

## The Oregonian

### City leaders consider financial tradeoffs tied to affordable housing policy in North and Northeast Portland

*By Brad Schmidt*

Portland Mayor Charlie Hales' proposal to spend \$20 million more on affordable housing in parts of North and Northeast Portland may mean that officials spend \$6 million less for housing in a nearby part of town.

That's the tradeoff being discussed by city leaders responsible for urban renewal and affordable housing projects in Portland.

While city officials weigh the merits of increasing housing money in one area while decreasing it in another, the net impact is clearly a boon for affordable housing: \$14 million more citywide than originally envisioned.

But the compromise marks a test case for Portland and the City Council's commitment to meet spending benchmarks in individual urban renewal districts, as part of the city's acclaimed

If the proposal moves forward, the city would fall short of its affordable housing spending goals in the Oregon Convention Center urban renewal area.

Last month, Hales announced plans to increase affordable housing spending within the Interstate urban renewal district by \$20 million. His announcement came in response to controversy over gentrification and a proposed Trader Joe's project on Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Alberta Street.

The Portland African American Leadership Forum, which wanted affordable housing added to the Trader Joe's project, called Hales' plan a "start to a path of victory for all who have been displaced and marginalized for twenty years."

But at the same time, city leaders were considering options to reduce affordable housing spending in the neighboring urban renewal area, the Oregon Convention Center district.

"I do think there was a recognition that we may not be able to spend the set-aside dollars as intended in every district, so let's not force the issue," said Patrick Quinton, executive director of the Portland Development Commission.

Dedicated affordable-housing money is rooted in a 2006 battle between the City Council and its redevelopment agency, the Portland Development Commission.

Politicians at City Hall wanted to ensure that money collected within urban renewal districts paid for more than just redeveloping offices, commercial buildings and building transit projects.

In response, they required that within nine of 11 urban renewal districts, a "minimum" percentage of money within each district went toward affordable housing.

In the Interstate district, the minimum was 30 percent. For the Oregon Convention Center district, the minimum was 26 percent.

But in 2011, the City Council softened the policy.

Officials clarified that the 30-percent standard would be calculated citywide and percentages within specific districts were only "targets."

Three years later, that change is now giving the City Council, the Portland Development Commission and the Portland Housing Bureau flexibility.

As it stands, the city has spent just \$8.6 million of nearly \$80 million within the Oregon Convention Center district for affordable housing – or 11 percent.

Quinton said the PDC originally proposed a “combo deal” where it would increase affordable housing spending in the Interstate district by \$20 million and decrease affordable housing spending in the Oregon Convention Center district by \$13 million.

But Hales moved forward on his plan to increase affordable housing spending in the Interstate district without resolving what to do in the Oregon Convention Center district.

“Now they’re separate conversations,” Quinton said.

While an infusion of affordable housing money into the Interstate district is not contingent on reductions elsewhere, the \$20 million strengthens the political argument that the city can afford to roll back funding in the Oregon Convention Center district.

Meanwhile, the Portland Housing Bureau is considering options to spend \$7 million within the Oregon Convention Center district on a housing project involving Central City Concern and the Miracles Club, Quinton said. That leaves just \$6 million in play.

Quinton said the development commission is talking with the Portland Housing Bureau about whether it makes sense to shift that \$6 million away from affordable housing to fund other projects in the Oregon Convention Center district.

Among the big-ticket items in the budget: renovating Veterans Memorial Coliseum and building a Convention Center Hotel.

Quinton said he doesn’t know which projects would receive additional money, but said “maybe there’s a better use for those dollars” instead of affordable housing.

If city leaders move forward with the proposal, Portland would spend about \$15.6 million, or 20 percent, on affordable housing within the Oregon Convention Center district.

The city is on pace to meet or exceed targets in every other district.

An estimated 44 percent of money within the Interstate district would be earmarked for affordable housing, thanks to the \$20 million infusion pushed by Hales.

Throughout all urban renewal districts, \$242 million out of \$679 million has been spent or budgeted on affordable housing from 2007 through June. That’s 36 percent.

