

The Oregonian

Portland lacks financial resources to make downtown affordable housing goal for 2035 a reality, Dan Saltzman says

*By Brad Schmidt
February 04, 2015*

Portland Commissioner Dan Saltzman says a long-term city goal to provide an adequate supply of affordable housing downtown won't be met without new development incentives or mandates.

During a Wednesday meeting, the City Council began reviewing a broad, 20-year vision for downtown Portland and surrounding westside neighborhoods called the "West Quadrant Plan."

In that plan, the city sets an "ambitious goal" that by the year 2035 about 30 percent of all units in the central city will be affordable to individuals or families earning up to 80 percent of the region's median.

Saltzman, in charge of the Portland Housing Bureau, said in a Jan. 26 memo that target simply isn't possible under the current model.

"While I support this goal, the fact is we do not have the financial resources or tools to make this recommendation a reality," Saltzman wrote in a memo to the City Council.

Saltzman's solution? He said the city has a "once in a generation opportunity" to advance affordable housing production through city and state legislative changes.

On the city front, Saltzman wants to offer unspecified incentives to developers - likely density and height bonuses - if developers voluntarily include affordable units or, perhaps, pay into a fund to build affordable housing elsewhere. But Saltzman said officials need to time such incentives or risk losing the opportunity because of state land-use laws protecting owners' development rights.

On the state side, city leaders for the first time have thrown support behind an effort to repeal a statewide law prohibiting local governments from requiring affordable housing in new developments. That concept is called mandatory inclusionary zoning.

If the Oregon Legislature repealed the prohibition during its session this year, government such as Portland would be free to set local mandatory inclusionary zoning requirements for developers to include some affordable housing in new projects.

Historically, Portland has largely struggled to provide affordable housing, particularly in its expensive downtown neighborhoods. Typically, the city uses money from downtown urban renewal districts to help subsidize development of affordable housing.

The city set a goal that 35 percent of all new units in the River District, which includes the Pearl, would be affordable. But officials haven't kept track and The Oregonian/OregonLive found that the city is failing.

Separately, Portland has helped subsidize just 209 units in the South Waterfront District, also far short of goals.

In his memo, Saltzman said timing, coordination and work by city bureaus will be essential to maximizing opportunities.

At the start of Wednesday's meeting, Saltzman highlighted his concerns about living up to the 30 percent goal for 2035.

"We need to activate the tools that will get us there," he said.

Portland Mayor Charlie Hales' 2015 priorities handout included errors on \$15 minimum wage, ex-offenders policies

*By Andrew Theen
February 04, 2015*

Portland Mayor Charlie Hales announced a series of policy ideas last Friday during his state of the city address that caught the attention of both City Hall staffers and members of the media.

He pledged his support for a \$15 minimum wage for all full-time city of Portland employees and contractors, and outlined a \$5,000 tax credit pilot program for businesses that hire ex-offenders.

But a prearranged pamphlet, touting the mayor's priorities and accomplishments and distributed to members of the media, included several factual errors.

"The mayor plans to adopt a \$15 minimum wage for all city workers," the handout read. "That will improve quality of life for more than 1,840 city workers and is intended to serve as an example for private businesses."

The Oregonian/OregonLive called Hales' office Wednesday morning to ask about the discrepancy.

Haynes subsequently sent a media alert to all press outlets citing the three factual errors and issuing a correction.

In the speech and in an interview Tuesday on OPB's Think Out Loud, Hales made it clear the \$15 per hour proposal wouldn't include seasonal or part time workers. He estimated the cost of extending the \$15 minimum wage proposal to contractors and a handful of full-time workers that earn less than that wage would be roughly \$1 million.

Expanding that wage increase to other employees could be prohibitively more expensive. Last year, Commissioner Amanda Fritz said extending that wage to the estimated 2,000 seasonal and temporary workers in her bureau would cost \$2.7 million per year.

In a voicemail message sent shortly after the press release on Wednesday, Hales spokesman Dana Haynes confirmed The Oregonian was the first outlet to inquire about the error. He said the mistakes were already fixed online and he was waiting to get "all our ducks in a row" before issuing a formal correction.

Haynes said the number of employees and contract workers that would benefit from the wage increase is not yet known. He said the errors were just copy editing mistakes and not a hint that the mayor planned to extend the \$15 minimum wage proposal

Here's a snapshot of the other errors:

On Page 8, the publication mentions a \$10,000 tax credit for companies that hire former offenders. The mayor is proposing a \$5,000 tax credit.

On Page 9, the publication said more than 1,840 city employees would benefit from an increase in the city's minimum wage to \$15 per hour. The number of employees and contract workers who would benefit is not yet known.

Also on Page 9, the publication made reference to a tax credit for Benefit Corporations. The mayor is not proposing the tax credit, but is proposing other incentives.

Portland police chief wants to add 9 analysts, tech support jobs to help with body camera program, use of force audits

*By Maxine Bernstein
February 04, 2015*

An outside consultant has found that the Portland Police Bureau's 930-member force is understaffed by at least 24 people, including officers, detectives and sergeants.

Officers' average response time to emergency calls is slowing, expected to exceed the bureau's five-minute goal by 50 seconds by the end of the current fiscal year.

And the bureau's rate of clearing violent crimes and property crimes is low: 40 percent for crimes against people and 14 percent for property crimes.

Portland's new police chief cited all those factors in his proposed \$181 million budget, seeking nine new full-time positions costing \$835,570 for the new fiscal year that begins in July.

But the positions aren't for uniformed officers. They're for crime analysts and civilian technical support hires.

The budget proposal requests money for six crime analysts to examine and compile reports on traffic stop data and do audits of police use of force required to comply with the city's settlement with the U.S.

