

The Oregonian

Portland has \$20 million to spend on affordable housing in wake of Trader Joe's dustup: Now what?

*By Andrew Theen
September 18, 2014*

After Trader Joe's dismissed Northeast Portland as a site for a new store back in February, Mayor Charlie Hales promised to spend an additional \$20 million on affordable housing in surrounding neighborhoods during the next five years.

At 6 p.m. Thursday, more than six months after Hales first made that promise, the Portland Housing Bureau will host the first of four community forums to ask the public how the city should spend that money. The meeting is at Highland Christian Center, 7600 N.E. Glisan St.

The \$20 million investment is a win for the Portland African American Leadership Forum. The group criticized the absence of housing on the Trader Joe's project and said the Portland Development Commission lacked transparency in reaching its decision to sell a key piece of land in Northeast Portland.

Hales said in March that PAALF would have a voice in how the \$20 million is spent.

The money also is a small sign that the city is ready to make some investments, and soon, in a rapidly evolving part of the Rose City that PDC and Hales have acknowledged experienced gentrification and displacement due to city policies.

"I think there's a sense of urgency and a sense of commitment," Andrew Colas, the president of Colas Construction, said in an interview earlier this month.

Colas' firm is the general contractor for Majestic Realty on the Natural Grocers development in Northeast Portland, the company pegged to replace Trader Joe's.

To help shape the upcoming meetings on affordable housing, the housing bureau leaned on a committee of community members (including PAALF and Colas) representing minorities and low-income residents. The group suggested the city reach out to residents in "nontraditional ways," meaning more than just snail mail and a website buried online.

Maxine Fitzpatrick, executive director of Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives a nonprofit development and housing provider, said the city did a good job of getting the word out. Officials reached out through churches, community radio stations and institutions such as PCRI.

Fitzpatrick predicts a good turnout Thursday.

But she's also hoping community members who've been displaced have their voices heard. "To the average person, \$20 million sounds like a lot of money," Fitzpatrick said, "and it is a lot of money, but in the scheme of things and what it's needed for, it's not nearly enough."

The \$20 million must be spent within the Intestate Corridor Urban Renewal Area, a 3,660-acre slice of Portland that's experienced gentrification and displacement of communities of color for years. Another \$16.6 million in urban renewal funds is already set aside for affordable housing in the area and has yet to be spent.

Fitzpatrick said there are a lot of long memories dating back to the expansion of the TriMet Yellow Line through those neighborhoods. Promises of investment haven't been met, she said.

"The city of Portland does not have a very good history in how it's historically treated its black and African and minority populations," she said.

Housing officials say the goal of the forums is to "seek consensus" about how to directly improve affordable housing options and increase stability for residents.

A formal recommendation is expected to go before the City Council early next year, and projects could begin by 2016.

Community leaders who helped shape the forums are:

- Cyreena Boston-Ashby, Portland African American Leadership Forum

- Bishop Steven Holt, International Fellowship Family and 11:45 Faith Leaders
- Linda Castillo, Latino Network
- Andrew Colas, Colas Construction' Inc.
- Rakeem Washington, Portland Observer
- Debora Leopold Hutchins, Sistas Weekend Cyclers
- Maxine Fitzpatrick, Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives
- Bernie Foster, The Skanner

The housing forums are scheduled for:

- Thursday 9/18/14 from 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. at Highland Christian Center
- Saturday 9/27/14 from 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. at Matt Dishman Community Center
- Thursday 10/9/14 from 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. at Gresham City Hall
- Saturday 10/11/14 from 9:00 a.m. – Noon at New Song Community Church

Pushing Portland street fee, mayor's aide cites unpaved roads, a problem the fee won't fix

*By Andrew Theen
September 17, 2014*

UPDATE: This story was updated with comments from Hales' office.

Portland has 56 miles of unpaved roads, and transportation officials say even if the City Council approves a new tax or fee for road work in November, that number will remain unchanged for years.

Addressing gravel roads isn't a priority for the Portland Bureau of Transportation. In fact, it's not the bureau's responsibility.

"Those are adjacent property owner's responsibilities," PBOT spokesman Dylan Rivera said in a text message.

That didn't stop Gail Shibley, Mayor Charlie Hales' chief of staff, from highlighting those 56 miles of property owner responsibility when talking up Portland's need for new transportation funding recently.

