

## The Oregonian

### Logo design contest leaves Portland Bureau of Transportation spinning its wheels

*By Brad Schmidt  
September 09, 2014*

Portland's top transportation official knew how it would look:

Spending an estimated \$15,000 to design, of all things, a flashy new logo for the Portland Bureau of Transportation while Mayor Charlie Hales and Commissioner Steve Novick push a controversial new fee for street maintenance and safety.

It would look bad, politically speaking.

"I just can't justify spending \$15,000 on a logo," Transportation Bureau Director Leah Treat said.

So this summer Treat crafted what she thought was an out-of-the-box solution: a contest asking employees in all branches of Portland government if they'd be willing to design a new transportation logo. On their own time, for free.

The results? From a citywide employee pool of more than 5,600, five people submitted designs by last Wednesday's deadline. And none, Treat decided, was good enough to attract serious consideration.

"I don't think we'll be using any of them, unfortunately," Treat said.

#### Catcalls

Treat's penny-pinching quest for a new logo may not incite taxpayers, but it nonetheless is drawing catcalls from a design industry executive and from a vocal street-fee critic.

Anne Marie Levis, president and creative director for Eugene-based Funk/Levis & Associates, said it's no surprise that Portland's contest flopped. If the city really wants a quality logo, she said, design should not be left to amateurs working for free.

"I've never seen one of these go well," Levis said of design contests such as Portland's. "When something like this happens, it sort of reinforces for people, 'Maybe we should hire a professional.'"

Four years ago, Levis' company won a \$26,750 contract with the city of Beaverton to craft a new logo and brand, ultimately settling on "The Best of Oregon."

"Creating an image that encapsulates who you are is a very difficult thing to do," she said. A logo should be simple but memorable, suitable for various media. Handing over design work to a novice "is an easy way to sort of get yourself in trouble," she said.

Street-fee critic Eric Fruits said Treat's contest is "harmless." But he also questioned why the Transportation Bureau even needs a logo, noting that many Portland residents probably wouldn't be able to identify it.

Fruits said Treat should have opened the contest to the general public.

Fruits opposes new taxes and fees that could raise tens of millions of dollars annually for transportation projects. He said his logo design would feature a taxpayer "with a giant screw going into his back."

#### Logo needs

Portland's Transportation Bureau is one of several city fiefdoms with its own distinct logo. Since about 2000, the transportation bureau has branded itself with a shaded rectangle featuring two sloping lines.

The image could resemble a street, sidewalk or light-rail line. But when Treat looks at the logo, created by an outside contractor, she sees only a road. No hint of the Portland Streetcar, aerial tram, biking, streetlights or any others symbols from the agency's "more robust" operation.

"Just a picture of a roadway is not emblematic of the work we do," Treat said.

Hence, the contest.

Treat had high hopes when she announced the competition, according to an Aug. 4 citywide email obtained through a public records request.

"The talented winner will have the honor and distinction of having their creative work used on all of PBOT's printed and online materials; and believe me, we do A LOT of communicating!" Treat wrote.

In the fine print, Treat noted that Portland would own the logo and planned to trademark it. So while an employee would lose intellectual property rights to the logo, "the bragging rights are all yours!"

### **The submissions**

Employees showed little interest by last Wednesday's deadline. Some of those who did were sheepish in their applications, acknowledging a lack of design proficiency.

"Not sure if this qualifies, but I thought I'd give it a shot!!" wrote one employee.

"I am definitely NOT a graphic designer... but I think you can get the gist," another employee wrote.

After reviewing the submissions, Treat said she plans to stick with the existing logo and focus on bigger priorities.

"It would be great to have a new one," she said. "But the actual work on the street is more important."

## **How do you fix an urban park? Bring in more women, planner says**

*By Casey Parks  
September 09, 2014*

Holladay Park was home to drug deals, a steady homeless population and never ending litter.

But Dan Biederman has seen worse. The urban park planner once turned New York's crime-ridden, drug-filled Bryant Park into one of the nation's most treasured parks.

Biederman didn't hesitate when the developers behind a forthcoming Lloyd Center remodel asked Biederman if he could transform Holladay, a 4.5-acre green space that sits just outside the mall.

Revitalizing small urban parks often requires an easy solution: More female visitors. They'll come if you offer events and activities, Biederman says. But all-day programming requires more money than most local governments can spare.

More local agencies nationally are turning to the private sector for help in developing robust public parks. Pioneer Square and Director Park both have consistent programming. Now, city leaders and mall developers aim to use Holladay Park to prove that new private investment in activities can transform public spaces.