Department of Justice. The settlement followed a 2012 federal investigation that found police engaged in a pattern of excessive force against people with mental illness.

The bureau is seeking another three technical support positions - a digital media program manager, a records specialist and an information technology specialist -- for a police body camera program.

The city is awaiting changes to state law during this legislative session, seeking restrictions on who may access the police video recordings and an exception that would free police from having to notify those being recorded ahead of time.

The bureau wants to select a camera vendor sometime between July and September.

"That is one tool that can increase people's trust in the police," Chief Larry O'Dea said.

The bureau anticipates that nearly 18 percent of the bureau's officers will be eligible for retirement by July 1, 2017, so it's working to recruit and hire new officers to get trainees in the pipeline to fill vacancies that arise.

Because the mayor asked bureaus to submit "stabilization" budget requests, the bureau offered ways to offset the added jobs: eliminate two patrol officers and one officer each in the Traffic Division, Gang Enforcement Team, Drugs and Vice Division, and a civilian police records specialist.

But the bureau made it clear that such cuts would be painful, slowing the bureau's response time to emergencies and reducing the arrest rates of its specialty enforcement units.

"Some of the work units are already running short-staffed and unable to adequately manage the workload," the chief's budget proposal says.

The bureau and mayor's office so far have declined to release the outside consultant's draft report on police staffing, which was delivered to the city last month. The budget request makes reference to some of its findings: that the bureau is understaffed in several divisions and resources should be realigned to improve supervisors' span of control.

Officer Daryl Turner, president of the Portland Police Association, said he's disappointed the bureau is not seeking to bolster its force.

"We are desperately lean," Turner said. "We need to hire more police officers, and that's not happening."

The bureau is hoping to add positions that would be covered by outside revenue: an evidence control specialist, whose job would be funded from the increased sale of abandoned property; two police officer positions added to the Transit Division, funded by an interagency agreement with TriMet; and three technical positions to help in the bureau's transition to a new records database system called Regional Justice Information Network, or RegJIN, set to go live in April.

RegJIN is replacing the Portland Police Database System and will provide a regional record-keeping system for more than 40 law enforcement agencies in the metro region. The bureau is seeking a management analyst, program manager and records supervisor, jobs that are to be funded from agencies' user fees for the new database.

The mayor is scheduled to present his proposed budget by April 28.

Portland Parks & Recreation wants to know: What's your race and ethnicity?

*By Casey Parks
February 05, 2015*

Athletes, artists and the other 60,000 people who pay to use Portland Parks & Recreation facilities and classes now face a new question when they sign up:

What's your race?

Portland Parks & Recreation leaders say their new practice of documenting the race and ethnicity of customers will help them better serve the city's increasingly racially and ethnically diverse population. The data could guide parks leaders as they create and market new programs as well as hire new staff.

"This helps us look at who we're serving but also who we're not serving," said Mark Ross, a spokesman for the city bureau. "We like to say 'Healthy parks, healthy Portland for all.' If we just do things the way we

think they should be done without data and input from those communities, we'll just be treading water. We want to be excellent swimmers."

Parks employees first began talking about collecting race and ethnicity data back in 2012. The bureau's leaders had begun looking for ways to make sure people from all backgrounds were able to access parks and recreation centers. They wanted to look at what barriers existed for people of color in accessing parks' services. But they weren't sure exactly how many people of color were visiting parks facilities.

"Our city is changing both racially, culturally and ethnically," said Art Hendricks, the equity and inclusion director for Portland Parks. "If we don't ask the question, what we're left with is anecdote. We really need to be data-driven."

Community centers collected some data last year, but the parks bureau moved to a new system after having technical difficulties with the old one. They began collecting data in earnest this year.

Here's how it works: Parks employees will ask customers registering for a pass or program to specify their race or ethnicity. Customers can refuse to answer. Right now, parks employees are not collecting data on people who simply visit the centers during free drop-in times. Other customers can stop by the front desk at any community center to update existing accounts.

A parks committee spent the past two years talking about the best way to collect the data. They looked at models from public health agencies. They debated the best ways to identify racial categories. And they talked about how to train staff members to ask for the data.

For instance, Hendricks said, the parks bureau hires many seasonal employees to work the front desk and lead programs. Those temporary employees may not have had discussions about race.

"The committee decided that at each community center we need a program champion," Hendricks said. Those existing staff members would work with community center directors to train staff in how to have those conversations and how to accurately report the data.

In Beaverton, Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation Department does not yet collect race and ethnicity data.

"Although we may at some point in the future," said Bob Wayt, a spokesman for the department. Because Beaverton is so diverse, Wayt said, staff members "do ask patrons their language preference from a fairly long list of possibilities."

Customers don't have to mark a choice, Wayt said.

Eventually, Portland parks officials will compare their data with that of the 2010 census and annual statistics from area school systems, including Portland Public, Reynolds, Parkrose, Centennial and David Douglas.