"We have crumbling bridges, roads, many places with no sidewalks. In the city of Portland alone we have 56 miles of unpaved streets," Shibley said in a brief YouTube video via the "Charter Local Edition Northwest" program, which apparently was filmed at the Three Rivers Casino in Florence earlier this month.

Hales staffers on Wednesday highlighted another segment of the interview on the mayor's Facebook page. "Unpaved, nothing there, gravel. No sidewalks, no crossings for kids."

Dana Haynes, Hales' spokesman, said Shibley mentioned a wide array of problems facing Portland's transportation network. "Gail mentions that there's unpaved roads, Gail mentions that there's crumbling bridges, Gail mentions that the feds haven't acted in 20 years, and Gail doesn't go on to make any kind of promise that the street fee would address any of those things."

In the cable interview, Shibley also said Portland must show state lawmakers that it is serious about street funding. Then Salem and potentially Washington D.C., might follow suit with more money.

She said Hales is trying to reverse the "backward momentum" in deferred street maintenance and said the mayor's promise to maintain 100 miles of road in the 2013-14 budget proved that. Achieving that goal was "a big stretch," Shibley said, "And we are far, far behind."

As PBOT, Mayor Charlie Hales and Commissioner Steve Novick rework the controversial street fee proposal pitched earlier this year, there's much debate about how much money to spend on maintenance versus safety projects.

Unpaved roads are not a part of the conversation.

According to PBOT documents, the city has 92 miles of busy streets that need to be completely rebuilt. That would cost \$276 million.

On neighborhood roads, the situation is even more dire. PBOT says during the next 10 years the city needs to rebuild 133 lane miles of neighborhood streets at a cost of \$253 million.

None of the more than \$500 million in projects that PBOT identified include improvements to Portland's 56 miles of unpaved roads.

Portland Parks & Recreation hires former Intel marketer to manage Portland International Raceway

*By Casey Parks
September 17, 2014*

A veteran marketing executive with deep ties to the motorsports industry will be the new manager for Portland International Raceway, Portland Parks & Recreation officials announced Wednesday.

E.C. Mueller takes over for Mark Wigginton, who is retiring after 15 years at the city-owned Kenton track.

Mueller spent 17 years at Intel Corporation working in marketing and technology. He oversaw analytics of Intel's sponsorship of the BMW Sauber Formula One racing team. He has also worked at Nissan Motor Corporation doing product planning, motorsports marketing and model line management.

Parks staff expect Mueller, who starts Sept. 25, to make changes to modernize the 54-year-old raceway.

"I am excited to utilize my blended experience in motor sports, automotive and technology for this new role," Mueller said in a news release. "Both motor sports in general and PIR in particular are in a time of transition. So that means there is a tremendous opportunity to service our customers in new and innovative ways."

Portland Copwatch takes concerns to mayor at council session after unable to schedule meeting with him

*By Maxine Bernstein
September 17, 2014*

Five members of Portland's Copwatch directly addressed the mayor Wednesday during a City Council session after saying they've been unable to get a meeting with him for the past four months.

Dan Handelman, who leads the local police watchdog group, told Portland Mayor Charlie Hales that he was concerned that Police Bureau policies and programs are being developed without sufficient community input.

"Since the goal was to critique policy discussions being made behind closed doors, Portland Copwatch decided to avoid the pitfalls of a private meeting and take their concerns public," Handelman wrote in a press release.

Before the council, Handelman and other Copwatch members voiced concerns about police policies regarding homeless people, a neighborhood hot spot policing program, the mayor's lack of security clearance on the FBI-led Joint Terrorism Task Force and the mayor's push for body-worn cameras on police.

Copwatch members also voiced concern about the mayor's public safety policy liaison, former Portland police Officer Deanna Wesson-Mitchell.

"Since she was plucked out of the bureau, we have questions about her capacity to be impartial," said Barbara Ross.

Ross noted that Wesson-Mitchell could choose to return to the Police Bureau in the future, and therefore, "may be hesitant to make waves or to burn bridges."

Copwatch members said they started seeking a meeting with Hales in April. At the request of the mayor's staff, they waited until the end of the city budget process. They were asked to set up a sit-down first with Wesson-Mitchell, but Copwatch members got turned off by several emails they received from her. They described her as being defensive of the bureau when they questioned its policies.

