

The Oregonian

Portland's drinking water: An update on Mt. Tabor, Powell Butte, Kelly Butte reservoir projects

By Andrew Theen

It's the calm after the Portland boil water storm.

Let's take a second to refresh readers of a couple high-profile construction projects around Portland.

No, we're not talking about apartment buildings without parking spaces or the new bridge spanning the Willamette River.

Portland has more than \$200 million in Water Bureau projects underway or coming down the pike.

Why?

The city is complying with a 2006 Environmental Protection Agency requirement and burying or covering its drinking water supply. Portland is an outlier, one of the few cities in the nation that still relies on open air reservoirs to hold its drinking water. The battle for the reservoirs was one of the driving forces behind last month's unsuccessful ballot measures that would've created an independently elected water district board.

In the wake of the May 23 boil water alert, David Shaff, Water Bureau administrator, said reservoirs at Washington Park and Mt. Tabor are a problem. "They are vulnerable to post-treatment contamination, Shaff said in an interview, saying the reservoirs are "an obvious vulnerability."

Portland has until Dec. 31 2015 to comply with the federal requirements and remove the open air reservoirs from the city's drinking water supply. That's led to a flurry of construction activity around town. Here's an update on all the moving pieces and construction projects.

Mt. Tabor Reservoirs

Capacity: Two reservoirs currently in use with a capacity of 12 million gallons and 50 million gallons. A third 70 million gallon facility, is currently being used to hold water diverted for the urination incident and boil water alert. Reservoir 2 was decommissioned years ago.

Disconnect: The reservoirs will be disconnected from the Bull Run Watershed-fed drinking water system starting in the spring of 2015.

Powell Butte Reservoirs

Capacity: Two covered reservoirs of 50 million gallons, one came online in 1981, the other covered reservoir is nearing completion.

Cost: Total costs of the project is \$138 million, but the bureau anticipates coming in under budget. Issues: The DEQ fined the Water Bureau \$40,800 for issues that led to repeated discharges of chlorinated water into Johnson Creek last fall. Shaff said "concrete leaks, that's a given," but added the leaks lasted longer than expected. The contractor took steps to "dechlorinate" the water, a spokesman said, but didn't do enough. They've since rectified the error.

Completion: Will be available for service this summer

Kelly Butte Reservoir

Capacity: Used to be 10 million gallons, are replacing that reservoir with 25 million gallons covered reservoir

Cost: approximately \$80 million

Completion: By the end of 2015, likely in the fall

Washington Park Reservoir

Capacity: 16.4 million gallons will eventually be replaced with a 15 million gallon covered reservoirs

Cost: estimated \$67 million

Completion: The construction could begin in the summer of 2016, needs to be completed by late 2019

The Portland Tribune

Council to consider limited street fee measure

By Jim Redden

The City Council will vote Wednesday on submitting a measure to the Nov. 4 general election ballot to restrict funds raised by a new transportation user fee to transportation projects.

The council is not scheduled to consider the details of such a fee until Nov. 12, however, a little more than a week after the election. And the council has also said it is also willing to consider various taxes to fund the projects.

The staggered vote schedule is the result of a series of last-minute changes made by Mayor Charlie Hales and Transportation Commissioner Steve Novick, who are developing the funding proposals. They had originally agreed to have the council vote on a three-part package on June 4 — the ballot measure, a residential street fee, and a fee on businesses, governments and nonprofit organization, including schools and churches.

But after hearing from many Portlanders either puzzled or opposed to the proposal at the first public hearing on May 29, Hales postponed the vote on the business, government and nonprofit fee. He then postponed the vote on the residential fee at the June 4 hearing.

At the hearing, Novick convinced the council to allow a wide range of funding sources to be considered between then and Nov. 12, including a motor vehicle fee, a gas tax, an income tax, a sales tax and a tax on business profits.

But the council is still scheduled to consider placing the measure on the November ballot on June 11. As currently written, it would restrict funds raised by the fee to transportation purposes, including associated administrative cost, with a majority to be used for maintenance and safety improvement projects.

Hales and Novick do not want to submit the revenue measure to voters. Commissioners Nick Fish and Dan Saltzman have so far said they believe Portlanders should be asked to approve it. Commissioner Amanda Fritz has not yet said where she stands on that question.

Other major items on this week's council agenda include:

- An agreement to accept \$5.2 million from the Portland Public Schools construction bond levy to identify, prioritize and fund agreed-upon transportation safety improvements.
- A franchise with Google to construct and operate its ultra-high speed broadband network — called Google Fiber — using city streets for a period of 10 years.
- An amendment to Portland Housing Bureau rules to exempt affordable housing projects from System Development Charges instead of waiving them.

- A new streetscape and transportation plan for Southeast Foster Road between Powell Boulevard and 92nd Avenue that would cut the number of motor vehicle lanes in half, among other things. For more details, see this previous story: portlandtribune.com/pt/9-news/223508-85164-vehicle-lanes-to-shrink-along-foster-road-
- To read the complete council agenda, go to: www.portlandonline.com/auditor/?c=26997

Vehicle lanes to shrink along Foster Road

By Steve Law

Foster Road may be the next Portland thoroughfare to go on a “road diet.”

The Portland City Council will consider a new streetscape and transportation plan for Foster between Powell Boulevard and 92nd Avenue next Wednesday, June 11.

The plan would cut the number of vehicle lanes in half, down to one in each direction, while adding a middle strip for left-turn lanes or cars taking refuge while making other turns. That is designed to slow traffic while boosting safety and reducing accidents.

The plan would introduce bicycle lanes on both sides of Foster, as well as make it safer and more inviting for pedestrians by adding curb extensions and crossing improvements.

Street trees, street lights and other improvements also would be made.

The plan has been well-received by neighborhoods and merchants on both sides of Foster, though some neighborhood leaders to the east complain it will lengthen their car commutes into the city and back home again.

The move comes on the heels of other recent moves to shrink the number of vehicle travel lanes along Southeast Division, Northeast Glisan and other streets.

City commissioners are expected to consider a resolution supporting the plan from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, at City Hall, 1221 S.W. Fourth Ave. downtown.