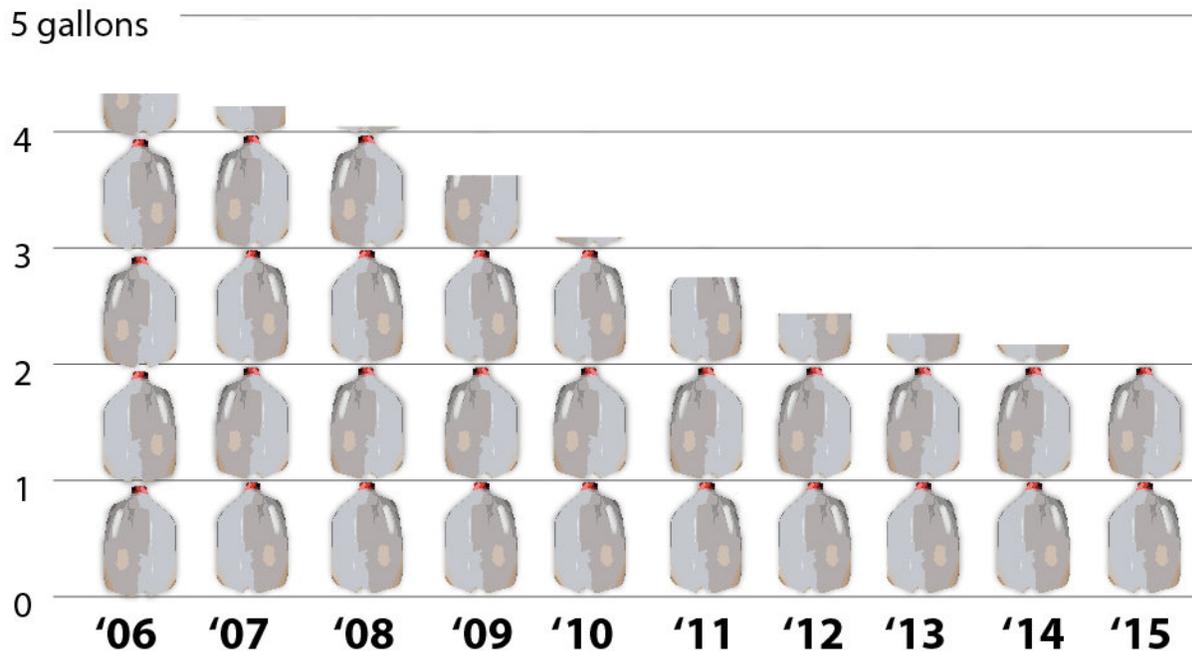
Anecdotally, parks staff knows that the Charles Jordan, East Portland and Matt Dishman community centers serve a more diverse population than, say, Northwest Portland's Hillside Community Center. But are those centers as diverse as the neighborhoods that surround them?

Comparing the data sets, Ross said, will show bureau staff if they need to ramp up marketing efforts to reach more people from diverse communities.

Update: This story has been updated to note that Portland Parks will compare survey data with the 2010 Census and information from multiple school districts, not just Portland Public.

Portland water and sewer rates may rise 4.8 percent: Portland City Hall Roundup

How much Portland tap water will a penny buy?



Source: Portland Water Bureau

MARK GRAVES/THE OREGONIAN

By Brad Schmidt
February 04, 2015

The average water and sewer bill for Portlanders would increase by \$4.58 a month, or 4.8 percent, under budget requests submitted this week by Commissioner Nick Fish.

"I think this is a responsible proposal and it's now up to the council to review it," Fish said Tuesday.

If approved, the rate hike would take effect July 1 and would mark the third consecutive fiscal year that Portland kept combined water and sewer increases at less than 5 percent.

The relatively modest increases followed public outcry over rising rates under the 2009-12 City Council and a commitment by Mayor Charlie Hales and Fish to minimize annual hikes.

Fish has previously labeled controversial projects such as the Rose Festival headquarters and the Water House as "self-inflicted wounds" that damaged public perception but did not play a sizable roll in cost increases.

Some of those projects prompted a lawsuit alleging improper utility spending. A Multnomah County judge last year determined that the City Council exceeded its authority by dedicating about \$1 million from utility funds for publicly financed campaigns and public restrooms.

On Wednesday, the City Council will authorize city attorneys to take necessary steps to appeal that decision to the Oregon Court of Appeals. A judge previously denied the city's request to appeal. But this time could be different if the city concedes how much money was misspent.

Fish, who oversees the Water Bureau and Bureau of Environmental Services, said the public will have an opportunity to weigh in on the latest rate proposal at a March 12 hearing.

The average water bill is currently \$29.54 a month and would rise to \$31.61, an increase of \$2.07, or 7 percent.

The average sewer/stormwater bill is currently \$65.25 and would jump to \$67.76, an increase of \$2.51, or 3.85 percent.

Despite the request, Hales is responsible for formally proposing utility rates on April 28. The City Council will set the numbers May 27.

The increases, Fish said, will help both bureaus meet basic service obligations and keep big construction projects on pace.

Fish also said he'd like to keep his two bureaus -- often considered political grenades -- despite Hales' revelation that he may reshuffle assignments at City Hall.

"My preference is to keep my assignments and the mayor hasn't indicated otherwise," Fish said. "This is a very tough assignment, but it's also very rewarding."

Portland street fund: Steve Novick wants more than \$28 million for transportation projects

*By Andrew Theen
February 04, 2015*

The Portland City Council is projected to have more than \$14 million in one-time spending to spread across city bureaus in the next fiscal year, and the requests are already flowing in.

City bureaus submitted their 2015-16 budget proposals this week, asking for more than \$50 million in one-time dollars. The Portland Bureau of Transportation accounts for more than half of the requests, some \$28 million, according to city budget officials.

Quick Primer: See below for a quick primer on where this money comes from.

After more than a year of town halls, contentious City Council meetings and the ultimate decision last month by Mayor Charlie Hales to wait for Salem lawmakers to act, it comes as no surprise that Commissioner Steve Novick wants more money for his bureau.

On Tuesday, Novick said the requests are robust and would represent "a meaningful addition" to PBOT's budget.

Novick's top priority request is \$5 million for street maintenance and safety projects. The money would be split according to the since-tabled Portland Street Fund formula, with 56 percent going to maintenance and 44 percent to safety projects.

Crossing improvements on 122nd Avenue in east Portland are the top priority safety project. Novick said the improvements are "a down payment" on the roughly \$8 million in projects TriMet said are necessary bring more frequent bus service on that thoroughfare.