In one email, for example, she wrote: "Hi Dan, Hoping to schedule a meeting with you and other Portland Copwatch representatives to discuss the below items for which you have concern. Due to a fair amount of misinformation or mischaracterizations regarding almost all of these issues, I would like to meet with you to ensure we are working from the same set of facts."

Hales, who serves as police commissioner, defended Wesson-Mitchell. He also asked again that the group first meet with her.

"I ask that people start with my staff," Hales said. "I have full confidence in them, and their job is to be transparent and to bring me community concerns."

Hales added, "I'd like to end this impasse and ask you to go have a meeting with her and we'll follow up on that. ... Do start with Deanna Wesson-Mitchell and you'll find she's more independent-minded than you presumed."

In recent years, the police chief hasn't held monthly Chief's Forum meetings that are open to the public. Bureau programs used to be publicly discussed at those meetings, but only a select group of community members are now invited to attend closed-door advisory meetings with the chief.

"At least there would be some public discussion so we knew what was going on," Handelman said of the chief's forums.

"Some way we have to get to a partnership on these difficult issues," Ross told the mayor.

Hales spoke briefly about his support for body-worn cameras for uniformed officers. He said he understood Copwatch's concerns that there be adequate controls and policies adopted to regulate the storage of video images and their use.

"Properly managed with the proper controls, having video is more beneficial than not," the mayor said. "I'm inclined towards it, but I understand the need for us to do it right."

After the Copwatch members addressed the mayor and council, Wesson-Mitchell approached them outside the council chambers to try to set up a future meeting. Instead, Copwatch representatives asked her to send them documents on the police programs they had questions about.

Among Portland's many chiefs, city mulls new job: Chief Resilience Officer. Portland City Hall Roundup

*By Brad Schmidt
September 17, 2014*

The city of Portland is a bureaucracy of chiefs: administrative officer, financial officer, procurement officer, technology officer, fire and police.

And now there could be a new one: Chief Resilience Officer.

Next Wednesday, the Portland City Council is scheduled to greenlight a \$1 million grant application to The Rockefeller Foundation to help pay for the proposed emergency management position, among other things.

The Rockefeller Foundation has been promoting a municipal hiring spree to better prepare major American and international cities for natural disasters. In April, the foundation labeled a San Francisco bureaucrat as "the world's first chief resilience officer," with Oakland and Los Angeles following suit.

Portland applied for the same grant last year but was not among the 11 U.S. cities selected.

A Chief Resilience Officer is "a top-level advisor" who reports to a mayor and establishes "a compelling resilience vision for his or her city, working across departments and with the local community to maximize innovation and minimize the impact of unforeseen events," according to the foundation.

According to the city's new grant application, the position would be embedded in Portland's Bureau of Emergency Management, which reports to Commissioner Steve Novick.

But the city says the Chief Resilience Officer would report to Mayor Charlie Hales.

"We envision the role of the CRO as convener, communicator, coordinator, and catalyst on behalf of resilience work," the city's grant application reads.

"The CRO will work across bureaucratic silos to help implement the (Healthy Connected City) strategy, to marshal resources and integrate resilience into the work of creating healthy connected neighborhoods. The CRO will help build capacity for emergency preparedness at the household, block and neighborhood scale."

Applications were due Sept. 10 and the city has already applied.

A pending City Council vote amounts to an after-the-fact approval, although the Bureau of Emergency Management will withdraw its application if the City Council isn't supportive. The Council on Wednesday delayed its vote until next week because it lacked the four members necessary for immediate approval.

Grant results could be announced late this year or in early 2015.

Portland street fee: Leah Treat says time to 'move forward' as City Council vote looms

*By Andrew Theen
September 17, 2014*

Portland transportation officials decided to disband two volunteer committees formed this summer to offer advice and recommendations on how to improve a controversial street fee proposal introduced in May.

The two work groups — one consisting of prominent developers, business owners and potential street fee opponents, the other made up of nonprofit and low-income advocates — still had one more meeting scheduled in the first week of October to iron out their recommendations.

But it became increasingly clear, according to a Portland Bureau of Transportation draft report circulated late last week, that the committees weren't going to make any more progress.