"This is a park that we've invested a lot of time and money into over many, many years," said Mike Abbate, Portland's parks director. "We have done things to try to activate it, but we realize that it takes some concerted effort to organize programs, and we haven't been able to do it."

### **Green space in decline**

Holladay Park is one of the city's oldest public green spaces. The city acquired the Northeast Portland property in 1870 and has repeatedly reinvented it. Crews installed a concrete fountain in 1964 then replaced it with a spouting fountain in 2000. TriMet built the MAX line, with a stop adjacent to the park, in the 1986. And a few years ago, parks staff installed new lighting and pruned trees back to bring in more natural light.

But residents consistently told parks staff they felt unsafe there. In 2011, nearby business leaders came to the city and said Holladay was keeping people out of the neighborhood. They begged city leaders to do something.

"It's not the park; the park is an award-winning design," said Sue Glenn, Portland's zone manager for North and Northeast Portland parks. "It's behavior."

Glenn said city leaders had seen great success with all-day activities at downtown's Director Park -- but they couldn't replicate that success at Holladay.

"We didn't have the money, frankly," Glenn said. "We were in budget reduction mode."

### **Lloyd District rebirth**

The park might have continued to languish if not for a spate of development.

American Assets Trust is building nearly 660 apartments nearby, doubling the neighborhood's residential population. And next year, Dallas-based Cypress Equities will remodel the Lloyd Center. The new mall will have more outdoor storefronts and overlook the park.

Cypress representatives asked Portland Parks & Recreation if they could bring someone in to transform the park.

"Biederman is one of the best firms in the country," Abbate said. "I could see Cypress was really trying to get the best talent they could find, and that's a good thing for us."

Biederman saw great potential in Holladay. The park's orientation with the street, for instance, gave it great advantages.

"It's at grade. It wasn't hidden away," he said. "It has specimen trees that are nice. There were tons of people around."

His company began a pilot program there earlier this summer. Because a TriMet Max stop backs up to Holladay, most of the people were moving through the park, rather than spending time in it. To keep people in the park, Biederman's company planned classes such as yoga and zumba. The planners brought in a free library, ping pong tables and a piano. They planned concerts for every Wednesday night and Friday afternoon of the summer.

Biederman's company was looking for one figure as a sign of success: How many women hang out in the park?

"An overwhelmingly male environment is one that does not feel safe to many women and children. A female-plus-child dominant environment tends to feel safer to all users," said Matt Jacobs, a consultant for Biederman's company.

Last winter, the park's makeup skewed up to 70 percent male at times. The only park visitors were homeless people living there.

Now, only a few months after Biederman's crew began planning activities for Holladay, the park's makeup is nearly 54 percent female and children, with an average of 1,061 visitors a day hanging out. Zumba attracts about 25 participants, and each small concert has drawn between 30 and 45 people.

### **Seeing success**

At a stakeholder advisory meeting last week, Portland Police officers said this was the first summer they could recall where there was zero violent crime in the park.

Events programming isn't a cure-all. Downtown Portland's O'Bryant Square, for instance, has poor sight lines and needs significant structural upgrades. So far, no one has stepped in the way Cypress has at Holladay offering to pay for fixes at O'Bryant.

But for now, success at Holladay Park looks like this: Last Friday afternoon, the Madrona Viola Duo performed for an hour. Twenty-somethings played ping pong. Kids ran figure eights through the fountains. Park rangers and park hosts -- which Cypress pays the city to provide -- roamed the perimeters.

And on the east side of the park, two elderly women sat on a bench alone, talking as if they didn't have a care in the world.

## Developer Mark Edlen finalizing \$2.6 million land deal with Portland Development Commission weeks before joining it

*By Andrew Theen  
September 10, 2014*

The Portland Development Commission will vote Wednesday whether to sell land in Old Town Chinatown to major developer Gerding Edlen, whose CEO is set to join the urban renewal agency board in less than a month.

Mark Edlen is Mayor Charlie Hales' choice to fill a vacancy on the five-person commission. The City Council is expected to approve Hales' appointment on Oct. 1.

Edlen declined to comment on the Old Town project Wednesday morning. But in an August interview, Edlen said going forward he plans to recuse himself from any votes that would present a potential conflict of interest on the development commission.

Edlen's company wants to buy two-thirds of an acre, three-quarters of a city block, in Portland's oldest neighborhood and erect a \$37 million building containing offices, retail space and apartments.