Roughly \$2.8 million of the requested money would go to street preservation (paving work or repair projects). All told, PBOT is asking for \$17.8 million for street preservation, up from \$14.7 million in the current budget year (closer to roughly \$11 million was spent directly on paving work after subtracting administrative costs and overhead).

Another \$23.3 million in PBOT budget requests come from the list of infrastructure and maintenance projects not funded during the recent fall budget adjustment period. Novick said the City Budget Office liked those requests. "We shouldn't forget about them," he said.

According to the requested budget, the projects include \$11 million for three bridge and landslide abatement work, \$10 million for road rehab on major roads (Naito Parkway, 122nd Avenue, NW 23rd Avenue, West Burnside), and \$1.6 traffic signal maintenance and upgrades.

PBOT's proposal would also move TriMet's YouthPass funding to the general fund, freeing up another \$1 million in discretionary dollars for PBOT. "We want to be sure that we're not asked to carry it," Novick said of the program, which offers free buss passes to Portland Public Schools' High school students (Read more here).

The City Council will host budget town halls in March, but the mayor has the power to proposed a budget of his own Hales is expected to release his proposed budget on April 29.

Budget primer: The city's general fund is the discretionary pot of money, funded largely by property taxes and business license fees. The City Council decides how to spend the money, with the bulk of spending going to police, fire and parks. The transportation bureau has it's own discretionary pool of money, general transportation revenue, which is funded by largely the gas tax and parking revenues. The 15-16

requested budget is \$108.1 million, up from \$102.8 million in the current fiscal year (half of new revenue projected to come from Northwest Portland parking meter district). The 2015-16 fiscal year general fund budget is expected to be \$455.4 million. In addition to the \$14 million in one-time spending, the City Council could have an additional \$4.6 million in on-going general fund dollars to allocate.

Portland Mayor Charlie Hales talks \$15 minimum wage, demolitions, hiring ex-offenders on OPB Radio

*By Andrew Theen
February 03, 2015*

Portland Mayor Charlie Hales followed up last week's State of the City address with a 40 minute interview on OPB's Think Out Loud on Tuesday.

Hales expanded a bit on some of the main themes of his yearly address. In case you missed it, here's our recap of that speech.

We listened to OPB's interview, and here a few quick takeaways from the conversation ([listen to the full interview with the mayor](#))

\$15 minimum wage

Hales told OPB the estimated yearly cost to pay all full-time city employees and contractors \$15 per hour is about \$1 million per year. That doesn't include the cost to convert roughly 2,000 seasonal parks employers to that same wage (Commissioner Amanda Fritz previously said that would run \$2.7 million annually). The workers Hales is talking about are in the service industry (stadium attendants, parking attendants, security and janitorial personnel).

Salem lawmakers set the state minimum wage. Hales said the city supports an overall increase to the minimum wage but won't lobby Salem lawmakers to accomplish that. When asked whether cities like Portland should be able to set their own minimum wages, Hales said, "I'd like that authority if the legislature is unable to act, in fact I'd probably like it regardless."

Ex-convicts

In his Friday speech, Hales introduced a new policy proposal: \$5,000 tax credit for businesses that hire ex-offenders. Hales told OPB the program would cost \$500,000 to run a pilot program for 100 businesses. During his speech Friday, Hales cited a policy decision last year to ban the box on city applications asking applicants if they've been convicted of a crime. "I think we've had some pretty good success in our maintenance bureau," Hales told OPB, of finding ex-convicts for potential hires.

In-Fill

Demolitions of existing homes in Portland neighborhoods continues to be a hot-button issue. Hales didn't offer any more significant details in terms of what he would propose to address the phenomenon. "We can't legislate taste," he told OPB. But, he added, the changes "cause most people to wince" when they see big homes that don't fit the existing fabric of a neighborhood.

Re-Election

Last month, The Oregonian reported that Hales was asking supporters for campaign contributions, a nod to a likely reelection effort next year. On Tuesday, Hales told OPB he was "pondering" reelection. "I'm leaning in that direction because I love this job and love this city."

Beer wars: Portland, Pabst reach 'agreement in principle' on trademark dispute

*By Andrew Theen
February 03, 2015*

Portland and Pabst Brewing Company are inching closer to a legal settlement regarding the brewery's use of the iconic, and trademarked, "Portland Oregon" sign to promote a music festival last summer.

Matt Slessler, Pabst's Brand Ambassador, said Tuesday that the parties have an "agreement in principle." Slessler declined to comment when asked the financial terms of the tentative agreement.

Tracy Reeve, Portland's City Attorney said "discussions are ongoing," but no firm settlement is in place.

City attorneys were prepared to sue Pabst for unauthorized and unlicensed use of the famous "Portland Oregon" sign atop the White Stag Building in Old Town Chinatown.

The brewery held its inaugural Project Pabst festival at the Zidell Yards in South Waterfront last September, and the company promoted the festival with a logo that city officials said was "confusingly similar" to the city's trademarked sign. The Pabst logo featured the Oregon state outline, but a unicorn in lieu of the famous stag. The bottom of the promotional materials Project Pabst rather than "Old Town."

The City Council is scheduled to vote to authorize legal action against the company on Wednesday, but a spokesman for Mayor Charlie Hales said the agenda item would be pulled.

The dispute highlights Portland's recent efforts to flex its legal muscles and protect the sign, trademarked in 2011. Officials said the city is "pretty vigorously" defending the trademark by sending cease and desist letters to companies that use the likeness without going through the proper channels.

Portland has a process to officially license the sign, or use altered versions of it. Pabst went through that appropriate channel but was subsequently denied.