"We've got enough feedback from these groups that we feel like we've gotten as much consensus and input as we're gonna get," Portland Bureau of Transportation director Leah Treat said Tuesday. "It's time to put a bow on it and move forward."

The low-income and nonprofit work group will still meet as planned on Thursday. PBOT decided to keep the so-called umbrella group, the Transportation Needs & Funding Advisory Committee, together. That body will likely meet again, according to Treat and Chief Administrative Officer Fred Miller.

Mayor Charlie Hales and Commissioner Steve Novick plan to return to City Council in November with a new or revised funding proposal that would collect millions of dollars each year for pavement maintenance and safety projects. You can track our coverage of this evolving plan and previous stories [here](#).

Treat said the city needs to send a formal recommendation to City Council quickly. Miller said Tuesday that he expects to author the report in conjunction with Ruth Adkins, a Portland Public School Board member and the chair of the low-income and nonprofit working group.

Miller expects to send the report to City Council offices by Friday or early next week.

It's still unknown whether the committees will recommend a formal plan in line with the latest discussion, a combination of a progressive income tax on residents and a flat fee for businesses. The latest proposals include a \$40 million gross revenue estimate, but those figures could change too.

During the roll out of the street fee plan this May, which included a monthly fee for residents and businesses to pay for street projects, Treat acknowledged the general public felt there wasn't enough time to fully understand the plan.

Treat wants to change that and come forward with a precise plan ahead of the November vote. That could include another open house this fall, this one with specific outlining of projects and what the city could accomplish during a six year window.

Josh Alpert, Hales' director of strategic initiatives, said Tuesday the council will hold a public work session on Oct. 23, prior to the November vote.

The Portland Tribune

Expert: Find a place to park affordable housing

*By Steve Law
September 18, 2014*

If Portlanders hope to address the area's growing housing affordability problem, maybe they should get over their aversion to apartments built without parking spaces.

That bitter pill was offered Friday at the Portland City Club by an emissary from San Francisco, who joked he was sent "back from the future" to warn Portland how to prevent the housing mess now faced by millions of Bay Area residents.

"We certainly think that parking (or the lack thereof) is a housing affordability strategy," said Gabriel Metcalf, executive director of SPUR in San Francisco.

Metcalf was a featured speaker at a City Club forum on gentrification and housing affordability: "A Tale of Two Cities — Playground for the Wealthy or Home for Working Families?"

Portland city planners have promoted a new wave of apartments being built without parking lots as a way to discourage driving and encourage tenants to take a bus, walk or bike. Much has been made of the environmental benefits, but far less has been said of the financial benefits to tenants.

In San Francisco, requiring apartment developers to provide parking can add as much as \$50,000 to the building cost of each unit, Metcalf said.

He called for Portland to stop requiring developers to install parking with housing projects, and instead leave it up to developers.

Such policies should work against gentrification, Metcalf said, because affluent people won't want units "if they don't come with a parking place."

But don't tell that to folks living along inner Southeast Division Street, where a wave of hip new restaurants, bars, ice cream parlors and other attractions have sprung up along with a string of four-story apartments with little to no parking spaces.

Once the dinner hour approaches, it's getting harder to find a parking space in and around Division or on side streets to the north and south. That's caused a backlash among residents in the area against the city's apartment policies, some of whom have to walk far from their parking space to their house.

In response, Mayor Charlie Hales pushed for a slight modification to the no-parking standards last year. The revised rules require a small number of parking spaces for new apartments proposed after the policy change, if they have more than 30 units. Projects larger than 30 units built on corridors well-served by buses now must have one parking space for every three to five units, far less than the standard requirement elsewhere in the city of one parking space for each unit.

Allen Field, who lives in the Richmond neighborhood that includes inner Division Street, said he likes the new restaurants going in, but said all the new development is making Division more upscale, and that translates to higher prices.

"The apartment building bubble that is happening on Division and bringing in a lot of restaurants is most likely having the opposite effect of reducing affordability by raising rents and property values and increasing the cost of living in rental rates, property valuations and taxes," Field said.

"I don't think either apartments with or without parking helps on affordability issues," he said. "Do you know how expensive these apartments are?"

Aaron Jones, who recently completed a 74-unit apartment without parking on Southeast Division and 48th Avenue, said he'll charge rents between \$875 to \$1,095 a month, but his units will be smaller than the typical ones farther to the west near most of the new restaurants, which he said are renting for \$1,275 to \$1,570 a month.