In 2011, Commissioner Nick Fish, then in charge of the Portland Housing Bureau, downplayed the policy change that tweaked the wording from district “minimums” to “targets.”

“With the existing districts, those targets mean a lot to me,” he said at the time. “We’ll be vigilant.”

## **Portland police chief seeks to restore traffic unit's night shift; fire chief wants funding for 26 firefighters**

*By Maxine Bernstein*

Portland Police Chief Mike Reese urged City Council members Tuesday to approve nearly \$300,000 in the next budget to bring back a night shift of traffic enforcement officers.

In the last budget, the bureau lost five full-time traffic officer positions, and so eliminated the 9 p.m.-to-7 a.m. traffic shift Wednesday through Saturday.

Reese described many of the fatal crashes in Portland over the year caused by impaired drivers. Compared to 15 homicides recorded in the city in 2013, there were 35 traffic fatalities, Reese said.

"Traffic officers are committed to saving lives. They hold people accountable when they break the law," Reese said. "It's not easy work. DUII investigations require skill to make arrests prosecutable."

The bureau has asked the council to restore four officers to the traffic division's night shift.

The move "will have a measurable impact on restoring public safety," Reese told the council.

When asked how many of Portland's traffic fatalities occurred overnight, neither the chief nor Traffic Capt. Kelli Sheffer had the answer.

But Sheffer cited a Washington state survey, which she said found that 60 percent of all fatal crashes occur between 7 p.m. and 5 a.m.

Next up before the council Tuesday was Portland Fire Chief Erin Janssens.

Janssens urged the council to restore \$2.6 million for the 26 firefighter positions lost in the 2013-14 budget. A federal grant is covering those salaries, but it will expire in December 2015, she said.

Janssens also suggested buying two Quint trucks and adding one of those to a fire truck company in Southwest Portland. The Quint contains both a water pump and aerial ladder. In the 2013-14 budget, the bureau placed Quints at Station 2 at 4800 N.E. 122nd Ave. and Station 8 at North Lombard and Interstate Avenue. The bureau then reduced staff and removed those stations' full engine and ladder trucks.

The fire chief's budget request for fiscal year 2014-15 also seeks to restore funding for the bureau's safety chief position (\$167,430); half of the bureau's dive team (\$70,000), which was eliminated in the current budget; and for training of 15 firefighters to serve as paramedics (\$250,000).

"We're at an all-time low for this skill set, which places us at risk to have advanced life support in every neighborhood across the city," the fire chief said.

While the Fire Bureau's emergency call volume has increased 27 percent over the last 15 years, demand for service in North Portland has dropped 10 percent, but increased 54 percent in East Portland, she noted.

## **Buying park land in Centennial neighborhood will cost Portland \$630,000 premium: Portland City Hall roundup**

*By Brad Schmidt*

Portland Parks & Recreation's proposal to buy about 7.5 acres of land in one of the city's most park-deprived neighborhoods will come at a 40 percent premium over the property's appraised value.

City officials want to buy the land, near Southeast 148th Avenue and Division Street in the Centennial neighborhood, for \$2.2 million.

But the land has an appraised value of just \$1.57 million, according to a January 16 city appraisal, meaning the cash-strapped parks bureau is going to pay a \$630,000 premium.

Those details aren't included in documents shared publicly in advance of Wednesday's Portland City Council meeting, where the mayor and city commissioners will vote on the proposed acquisition.

Officials for Portland Parks & Recreation say they need to pay a premium over the appraised value because \$2.2 million is the lowest price that the landowners are willing to accept.

The appraisal determined that the property, zoned for multifamily housing, could accommodate up to 157 units. Development would feature modestly priced units, the appraisal assumed, leaving anticipated land costs of \$10,000 per unit to make any project financially feasible.

Parks officials have been talking on and off with the property owners, Ronald Dennis and Theresa Virnig, since about 2007. The city has been intrigued by the property because it is one of only a few large, undeveloped parcels in the area. The owners inherited the property from their father and recently listed it for \$2.54 million.