License fees are expected to partially fund the \$28,000 annual maintenance costs for the sign, but the city has only received roughly \$10,000 from companies and nonprofits that licensed the sign.

Widmer Brothers Brewing and Uber also received similar notices to stop using the city's sign.

Pabst's new owner, Eugene Kashper is meeting with Hales on Thursday. Dana Haynes, Hales' spokesman, said the meeting is "not about the settlement."

"It will be about what Pabst has promoted in the past and might be promoting in the future," Haynes said.

Slessler, a Portland resident, said the company changed ownership and legal counsel last fall. He said the company was "caught off guard" by an Oregonian/OregonLive story on Jan. 2 highlighting the trademark dispute. The company subsequently changed the Project Pabst logo to a solo unicorn, Slessler said to avoid confusion.

Portland is Pabst's number one market in the country, according to Slessler. "We're committed to doing Project Pabst in Portland in 2015 and hopefully for years to come," he added, noting that the company donated thousands to a local charity last year.

The Portland Tribune

City maneuvers to protect West Hayden Island

*By Steve Law
February 4, 2015*

City planners, bowing to public pressure, have yanked West Hayden Island from their proposed list of industrial lands available for development over the next 20 years.

The move is likely to please environmentalists and Hayden Island residents — who want the land retained as open space — but anger business groups and the Port of Portland. It also might jeopardize state approval of the city's revised comprehensive land use plan.

In September, many neighbors and environmentalists bashed city planners for including about 300 acres of West Hayden Island on a map of Portland's developable industrial lands. The city is in the thick of

revising its comprehensive land use or “comp” plan, and is obliged to show state land use regulators that it’s accommodating land for new jobs over the next two decades, including industrial lands and harbor-related trade jobs. Including West Hayden Island enabled planners to meet the city’s projected 20-year land supply of harbor and industrial jobs.

The Port of Portland owns most of the 800-acre west side of Hayden Island, and eventually plans to develop marine trade terminals there. But it withdrew its request for the city to annex the land a year ago, after the Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission recommended environmental remediation terms the port said were too expensive to make its project pencil out.

When the property appeared on the city’s industrial lands inventory in September, neighbors and environmentalists complained of a back-door effort to revive the port’s project.

Now, in advance of a Feb. 10 work session on the issue before the Planning and Sustainability Commission, city planners are backing down, leaving West Hayden Island off the industrial lands inventory. But to do that, they’re using a bit of sleight of hand, “lowballing” the expected demand for trade-related land in the Portland Harbor over the next two decades.

“In response to public testimony, our current proposal is to designate West Hayden Island rural farm/forest, which is sort of a continuation of its current designation as a holding zone,” says Tom Armstrong, supervising planner for the city.

The city’s comp. plan will include language about a potential split in future use of the property, of 500 acres for open space and 300 acres for industrial projects, Armstrong says.

The city is now using its “low end” forecast for the amount of harbor industrial land that it will need between now and 2035, substituting that for its mid-range forecast. That maneuver means the city doesn’t need to set aside as much land as it once assumed.

The city still is providing for a potential 1,800 acres of developable industrial lands, Armstrong says, about 100 acres more than its forecasted need for jobs. Some of that land would be provided at golf courses the city expects might come on the market in the next 20 years, because fewer people are playing golf these days.

Susie Lahsene, the Port of Portland’s senior manager for transportation and land use policy, finds the city’s move curious. “They changed their forecast assumptions,” Lahsene says. “That’s surprising to me, given the amount of investment that’s going on along the Columbia River and the harbor in general.”

Since the federally funded deepening of the Columbia River channel was finished about four years ago, there’s been significant expansions of trade terminals on the river, in Portland, Vancouver, and other communities. By the port’s count, there’s been \$866 million in new marine facility improvements and related infrastructure. Of that, \$366 million was in the city of Portland, including Port of Portland property and private property.

The port estimates there’s another \$2.8 billion in proposed projects in the regional river system. That includes a \$500 million propane export terminal proposed by Pembina Pipeline Corp. of Calgary, at the Port’s Terminal 6.

It’s unclear what the city’s action might mean for the West Hayden Island project. “The change they made is removing the assumption that it will develop in a 20-year time frame,” Lahsene says. But the port has said all along that the project wouldn’t be needed for several years.

The West Hayden Island issue will be one of many items before the Planning and Sustainability Commission when it meets on Tuesday, from 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Sources Say: Hales sounds like contender as he sings for his supper

*By Jim Redden
February 5, 2015*

Mayor Charlie Hales didn’t announce for re-election at his State of the City speech last Friday, but the noontime address to the Portland City Club had a lot of campaign-sounding talking points.

Hales spent the first part of the speech taking credit for rescuing the city from policy gridlock and looming deficits. Then he spent the rest of the speech making promises that sound so good, you can’t really

criticize him for failing to keep them, as long as he tries. Those promises included preserving city neighborhoods, housing all homeless veterans, and making the police more responsive to the community.

Hales also sang the opening verse of "Simple Gifts," a Shaker song popularized by Aaron Copeland in his score for the "Appalachian Spring" ballet. It includes the line "'tis the gift to be free," though none of Hales' promises will be.

Check the source

It's always a good idea to take polls released by advocacy groups about their issues with a grain of salt.

Fair Shot for All is a coalition of labor, social justice and community organization groups that supports raising the minimum wage. It released a poll by GBA Strategies last week that said Oregon voters support raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by a 16 percent margin. But that conflicts with an independent poll conducted by DHM Research in December that found state residents almost evenly split on such an increase, with 50 percent supporting it and 46 percent opposing it.