Creating a barrier

Ben Schonberger, a board member of Housing Land Advocates, a local nonprofit that promotes affordable housing, said developers usually will charge what the market will bear on rents, so there's no guarantee they'll pass on savings from parking to tenants. But on the macro level, he said, studies show mandatory parking requirements make rents higher.

"Parking costs money," Schonberger said. "It takes land, and there's some development costs even if it's just a surface lot."

Schonberger, like Metcalf, argues that local governments should stop requiring parking, and let the market decide.

"We think that requiring parking or requiring too much parking is going to create a barrier to more affordable housing," he said. "It doesn't have to be zero; it just has to be less."

A city study last year calculated that mandatory parking can add to monthly apartment rent costs by \$50 a month all the way up to \$750 a month, depending on the type of parking spaces.

The study used a baseline of a four-story, 50-unit apartment building without parking. By adding nine parking spaces tucked under the second floor, rents would need to rise by 6 percent, according to the study. But that's only one parking space for every five units, and it would allow the builder to put up only 45 units instead of 50 on the site.

If that developer decided instead to use some of the space for surface parking, that would drive up rents by 50 percent, largely because there's space for only 30 units instead of 50.

If the developer built underground parking, that would drive up rents by 63 percent and allow 44 units on the site.

The average cost in Portland to pave a surface parking lot is \$3,000 per space. Spaces in a structured parking garage cost \$20,000 apiece. Underground lots cost \$55,000 per space.

Metcalf said any calculation of the housing affordability benefits must factor in transportation costs. Aside from any reductions in the rent, he said tenants' overall cost of living will be lower if they don't have to buy a car.

Schonberger said he empathizes with Portlanders who have lived a long time in their neighborhoods and are now seeing them change dramatically in a short time.

Metcalf cautioned Portlanders not to do what San Francisco has done in response to growth. The city's restrictions on new housing development over many years have only fueled the housing affordability crisis now affecting millions of Bay Area residents, he said.

Schonberger had the same warning for those who are anxious about major changes underway in their neighborhoods.

"I don't think the solution is 'let's have less housing and less development and keep people out.'"

Sources Say: Even the name of the proposed street fee is controversial

*By Jim Redden
September 18, 2014*

Mayor Charlie Hales and Commissioner Steve Novick may have to change the name of their proposed street fee before they're done with it.

The formal name is transportation user fee, which suggests it will be paid by those who use the city's transportation system. That was always a stretch with the residential fee, which was originally proposed to apply to all households. But it made sense with the business fee, which originally was proposed to be based on the number of motor-vehicle trips each business generates.

But now the work groups appointed by Hales and Novick are considering a range of options with no relationship to the use of the transportation system. They include a progressive income tax on residents and a business fee based in part on annual gross revenue. The revised proposal is scheduled to be finalized in October and presented to the City Council in November.

Meanwhile, the leader of the recall campaign against Hales and Novick says he is still hopeful of forcing them on the ballot, although he admits the odds are steep. Southeast Portland retiree Ray Horton admits the campaign still needs to collect around 10,000 of the 34,921 valid

voter signatures that must be submitted to the city by Oct. 9. But Horton says volunteers are still going door-to-door every day.

Democrats may have hard row to hoe

A recent poll commissioned by Oregon Public Broadcast has some good news for Gov. John Kitzhaber and U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, with a few qualifications.

The poll, conducted by DHM Research Sept. 4 to 7, found most Oregon voters feel positive about Kitzhaber, with 53 percent approving of his job performance compared with 35 percent who disapprove. A plurality of voters feel positive about Merkley, with 42 percent approving of his performance compared with 27 percent who disapprove.

However, a full 30 percent of voters said they had not heard of Merkley or formed an opinion of him, a relatively high figure for a statewide elected official. And, in a potentially ominous sign for Democrats in the upcoming general election, voters are evenly split about President Obama. Forty-nine percent approve his performance compared with 48 percent who disapprove — a surprising result in such a heavily Democratic state.

Washington greener (with envy) than Oregon

The poll also contradicted the conventional wisdom that Oregonians are jealous of Washington because its economy is better, thanks in part to the large number of big employers like Boeing, Microsoft and Amazon. In fact, the poll found that Washington residents are more obsessed with Oregon.