City officials have known for 30 years that a three-mile corridor along Division and Powell Boulevard, extending from 122nd Avenue to the Gresham border, lacks enough park space.

By 2020, city officials hope, all Portlanders will live within a half-mile walk of a park or natural area. Across the city, 80 percent of households already meet that standard. But in east Portland, it's just 63 percent.

Acquiring the property on Division, and eventually developing it, would help the city meet its goals. Officials estimate that a developed park in the neighborhood would serve 1,228 homes that currently don't have access within a half mile.

Mark Ross, a spokesman for Portland Parks & Recreation, said the city has no written policy on paying a premium when acquiring land.

"Council makes the determination on whether to proceed with any given proposed land purchase and are free to consider authorizing any proposal," he said in an email. "PP&R feels that this particular piece of property on SE Division best serves our City's needs, so we've brought the proposal to Council for their consideration."

To pay for the acquisition, Portland will tap about \$465,000 from funds paid by developers and builders to help expand the city's park system. Portland will also spend about \$1.74 million from its share of a regional bond measure, approved by voters in 2006, to preserve open spaces.

## **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 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.

## **The Portland Tribune**

### **Novick wants to cut police Drug and Vice Division funding**

*By KOIN News 6*

Commissioner Steve Novick wants to cut money from the Portland Police Bureau's budget, specifically their Drug and Vice Division.

He said the money could be spent better elsewhere. Novick and the other city council members debated the unusual and controversial idea Tuesday during a City Council work session on next year's budget.

"You take one drug dealer out, another one takes its place. I wish it weren't the case," Novick said. "I think the evidence over the last 40 years is that chasing drug dealers just because they're drug dealers doesn't have much of an impact."

The budget for the division is \$4 million, and Novick wants to cut that by half.

The other half of the money would be used for things like emergency preparedness and intersection safety improvements.

Police Chief Mike Reese said going after mid- and high-level drug dealers has a trickle-down effect. He also said cutting the unit in half would make a bad drug problem worse.

Novick disagrees.

"I think when you have a choice between making an investment we know saves lives, like making a dangerous intersection more safe which we know saves lives, and making an investment like this, which 40 years of evidence shows is not really having an impact, then you invest in the measure that the evidence shows actually works," he said.

Reese declined to address whether the proposed budget cut, if enacted, would create a danger to the community.

"I don't know that I want to speak on what the potential impacts of that would be," the chief said.

But this is a long way from being enacted.

At this point of the budget process, commissioners are mostly listening to pitches from departments about why they deserve additional spending since there is a cash surplus.

Mayor Charlie Hales will release his proposed budget at the end of April.

## **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.

## **Willamette Week**

### **Poll Shows City Looking at \$12-a-Month Street Fee to Fund Transportation Bureau**

*By Aaron Mesh*

Do you want to pay \$12 a month for a new city "street maintenance and safety" fee? That's the question being put to voters in a telephone survey paid for by the Portland Bureau of Transportation.

And the phone survey—first reported by BikePortland.org and obtained by WW—points to how Mayor Charlie Hales and City Commissioner Steve Novick will try to raise money for the bureau.

The new fee (\$144 a year) on Portland's roughly 250,000 households would bring in \$36 million annually for street paving and building sidewalks.

"It is our sense that people don't want to cut fire, parks, police and other services," says Novick's chief of staff Chris Warner. "But they may be willing to pay for transportation in other ways."

The poll tests three main options: an \$8-a-home fee, a \$12-a-home fee, and a second \$12-a-home version that sets aside money to increase TriMet bus service in low-income areas, as well as "preparing one downtown Willamette River bridge to survive an earthquake."

And further down in the survey, voters are asked if they'd support funding PBOT with a 1-percent city sales tax with an exemption for groceries.

The poll was conducted last weekend by Davis, Hibbitts, & Midghall. Transportation officials tell WW it cost roughly \$28,000.