Fair Shot for All also supports requiring all employers to provide seven days of paid sick leave. Its poll says 67 percent of Oregonians support such a requirement. But the DHM Research poll found state residents also were divided over the issue, with 56 percent supporting an unspecified number of mandatory paid sick leave days and 42 percent opposing it.

Not surprisingly, the GBA Strategies poll also found 79 percent of Oregon voters support creating a voluntary retirement system for workers who do not have any employer-sponsored retirement accounts. The DHM Research poll did not include a question on the issue.

Blumenauer high on legal marijuana

Earl Blumenauer has always been something of a rebel, so it's no surprise that he considers legal marijuana to be revolutionary.

Blumenauer first made waves when he unsuccessfully pushed to lower the voting age to 19 in 1969. After being elected to the Oregon House of Representatives in 1972, he raised eyebrows by being among the first to wear jeans into the chambers — and some say he even went shoeless a time or two. And after being elected to Congress in 1996, he became a leader in alternative transportation.

Now he is beating the drum on a new issue, legal marijuana.

According to a Jan. 29 news release from Blumenauer's office, he has founded a marijuana working group in Congress. The release also includes a letter to Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. Chairman Martin Gruenberg demanding to know what part the FDIC played in MBank's decision not to provide banking services to legal marijuana businesses in Colorado, as reported by The Denver Post.

"It is no secret we are in the midst of a revolution when dealing with marijuana in the United States," Blumenauer says in the letter.

The Portland Mercury

Hall Monitor

The Populist Charlie Hales

*By Denis C. Theriault
February 4, 2015*

TOM CHAMBERLAIN, the head of the Oregon AFL-CIO and an occasionally rumored political candidate, was seated somewhere rather conspicuous during the luncheon that accompanied Mayor Charlie Hales' State of the City speech last Friday, January 30.

Chamberlain was taking his meal just a few chairs from Hales himself, at the same table just in front of the lectern where the mayor would speak. That meant Chamberlain was one of Hales' special guests— with Hales poised to deliver something special in return.

He let it drop that he'd be tying himself, no matter how cautiously, to labor's local push for a \$15-an-hour minimum wage when he puts out his budget this spring.

"So what else can a city, our city, do about economic opportunity? Another passion of mine: living wages for city workers," Hales told the grandees gathered at the Sentinel hotel. "This year we'll be proposing [in] my budget that all full-time permanent employees and contractors of the City of Portland make \$15 per hour. It's the right thing to do."

That stagecraft, however, also left Chamberlain as something of a political scarecrow.

Hales—though he won't say so officially—is pretty clearly going to run for re-election. And he just sent one helluva message to rivals thinking they'd have a better chance at winning over labor, and especially labor's bounty of campaign assistance:

Keep away. It's mine.

That's partly bluster. While groups like Service Employees International Union Local 49 immediately cheered the mayor (SEIU was among the few unions backing Hales early in 2012), activists in the local 15 Now movement quickly reminded everyone that the plan still leaves out hundreds and hundreds of the city's part-time and seasonal workers. Hales' staff expects to spend just \$1 million helping to bump pay for about 100 contract workers and a relative handful of full-time workers.

But the symbolism of pushing for \$15 in any form remains plenty potent. It makes it more difficult for labor sources to dismiss the growing-if-grudging realization that Hales hasn't been as bad as they might have feared—despite some bad blood over the push to unionize park rangers and questions about Hales' support for front-line cops and firefighters.

And Hales, by nodding to progressive goals, might be hedging his bets after upsetting big wheels in the business community with his and Commissioner Steve Novick's paused push for transportation revenue. Last election's endorsement from the Portland Business Alliance, now that it's clashed with the mayor on street funding and other issues, may not be as easy to cinch.

Low-wage workers weren't even the only left-leaning or populist constituency Hales shouted out. He pitched tax breaks for businesses that hire returning convicts. He promised more affordable housing. He talked about places like Lents and NE MLK, and took on developers with threats to tighten city rules for demolitions and infill development.

Maybe we've finally met the real Charlie Hales. Or at least the Charlie Hales who's figured out that winning in Portland without facing a scandal-damaged opponent (sorry, Jefferson Smith!) means connecting with people outside the city's more-moneyed neighborhoods.

Housing Bureau Boldly Demands Almost All of City's Remaining Surplus Cash

*By Denis C. Theriault
February 3, 2015*

Portland City Hall's annual budget dance has kicked off pretty much on schedule—after the budget office this afternoon posted long-awaited 2015-16 funding wish lists from the city's myriad bureaus and offices.

We've just started taking a look—but one bureau's request very much sticks out: The Portland Housing Bureau is asking for just shy of \$7.2 million in surplus cash in the next fiscal year, or coincidentally nearly every dollar that won't be earmarked for infrastructure maintenance under a new council spending policy approved last week.

The biggest chunk is \$5 million for the city's housing investment fund, which the bureau uses to seed, subsidize, and build housing developments beyond affordable, low-income developments funded through a portion of the city's urban renewal tax revenue. But right behind it is an infusion of \$1.6 million meant to extend the reach of another policy approved last week: plans for spending some \$20 million in urban renewal funding promised for North and Northeast Portland in the wake of last year's Trader Joe's debacle.

- 1) \$1,600,000 in one-time funds to support the Equity and Complete Neighborhoods: North/Northeast Portland Ownership Retention Program. This program, as a part of the Bureau's larger North/Northeast strategy, provides resources to households outside of the

Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area through a case management approach to home rehabilitation and estate planning.

- 2) \$5,000,000 in one-time only funds to support the Housing Investment Fund which provides housing in high opportunity areas with increased access to jobs, transportation, high performing schools and other amenities, and to preserve affordability in areas at risk of gentrifying to prevent involuntary displacement of communities of color.
- 3) \$547,296 in one-time only funds to support programs identified by the Home for Everyone Coordinating Board to support people experiencing homelessness.
- 4) \$179,400 in ongoing funds to support the addition of a COLA for homelessness programs that were made a part of the PHB ongoing budget in 2012-13.