An open-ended question asked residents of each state what they think about the other state. The largest block of Oregon residents — 16 percent — had no serious opinions about it. The next most common answer was "legalized marijuana" at 15 percent, followed by "beautiful scenery" at 11 percent.

In contrast, the largest block of Washington residents were jealous of Oregon — 16 percent knew the state has no sales tax. After that, 12 percent consider Oregon to be "liberal or progressive," and only 11 percent have no opinion about it.

New Portland International Raceway manager named

*By Jim Redden
September 17, 2014*

Portland Parks & Recreation announced a new manager for Portland International Raceway on Wednesday.

He is E.C. Mueller, a marketing executive with ties to the motor sports industry. He has worked at Intel, where his duties included overseeing analytics of the company's sponsorship of the BMW Sauber Formula One racing team, and at Nissan Motor Corp. in California, where his duties included motorsports/event marketing.

"I am excited to utilize my blended experience in motor sports, automotive and technology for this new role," says Mueller. "Both motor sports in general and PIR in particular are in a time of transition. So that means there is a tremendous opportunity to service our customers in new and innovative ways."

Mueller replaces Mark Wigginton, who is retiring after 15 years as PIR manager.

The announcement was made by PP&R Director Mike Abbaté, who notes that PIR has served the community since the 1960's and predicts exciting changes for the track.

"Mark [Wigginton] has done a tremendous job at PIR," says Abbaté. "As we lose a manager of his caliber to retirement, we are pleased to have someone with E.C.'s experience to help move PIR in to the future. Portland Parks & Recreation is committed to optimizing the unique value PIR offers of being one of few metro located motor racing facilities while also being part of our parks system."

Commissioner Amanda Fritz, who oversees PP&R, says, "There are many passionate, core user groups that love PIR. We look to E.C. to continue growing the strength of those ties while also exploring new ways to optimize the venue and serve the communities of Portland."

Portland International Raceway opened on the former location of the city of Vanport, which was wiped out by the 1948 flood. In 1961 the first Rose Cup race was held as part of the Portland Rose Festival. By 1965 the track was hosting regular drag races as well as motorcycle and kart races.

Today, PIR features events ranging from running and bicycle races to car shows, drag racing, sports cars and motorcycle road racing, motocross, even dance festivals, and more. PIR is a noted location for commercial photography, and hosts many movies and television shows shot in Portland. The raceway has a popular annual holiday light show, and the largest weekly "cruise-in" in America.

For schedule information please go to www.portlandraceway.com

Public invited to Police Training Complex opening Saturday

*By Jim Redden
September 16, 2014*

The public is invited to the opening of the remodeled Portland Police Bureau's Training Complex.

The bureau will host an open house at the complex from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 20. It is located at: 14902 N.E. Airport Way in Portland.

During the open house, community members can tour the facility, visit with bureau members, meet members of the Special Emergency Reaction Team (SERT), K-9 Unit and Air Support Unit, and see their equipment.

In addition, kids can meet McGruff the Crime Dog, have their fingerprints taken by the members of the Forensics Evidence Division, and see how the Explosive Disposal Unit's robot works.

Visitors can also participate in the Bureau's obstacle course and receive crime prevention information or hear about Neighborhood Watch Programs from Crime Prevention Specialists at the Office of Neighborhood Involvement (ONI).

The City Council voted to fund a police and public safety training facility in March 2012. The bureau purchased the building and dedicated it on October 29, 2012. The remodel began in December 2013 and was completed on time and within budget for \$15 million, with the funds coming from a bond measure.

The new Training Complex is the first of its kind for the City of Portland and bureau. It will house all the training disciplines in one central venue, generating significant cost savings and efficiencies. It will also improve the bureau's ability to provide scenario-based training using all the various disciplines in one location.

Training Complex information:

- Architect: SCOTT | EDWARDS ARCHITECTURE LLP.
- General Contractor: 2KG.
- Contractor for Firearms Range: Action Target.
- Site Size: 9.6 acres.
- Building Size: 61,193 square feet.
- Patrol Vehicle Operations Area: 3.5 acres.
- Green components include water efficiency; multiple energy performance measures; recycling of materials, purchasing and waste.