One question not asked: What if City Council passes the new fee without a public vote? Circumventing voters is one option being looked at by Novick and Hales.

Both the \$8 and \$12 fees could be legally passed by City Council without going to the ballot.

That bugs Jason Williams of the Taxpayer Association of Oregon, which regularly challenges tax increases on the ballot.

"It just seems like whenever the politicians have a dumb idea or a dangerous idea," Williams says, "that's when they don't ask the voters."

Williams says he hasn't decided whether he'd challenge a fee passed by City Council.

And Novick's office says City Hall hasn't decided either. "There's a process to go through," says Warner, "before council makes that decision."

Meanwhile, PBOT spokesman Dylan Rivera says the bureau will continue gathering input from citizens at four public forums, starting April 16.

## **21 And Over**

### **Homeless camp Right 2 Dream Too strikes out again in its effort to find a new location**

*By Aaron Mesh*

Six weeks ago, the Portland City Council seemed ready to buy its way out of its most prominent homelessness problem.

The city agreed Feb. 17 to give \$846,000 to the leaders of homeless camp Too for the purchase of a new location and an agreement the camp would move out of its Old Town/Chinatown site at West Burnside Street and Southwest 4th Avenue.

To help things along, commercial real-estate broker Cushman & Wakefield created a list of 21 possible sites the city could purchase for the camp ("Camping Trip," WW, March 5, 2014).

Two months later, those options have all but vanished.

"The last potential sites, none of them were working out," says Mark Kramer, Right 2 Dream Too's attorney. "We are no closer to finding a new home."

As few as three sites were under serious consideration.

Two of the leading contenders—vacant lots at 2310 N Albina Ave. and 686 N Russell St.—are next to or near an industrial site contaminated by solvents. Kramer confirms the North Portland locations have been eliminated because of pollution concerns.

The third site seemed like an easier sell—because the city already owns it. But its sale was quietly vetoed by City Commissioner Nick Fish.



The parcel, at 2439 NW 22nd Ave., is a pipe and equipment storage yard for the Bureau of Environmental Services.

City emails show Fish, the commissioner in charge of the bureau, received complaints from several neighbors near the site.

But Fish says that even before the list was released, he had warned City Commissioner Amanda Fritz not to include the .46-acre parcel for consideration.

Fish tells WW that selling to Right 2 Dream Too could mean the city wouldn't get the best possible price. He said he has a policy for selling off city property that requires open bids.

The policy follows an embarrassment involving the city's Water Bureau, which Fish also oversees.

Last fall, the bureau sold a .75-acre parcel in Multnomah Village that included an old water tank to a housing developer—and ignited the anger of neighbors who didn't like the loss of nearby greenspace.

"My responsibility is to make sure that we learn from past mistakes, and that when we dispose of surplus properties, we do it by the book," Fish says.

Fritz could not be reached for comment. Mayor Charlie Hales' spokesman, Dana Haynes, says the city remains committed to finding a campsite.

"The search is taking place where property values are among the highest," Haynes says. "The mayor is committed to the search and so is Commissioner Fritz. We never thought it would be easy."

Right 2 Dream Too has presented a dilemma for Portland officials since 2011, when property owner Michael Wright invited the camp to reside on the former site of Cindy's Adult Bookstore.

The camp has become an intractable icon at the Chinatown gate. The City Council first sought to dislodge it through fines.

Fritz struck a deal with camp leaders last fall to move Right 2 Dream Too under the west end of the Broadway Bridge.

When Pearl District developers objected, Hales canceled the sale and in December found a warehouse in Old Town. But that plan fell apart over the cost of making the building safe to inhabit.

Kramer, the camp's lawyer, says the search for a new location continues.

"It's a big city," he says. "I'm still long-term optimistic. If Right 2 Dream finds a new place, they'd be happy to move."

## **When The Levee Breaks...Us**

Upgrading Portland's levees could cost \$100 million—money no one seems to have

*By Nigel Jaquiss*

Water is Portland's secret problem.

Not the Bull Run Reservoir water that runs out of your tap nor the contentious May ballot measure that will determine who controls it.