The city's expected to have \$14.4 million in one-time money available next year—which is an eye-popping amount (if just a small percentage of the city's overall budget). The problem, as it were, is that more than half of that money's now spoken for—leaving just \$7.2 million—with a little bit of intrigue buried in the small print.

Last week, Commissioner Amanda Fritz persuaded Mayor Charlie Hales and Commissioners Nick Fish and Steve Novick to back a brand-new policy that binds the council's hand when it comes to spending surplus cash. Half of whatever one-time funding's available in a given fiscal year, as well as half of any money unspent after the end of a given fiscal year, must now be spent on maintenance in three areas: parks, transportation, and emergency management.

Commissioner Dan Saltzman, in charge of the housing bureau, notably wouldn't sign onto the plan before a hearing last week. And then promptly voted against it, with his office making it known they were looking to make a huge request on housing needs and that their didn't agree with approving something so prescriptive.

Curious then, that the housing bureau's request is for almost exactly the amount that's leftover—a defiant ask given that Hales and Novick both raised the possibility last week that they'd try to please voters (in their quiet pursuit of a street fee) by looking at dipping into the unrestricted half of the surplus for even more maintenance cash.

Housing, as Fritz pointed out last week, had been contemplated as one of the focus areas in her policy until Hales nixed it on the grounds that the city, despite paying to build, rarely actually owns it once it's built.

Daily Journal of Commerce

City Council hears options for Portland Building

*By Shelby King
February 4, 2015*

The City Council at a Tuesday work session entertained possibilities for fixing the myriad problems plaguing the Portland Building.

"They were in a work session today to talk about options – funding options and timeline options," said Dana Haynes, Mayor Charlie Hales' communications officer. "No decisions were made."

Staffers from the city's Office of Management and Finance estimate that updating the building's exterior would cost about \$67 million, Haynes said. Financing for exterior renovations would likely be sought through a 20-year or 30-year bond.

“They’re going to have another work session in March,” Haynes said. “The Office of Finance and Management is planning to present rough estimates on how much fixing up the interior and exterior would cost.”

The focus of interior renovations would be creating more natural light in office spaces and “creating a healthier work environment” for employees, Haynes said.

The building, which two years ago was added to the National Register of Historic Places, was designed by renowned architect Michael Graves. Since its completion in 1982, the building has been plagued by structural issues and leaks.

The Portland Business Journal

Portland's 'Dashboard' promises transparency on city affairs

*By Andy Giegerich
February 5, 2015*

The city of Portland has unveiled a distinct, and very data-driven, way to keep tabs on various municipal doings.

The city's Dashboard brings a bevy of metrics that provide insights on various initiatives undertaken at City Hall. Officials are using the site to, initially, share data on economic opportunity, livable neighborhoods, public safety and government in general.

The site displays data gathered from all city bureaus.

Economic metrics, for instance, indicates that the city's a tad behind on meeting housing retention goals.

On the other hand, the city's jobs picture continues to improve by several measures.

The data is set to be regularly updated, according to the site's administrators.

The Skanner

Will Council Stay in Joint Terrorism Task Force?

*By Donovan M. Smith
February 4, 2015*

Portland's rocky relationship with the federal counter-terrorism program the Joint Terrorism Task Force could be coming to a close on Thursday— or it could be expanding.

Two resolutions are to be considered by City Council Feb. 5 at 6 p.m.

If the Council votes to back out from the Joint Terrorism Task Force -- which pairs local law enforcement with the FBI and other federal agencies to share intelligence and data -- it would mark a historic two times they would have done so.

Dan Handelman of the police accountability group Portland Copwatch says that if there's a “real” threat to public safety he has no problem with the bureau working with the FBI to prevent harm—his issue is with the lack of accountability presented by the Mayor not having security clearance to the program.

“The problem is our Mayor is the Police Commissioner, and it's his responsibility to be sure our officers are conducting themselves in a way that is consistent with the U.S. Constitution, Oregon law, and local policies,” Handelman told The Skanner News. “If he does not have the security clearance to oversee the daily work of these officers, we can't hold them accountable. So having more insight is not the same as having oversight. And no, it does not make us ‘safer.’”

Pre-dating the infamous attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the nearly three decade old JTTF -- meant to combat domestic and international terrorism such as bombings and mass killings -- has undergone major national expansion in recent years. To date, 74 Joint Terrorism Task Forces have been created since the Twin Towers fell, quadrupling its members to almost 4,000.

While Portland joined the JTTF in 1997, allegations of underreported and mishandled data have come from both bureaucrats and concerned citizens – including former Mayor Vera Katz, who was frustrated by being denied security clearance, even as Hales is now.

By 2005, City Council made its historic decision to become the first-ever city to withdraw from the Joint Terrorism Task Force, citing the need for better oversight of the city's own police, according to an ACLU blog post from that year.

The decision comes at an interesting time, as Chief Larry O'Dea who was sworn into the position at the top of the year made promises for a more transparent and tolerant bureau. Fritz who has been on Council when they withdrew from the program and rejoined just announced she'll be running for a third term as Commissioner, and some of the largest protests in recent history have filled all areas of the metro-area calling for an end to structural bias the lends itself to state-sanctioned violence.

A vote against continuing the relationship would still give the Chief of Police security clearance privileges with the FBI when there is "specific knowledge of an immediate threat of harm from criminal activity here in Portland, or at another local jurisdiction which may need support from our emergency responders."