The property is bounded by Northwest Couch Street, Northwest Naito Parkway, Northwest Davis Street, and Northwest 1st Avenue. The Oregon College of Oriental Medicine occupies the southwest portion.

For the PDC, the proposed development brings more jobs and activity to a key section of the Central City, more people to the waterfront and fulfills the promise of a recently approved five-year action plan to sell off its land in Old Town Chinatown.

Gerding Edlen plans to buy the oddly shaped Old Town property for roughly \$2.6 million, which the development commission says is the site's appraised value. But the city will reimburse the developer up to \$965,000 for environmental and archaeological remediation needed on the land.

Once completed, the proposed six-story building would include roughly 80,000 square feet of commercial office space, 5,000 square feet of retail and 60 apartments.

City Center parking currently has 75 parking spaces on the northern section of the parcel. During the past two years, PDC took in a net of \$358,000 in parking revenue from that lot.

PDC officials said there's no plan to add back parking on the property.

Eric Jacobson, PDC's senior project manager, said preserving parking would be too expensive, because the city would have to pay for additional environmental work to dig underground. The six-story structure is at the height limit currently allowed for the district, Jacobson said.

"There's not a high need for parking on the property," he said. It's on a TriMet MAX line and easily accessible. A Smart Park is adjacent to the development.

Gerding Edlen already signed letters of intent with Portland architecture firm Ankrom Moisan, and the University of Oregon, accounting for a collective 50,000-square-foot of the anticipated space.

Earlier this summer, the City Council approved the PDC's 5-year action plan, which calls for tens of millions in incentives for developers as well as waivers on system development charges to woo construction.

In an interview prior to Hales' Aug. 21 announcement of his choice for PDC board, Edlen said his company was "neck deep" in Old Town. "We're about to invest an awful lot in Old Town," he said, "So I believe in it."

Edlen said while he suspected the Old Town project would qualify for waivers on a portion of the development fees, he hadn't decided whether or not to take advantage of the incentives.

The company did not request a predevelopment loan from PDC, Jacobson said.

Edlen's company also helped redevelop the headquarters of wind energy firm Vestas in the Pearl District. Gerding Edlen took a \$8 million loan from the development commission to make that project happen.

Charles Wilhoite, one of Edlen's potential colleagues on the board, said he met with the developer to discuss how to walk the line between city and personal business, given his pending role voting on deals that undoubtedly will involve some of his business competitors.

"The real issue is can he review and vote objectively?" he said. "And I don't think there's going to be any problem," Wilhoite said.

The PDC meets Wednesday at 3 p.m.

## Willamette Week

### Ranger Danger

Park rangers seek higher wages and better training as the city questions their worth.

*By Sami Edge  
September 10, 2014*

It's not the first time Dustin Meyer and Angela Wilson have caught the man drinking with his pals in the South Park Blocks.

The two Army green- and khaki-clad Portland park rangers stand between the man (who his friends called Billy) and a group of young women who are holding their weekly get-together to talk about comic books.

One of them—a woman wearing rainbow-colored, heart-shaped sunglasses—knows the rangers well. She has Meyer on her speed dial and buzzed him when Billy and his drunken pals yelled come-ons and catcalls.

"I'm told you're being sexually degrading," Meyer says to Billy and his friends. The men deny it. Meyer points to the cans of 211 Steel Reserve that one of them is holding.

"I don't drink," says one. He hands a can to Wilson. She shakes it. Empty. She hands it back.

"Someone is lying to me," Meyer says. "I am not a fan of lying."

Hands on hips, feet spread, Meyer and Wilson watch as Billy and his pals saunter out of the park and beyond the rangers' jurisdiction.

Meyer and Wilson are among the city's team of 28 rangers who have been called the ambassadors of Portland's parks. But their jobs require each of them to be a blend of tour guide, security guard, trash collector, vandalism spotter, dog-leash scold, first-aid provider, dispute negotiator, restroom monitor and mental health worker.

Some do the job for as little as \$12.50 an hour, with no health insurance, paid vacation time or job security.

"We take it personally to make sure that every user experience is a positive one," says Vicente Harrison, a ranger for two years. "With our model and how we're doing things now, it's not sustainable. It's not equitable."

The rangers have won the right to organize and now face city officials who are pushing back against their demands and questioning whether the rangers are worth the money.

The rangers say they're worth a lot more than they're paid. They want a raise and a guarantee they can move to full-time work. The city calls the rangers seasonal, although they are hired year-round, and gives no guarantee they will be rehired after their jobs end. The rangers argue they work almost twice as many hours as other seasonal employees and should be given benefits accordingly.