No, the next big whack to taxpayers will, in fact, come in the fight against floodwaters, the kind that have inundated the city every few decades and will do so again.

Portland along the Columbia River was once swamps and wetlands that drained behind a web of levees—28 miles of dikes and berms that act as a bulwark against flooding but often go unnoticed even when underfoot. Northeast Marine Drive, for example, runs on top of one.

The levees protect some of the city's most valuable real estate—Portland International Airport, the Expo Center, and Portland International Raceway, to name a few key parcels—but are maintained by four tiny, obscure public agencies that can barely afford their basic upkeep.

And the feds now want more than basic maintenance. After 2005's Hurricane Katrina, the Federal is pushing to upgrade levees in the nation's 1,000-plus levee districts. FEMA wants all levees to be able to withstand what it calls a "1 percent flood" event—a deluge so severe there's only a 1 percent chance of it happening in any given year.

The agency wants action by 2017. The cost to Portland: an estimated \$100 million, money that local drainage districts charged with maintaining the levees do not have, and money the city of Portland may have to raise from ratepayers, probably through higher water and sewer rates.

Right now, everyone involved is tiptoeing around the potentially explosive issue of who will have to pay. In October, Gov. John Kitzhaber convened a group that includes Mayor Charlie Hales and Multnomah County Chairwoman Marissa Madrigal to find a financial solution.

The Multnomah County Drainage District is the largest of the four levee districts; the others are Peninsula Drainage Districts Nos. 1 and 2 (both in the city of Portland) and the Sandy Drainage Improvement Company.

The districts have independent boards and assess property owners based on the amount of land they own. Budgets at the districts range from \$3 million at Multnomah to \$200,000 for Peninsula No. 1—nowhere near enough to take on the new federal requirements.

City officials promised business owners in the affected areas—including the Columbia Corridor, the business district east of the airport and home to 43,000 jobs—they'd help pay for the work. That hasn't happened yet.

Executive director Corky Collier of the Columbia Corridor Association sent Hales a letter March 21 to prod the city into taking action.

"The discussions we've had with the city have been about equity, and I think they've been receptive," says Tim Warren, a real-estate developer and chairman of the Multnomah district. "It's not that they are not stepping up, it's a question of [Hales'] administration getting educated about the issue."

Hales policy director Jackie Dingfelder says City Hall is committed to fixing the levees. She says it's likely that the state of Oregon will provide a low-interest loan to complete current investigation of their conditions.

As for long-term costs, Dingfelder says, the decision of who pays will come after initial studies are complete. "We won't know what we need to fix until the engineering work is done," she says.

The Columbia rarely inundates Portland as it once did; the river's federal dams play a big flood-control role, and so have the levees—except when they've failed. They did so catastrophically in 1948, when Columbia River flooding wiped out the city of Vanport, killing 15 people. And the threat of major flooding has not gone away.

The January 1996 flood put so much stress on the system that people feared city-owned Portland International Raceway would be flooded before crews performed an emergency fix to one levee.

"We almost lost the dike in 1996 at PIR," says Mark Wigginton, manager at the raceway and chairman of the Peninsula No. 1 board. "That dike was sloughing and moving every day."

A failure to comply with new federal standards meant that the Corps of Engineers last year pulled certification of two of the drainage districts—Peninsula Nos. 1 and 2. Without certification, landowners in the districts can't get subsidized flood insurance. Without insurance, they can't get bank financing.

"You might as well turn out the lights," Warren says.

In other cities, such as Sacramento and Coeur D'Alene, requirements have included stripping levees of intrusions ranging from trees to buildings to major reconstruction.

Reed Wagner, executive director of the Multnomah district, says the feds have not given him hard deadlines for levee recertification—saying only that the two delinquent districts must immediately work toward meeting federal standards. They need \$1.5 million just to finish investigating the levees' condition—money the districts simply do not have.

"We as districts don't have a lot of authority," Wagner says. "Nor do we have the financial ability to carry out recertification."