The second resolution calls for expansion of the program giving two of the 944 sworn Portland Police officers to be assigned full time to the Joint Terrorism Task Force. Right now the force only works with the program on a part-time basis – whereas most cities assign fulltime officers to the JTTF.

Reports to Mayor Hales on the specifics of the program would remain largely limited under both resolutions should the Council decide to continue involvement.

The ACLU this year wrote a public letter decrying the City's participation in the program, which is in over 100 cities nationally saying, "The only way for the Portland Police Bureau to ensure that it is complying with Oregon laws and the Constitution is to stay out of the FBI's JTTF."

The note goes on to say, "History has taught us again and again that the federal government, including the FBI, uses invasive and unconstitutional surveillance tactics in the name of 'counter-terrorism' and 'national security.'"

The Center for Intercultural Organizing, an immigrant and refugee advocacy group, is also currently encouraging Portland residents to call City Council members to vote against continuing in the program.

"The program allows the Portland Police Bureau (PPB) to work with the FBI, and largely targets Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian communities," the organization said in an emailed action alert to its members.

"[The Joint Terrorism Task Force] has led to profiling and spying on our community members. There has been no transparency for the community to even know what activities PPB engages in. JTTF threatens the civil liberties and civil rights of many Portland residents."

GoLocalPDX

Five Things To Know About Portland's Joint Terrorism Task Force

*By Joanna Evoniuk
February 5, 2015*

Portland City Council could soon change the city's involvement with the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force. The council will listen to public comment on Thursday night to help decided whether to fully commit or completely walk away from the task force.

Mayor Charlie Hales has proposed new resolutions to the City Council that would change the city's dealings with the FBI task force. Dana Haynes, communications director for the Mayor's Office, said Hales is unhappy with the results of the city's current position, and the FBI reports they receive.

"We should be completely out or completely in," Haynes said. "These reports are not really telling what's going on. Universally, I think everybody thinks they're not very good and wants to get rid of them."

The City of Portland first voted to join the task force, a FBI program that involves local law enforcement with terrorism-related investigations, in 1997. However, unhappy with the relationship, Portland voted in 2005 to withdraw from the task force.

Yet after a bomb threat in 2010, involving an FBI sting operation, the council decided in 2011 to enter into an "as-needed basis" with the FBI. Although the city was not formally in agreement with the agency, Portland Police Bureau would be involved in some aspects of the investigations.

Mayor Charlie Hales has now put forward two new resolutions, which would end the half-committed relationship between the city and FBI. Hales said the mayor has not made up his mind yet to join the task force or not, but is looking to citizens for their opinions.

"The Mayor literally has a lot of questions, to see if [the city] would be better in or out," Haynes said. "He's saying 'bring me the facts.'"

The FBI said they would welcome the Portland's reinstatement into the task force. Larry Carl is an assistant special agent in charge of the national security branch of the Portland Joint Terrorism Task Force.

"We definitely welcome them coming back on. From our perspectives it provides a closer working relationship," Carl said. "The PPB has historical local knowledge that is useful."

Whichever way the board decides to go, Carl said the FBI is committed to working with the PPB and would advise the police chief to any active threats.

The City Council will hold a public hearing on Thursday, Feb. 5 to receive public input on Portland's involvement with the FBI task force. The commissioners will then vote at their normal meeting on Feb. 11th, unless they decide to delay the issue for a later date.

[Related Slideshow: Five Things To Know About Portland's Joint Terrorism Task Force](#)

KATU

Possible deal in Portland, Pabst brouhaha over iconic sign

*By Steven Dubois, Associated Press
February 5, 2015*

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Portland has reached a possible settlement in its trademark dispute with the maker of Pabst Blue Ribbon, the beer rejuvenated by the city's turn-of-the-century hipsters.

The disagreement stemmed from the brewer's use of an iconic downtown sign to promote a 2014 music festival.

The large neon landmark, which boasts a stag and the words "Portland Oregon," is considered one of the most recognizable features of the city's skyline. The deer's nose lights up red at Christmastime.

The city had denied Pabst permission because it doesn't allow images of the sign to be used for products not available to people of all ages.

City attorneys say Pabst Brewing Co. then created a "confusingly similar" knockoff. In essence, it replaced the words "Portland Oregon" with "Project Pabst" and swapped out the stag in favor of a unicorn.

The City Council was to vote Wednesday on whether to sue Pabst. But the item was pulled from the agenda because of what Mayor Charlie Hales described as a potential settlement.

A city attorney and a Pabst representative did not immediately reply to requests for comment.

For those familiar with Portland's storied social scene, the idea of the city suing Pabst is as unthinkable as James Bond ordering a stirred martini.

Pabst Blue Ribbon became synonymous with Portland in the late 1990s and early 21st century as a prominent subculture of young people embraced the working-class brand that had largely fallen out of favor with the previous generation.

The website promoting the 2015 Project Pabst music festival notes the connection: "We may have been established in Milwaukee in 1844, but it was in Portland that Pabst was reborn. Our love letter to Portland has been written in the stars for some time now."

The sign, meanwhile, was installed around World War II and carried a variety of messages before "Portland Oregon."

The city bought it in 2010 to thwart a controversial plan to change the slogan to "University of Oregon," which is more than 100 miles south of Portland.

The city trademarked the image and for several years has charged those who want to use it for commercial purposes.

Maintaining the sign costs more than \$2,000 per month, and the fees defray some of the cost, said Jen Clodius, spokeswoman for the city's Bureau of Internal Business Services.

She said nearly 50 entities have paid, including the American Institute of Architects and the television show "Portlandia."

The city has sent at least three cease-and-desist letters to companies using the image without authorization, including a recent one to ride-hailing company Uber.