"The seasonal model is not a model that works anymore," says Sam Sachs, a ranger who's part of the bargaining team. "They've been getting labor on the cheap. That's what this is all about."

The rangers also say they don't have enough protections from the job's risks. In August, Oregon's Occupational Safety & Health Division received an anonymous complaint—which surfaced just as contract talks with the city have grown more tense—alleging the program as it's now run violates the law.

"Parks rangers are required to have safety training in the areas of bikes, vehicle safety and operation, pepper spray, defensive tactics, verbal judo, and other areas such as radio communication before working," the complaint reads.

"Newly hired rangers, and others, have not received all [this] safety training, but are required to work in the field operating motor vehicles and bikes, and contacting dangerous subjects, without safety training."

City Hall continues to cite the value of having the rangers, but Mayor Charlie Hales has raised doubts about their effectiveness and has called for an evaluation of the program.

Portland Parks and Recreation spokesman Mark Ross says the analysis is underway: It will evaluate such metrics as number of calls for service, reported problems—and the response to them—and overall compliance with park rules to determine the program's success. It should be completed by the end of the year.

The current parks program was championed by Commissioner Nick Fish, who in 2012 gave rangers jurisdiction over 16 parks in the downtown area. The move replaced a security force called Clean & Safe, run by the Portland Business Alliance, to patrol downtown parks.

"We thought that park rangers gave us better value, more accountability and more flexibility," Fish says. "We were compiling a fair amount of anecdotal data that the program was working."

Hales took over supervision of the parks bureau briefly in 2013 around the time the rangers sought to join Laborers Local 483, one of seven unions that bargain for the city's District Council of Trade Unions contract.

The city fought the move but was overruled by the Oregon Employment Relations Board in May. The rangers and city have reached gridlock in bargaining their first contract.

The city's offer would make most union negotiators happy. The city has agreed to cover seasonal rangers under the contract (something not otherwise allowed) and to offer all rangers health care coverage and give them raises of up to 32 percent. That would move rangers earning \$12.50 an hour to \$15.83.

"We can help sustain the program until such time that it can get more money from the City Council," lead city negotiator John Uto said during the most recent bargaining meeting Aug. 26. "The budget for park rangers is really tight. It was a hard ask for the bureau to get the wages we're proposing."

But the rangers are asking for more.

"To have people who are timing out quickly who have little training and no job security," union business manager Erica Askin said during negotiations last month, "I don't think it will be good for the city of Portland."

Portland now restricts its seasonal rangers to 1,400 hours a year—a limit that allows the city to deny them benefits and doesn't guarantee they can come back to their jobs next season.

"We go through this whole season and build those relationships with the community—just like [full-time rangers]—and then our hours are up," says Alison Davis, who's worked two seasons in the program. "It's frustrating."

The city has told union reps that job-training demands don't fall within contract talks. The rangers disagree.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz, who now oversees the parks bureau, declined to comment on the negotiations. Fritz asked Hales to add nine ranger positions to the city budget last spring, but he turned her down.

"It is clear to me that the city does not have enough funding for parks security," Fritz wrote in an email to WW. "Portland Parks & Recreation has insufficient money even for urgent major maintenance projects, which has resulted in closures of some parks facilities and will require more closures unless additional funding is attained."

The contract talks have stalled just as Portlanders will be asked to weigh in on their support of parks. The City Council is asking voters to approve a \$68 million bond measure on the Nov. 4 ballot to repair and

improve existing parks. The city isn't allowed to spend the bond money on ongoing operations, such as the rangers program.

Sachs, a permanent ranger with three years of experience, took WW on a tour of the South Park Blocks to demonstrate the variety of challenges he and his colleagues face.

He's out of uniform and off duty, so he doesn't take action. But he points out how rangers respond to what they see. That person there, sitting on a bench, has a map sticking out of his shoe. He's a tourist, and a ranger would offer directions. The homeless man sleeping in a walkway, he'd be left alone. The skinny woman in a hoodie whose handshakes as she grips a bong, she'd be asked to leave because of her drug paraphernalia and perhaps told where she could find mental health services.

After Sachs' three years working downtown, some park regulars recognize him, even out of uniform. Some wave, others turn and leave.

"We were more successful more quickly than anyone ever expected," Sachs says. "Now the city and parks department has to ask themselves, 'Do we want to build on this program or not?' And if they do, it'll cost a lot more money."