Features:

- Police Vehicle Operations Skill Pad.
- Defensive Tactics Mat Rooms.
- Firearms Ranges.
- Multiple Classrooms of Varying Sizes.
- Patrol Tactics Scenario Village.
- Administrative Offices.

Other agencies involved in the project:

- Office of Management and Finance.
- Bureau of Technology Services.
- Bureau of Environmental Services.
- Bureau of Planning and Sustainability.
- Bureau of Parks and Recreation.
- Bureau of Transportation.
- Water Bureau.

Willamette Week

City Commissioner Nick Fish Asks for Independent Review of Portland Water Bureau's Rainy-Day Fund

*By Aaron Mesh
September 18, 2014*

City Commissioner Nick Fish says he will ask for an independent review of the Portland Water Bureau's use of a reserve fund that could lower utility rates.

WW reported Wednesday morning how that "rate stabilization fund" grew to \$32 million over the past five years, even though Water Bureau sales to customers were in decline. (Such funds are often used to lower rates when water sales don't meet projections.)

Fish stands by the city's decision to build up the fund, which the Water Bureau will begin using this year to offset the cost of upcoming capital projects, including a new water main under the Willamette River. But in a letter sent to Mayor Charlie Hales and other commissioners on Wednesday, Fish says he'll ask an independent ratepayer advocate, the Citizens' Utility Board, to take another look at the fund and compare Portland's policy to best practices.

"While I believe our policy is a responsible way to provide rate stability for our customers," Fish writes, "I told Willamette Week that I am open to taking a fresh look at the issue." The CUB has briefly addressed the use of the fund already this year.

In May, Janice Thompson of the CUB wrote that the Water Bureau's saving up its rate stabilization fund to avoid rate spikes was "standard practice" among utilities. But she also advised that "effective use of these funds in Portland has also been missing from recent discussions." The full text of Fish's letter is below.

From: Commissioner Fish Sent: Wednesday, September 17, 2014 1:37 PM To: Fritz, Amanda; Commissioner Saltzman; Novick, Steve; Hales, Mayor Cc: Finn, Brendan; Warner, Chris; Shibley, Gail; Bizeau, Tom; Kuhn, Hannah Subject: Rate Stabilization Fund

Colleagues,

In my first year as Commissioner in charge of the Water Bureau and Bureau of Environmental Services, I made rate stabilization a key priority. For the second year in a row, I have asked my bureaus to target a combined water/sewer/stormwater rate increase below 5%. This is a

substantial reduction from forecasted rate increases.

In today's Willamette Week, there is a story about the Water Bureau's use of its "Rate Stabilization Fund." It raises questions about the prior policy decision to establish this fund in order to smooth rate increases caused by major capital investments. The article suggests that we could instead use the fund to achieve a significant one-time reduction in rates.

While I believe our policy is a responsible way to provide rate stability for our customers, I told Willamette Week that I am open to taking a fresh look at the issue. Accordingly, I will ask the PWB Budget Advisory Committee, as well as the Citizens' Utility Board (CUB) – an outside, independent ratepayer advocate we brought in earlier this year – to review this policy as part of the upcoming budget process.

In particular, I will ask them to (1) review PWB's policy of using the account to smooth rate increases, (2) compare PWB's policy to any established best practices, and (3) evaluate the costs and benefits of using the account to achieve a deeper one-time rate reduction.

I am committed to transparency in the operations and budgeting of both my bureaus. And I look forward to working with both our in-house experts and outside watchdogs to explore these questions.

Nick

Murmurs: Hey, You Kids, Get Off My Property Tax Bill!

By WW Editorial Staff

September 17, 2014

Oregon has special taxing districts to fund libraries, transit and ports. In fact, state law gives local voters the power to create 26 different kinds of taxing districts to raise revenue and provide services. The next reason: children. City Commissioner Dan Saltzman is the sponsor of the Portland Children's Levy, a property tax voters have renewed every five years since 2002 to raise money for child-abuse prevention, foster care, early education and hunger prevention. Saltzman was in Salem on Sept. 15 to ask state legislators to create authority for a permanent "children's services district." While it sounds nice, money raised by the district would squeeze other local governments competing for a slice of property tax bills, which are capped by law. He's already twice met with Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek about the plan. Saltzman says the success of the Children's Levy makes him confident Multnomah County voters would pass a permanent district to fund children's programs. "We've delivered on what we said we were going to do," he says.