families.

"There are a lot of needs for housing in the community, including affordable housing for working families near their jobs and schools," Saltzman says.

Saltzman is also preparing to ask the City Council to set guidelines for the bureau's financing programs. The Portland city auditor recently released an audit saying it is not clear how the bureau decides which project qualifies for which program. And, the audit says, the bureau will only collect about \$54 million of its total portfolio of \$357 million in outstanding loans.

“This limits the opportunity for PHB to invest in new projects in the future, since most loans — more than \$300 million — will be spent once rather than loaned, recovered, and used again for additional projects,” according to the city audit.

Saltzman is not surprised so few loans will be repaid. The bureau has been focused on investing in projects that provide housing for the city’s most vulnerable residents. Many of the loans are made to nonprofit organizations that develop or rehabilitate such projects. They could not afford to keep their rents low if they had to generate enough income to repay the loans.

“We shouldn’t call them loans if we know they’re not going to be repaid. We should call them grants,” says Saltzman.

But more than that, Saltzman says the bureau needs to know which financing options should be offered to each of the different kinds of projects it supports. Saltzman has scheduled the bureau to appear before the council to discuss the issue on April 30.

Saltzman says his desire to expand the range of projects backed by the bureau will take longer, however. He says there is a lot of support on the council and in the community to prioritize low income housing projects. Commissioner Nick Fish, who had the bureau before Saltzman, was praised for coming up with city funds to help build Bud Clark Commons during the height of the Great Recession. Located at 655 N.W. Hoyt St., it offers 130 studio apartments for the homeless, including those with drug and alcohol addictions.

Applicants must have an annual income that does not exceed 35 percent of the area’s median family income for their family size. Saltzman agrees this population must be housed, but says even families earning 80 percent to 120 percent of the area’s median family income are having trouble finding affordable housing in Portland these days

According to the federal government, the median income in the Portland area is \$48,580 for an individual and \$69,400 for a family of four.

Saltzman recently commissioned a study on workforce housing by Amy Edwards, a limited duration employee at the bureau with a background in private financing. Titled “Tools and Strategies for Facilitating Middle Income Housing Development,” it was delivered to his office Thursday.

The study said there is a clear need in Portland for more housing for families supported by construction workers, paramedics, graphic designers, teachers and social workers. It found the city offers a range of incentives for housing serving families earning up to 60 percent of the area’s median family income, but only limited incentives for families earning up to 80 percent and nothing above that.

“Subsidies exist for affordable housing, and the capital markets provide for market rate development, but no incentives exist for middle income housing,” according to the study.

The study found that some other cities already provide incentives for workforce housing, including Austin and San Jose. Saltzman says he will use the study to help prepare a proposal for the council to consider in the future. It could include extending such existing incentives as property tax and system development charge waivers to workforce housing.

“I don’t think I can convince the council to support building housing for those at the 120 percent level at this time, but I’m hoping to get agreement on at least 80 percent,” says Saltzman.

### Biggest boom

Saltzman is so convinced the city has a shortage of moderately affordable housing that he is the only member of the council to publicly support Mayor Charlie Hales’ controversial proposal to consider waiving system development charges for developers willing to build market rate housing in the Old Town/Chinatown area. Hales believes waiving the city charges for streets, parks and the like would encourage the construction of new housing with at least some affordable units.

And Saltzman says he is talking to developers about including affordable units in new housing projects.

"We're in the midst of the biggest boom in multifamily housing construction in many years," says Saltzman, referring to the numerous apartment buildings under construction or recently completed in various parts of town.

State law prohibits the city from requiring developers to include affordable units in their projects, but Saltzman says the city has incentives it can offer to encourage them, such as property tax waivers.

"I've been meeting with developers to remind them about the incentives. I haven't clinched any deals yet, but I might going forward," says Saltzman, who lists the conversations to date as involving Hoyt Street Properties, Key Development and Unico Properties.

## **The Mercury**

### **Novick Gets a Public Conversation on Cutting Cops' Drug Unit**

*By Denis C. Theriault*

It's been nearly two months since Commissioner Steve Novick raised eyebrows in Portland City Hall with a memo urging his colleagues to consider millions in additional cuts to the police bureau's budget—leading with a call to cut the bureau's mounted patrol, but tacking on an equally sensitive call to whack back its drugs and vice division.

He's already put some of his colleagues on record with doubts about horse cops.

And now, at Novick's behest, we'll find out where they might stand on his other idea: At 12:30 tomorrow, the Portland City Council will take up the issue—for all of a half of an hour—at the tail end of an hours-long city budget work session.

"The mayor knows I want to have the discussion," Novick says. "He didn't say don't have the discussion."

By now, everyone ought to know. Novick's been talking about the drugs and vice division ever since he got on the council. He's been meeting more recently with Police Chief Mike Reese, Captain Mark Kruger of the drugs and vice division, and Deanna Wesson-Mitchell, the former police officer working on cop issues in Mayor Charle Hales' office.

His beef is partly about policy. The "war on drugs," ever more expensive, has failed to make a real dent in addiction rates and drug crime. It's partly about the realities of Portland's peculiar financial circumstances. After last year's budget cuts, the city has just a modest surplus to spend this year. Novick sees a unit focused on a "failed," national drug war and sees a way to squeeze out more cash for other priorities.

"If I could expand the pot [of surplus cash] from \$6 million to \$7 million," he said, "that would be a big step."

But Novick also realizes he's up for a tough sell. He's been given several arguments for keeping the drugs and vice division around. He says many of them aren't quite convincing enough.

At first he was given a history lesson, about the year in the mid-1980s when the bureau, under Chief Penny Harrington did away with the unit—only to see start it back up again a year later under a wave of arrests. That happened to coincide with the national arrival of the crack-cocaine epidemic.

"There was an explosion of drug use generally in the mid- to late '80s that I don't think Penny Harrington was responsible for personally," Novick says.

Then Reese, steeped in social services, told him the people who use hard drugs might use them less if the supply of their drugs was interrupted. And that those people might even seek treatment. But the bureau wasn't able to correlate that lofty aspiration with hard numbers.

Wesson-Mitchell took another tack, telling Novick that drug investigations are used to go after violent criminals—because drug charges might stick when other charges won't. Or they can be used as leverage to get smaller criminals to squeal about bigger criminals.

"I watch Law and Order," he says. "I know that sort of thing happens."

But that wasn't the whole story. Kruger told him only about half of the cases worked by the drugs and vice unit are "ancillary" to investigations worked by other police units.

"Then maybe you keep that half," he says, finding fault with the other half.

The drugs unit, Novick points out, also doesn't do much with vice, these days. It has one officer working on liquor licenses. Prostitution and neighborhood-level drug dealing are handled by other units.

And as for how effective the unit might be, Novick shared an analysis (pdf)—done by the police bureau itself—that raises some difficult questions about the dent one city's drug unit can make on a drug market already controlled by organized crime and inflamed by a lousy national economy.

"I'm not on any crusade to legalize drugs," he explains, "but there are things we do out of inertia. This seems to be something worth revisiting."

Novick wouldn't mind freeing up cash for other priorities outside the police bureau: a westside disaster operations center, among them. But he says he could live with redistribution within the police bureau, especially if that redistribution helps restore traffic division's night shift.

He also says his colleagues—the council collectively requested millions more in new spending, several times more than the city's small surplus—are extremely interested in doing similar math problems. Never mind the political lift involved a year after cutting the police bureau pretty deeply.

"They think this is a line of inquiry worth pursuing," he says.

We'll see how that goes tomorrow.