

The Oregonian

Have a tough time finding parking in Northwest Portland? It's about to get tougher

*By Andrew Theen
March 04, 2015*

Parking in Northwest Portland is notoriously difficult for residents, businesses owners and visitors.

It's about to get more challenging.

Starting this month, the largest parking garage owner in the thriving commercial and residential area around Northwest 23rd and 21st Avenues is closing its properties to the public.

Legacy Good Samaritan Medical Center has three parking garages and additional surface lots totaling 1,819 spaces in the dense, parking-deprived area.

"We're the last bastion of free parking in the neighborhood," said Megan Turnell, hospital spokeswoman.

For years, Good Samaritan had formal and informal agreements with the neighborhood and nearby businesses to allow free parking on nights and weekends.

But as the city prepares to install about 350 parking meters and expand the area where residents and business owners need a \$60 annual parking permit, hospital officials fear being overrun.

Starting next week, parking on campus will be limited to employees, patients and their visitors.

The hospital hopes the plan is temporary - Good Samaritan plans to convert its parking garages into commercial lots, charging the public for short-term visits on nights and weekends. The structures would remain free for staff and patients.

Good Samaritan also plans a system to allow residents to buy a \$60 annual permit to park nights and weekends.

But the hospital needs a city code change first, and that could take months. Bureau of Planning & Sustainability officials said the agency is working with the hospital on the code change and should have more answers in the next few weeks.

"It's disappointing. But it is what it is," said Gustavo Cruz, president of the Northwest District Neighborhood Association. "There's not much we can do at this point other than encourage the city to move a little bit faster."

Commuter issue

Shutting off access to Good Samaritan's parking garages was a long time coming.

Good Samaritan has 2,650 employees at its Northwest campus and treats roughly 60,000 people a year through in-patient, outpatient and emergency services.

For years, the hospital leased a satellite lot from Con-way, the freight company just north of Good Samaritan that is in the midst of transforming its 15-acre campus into a miniature Pearl District.

But by the end of 2015, Good Samaritan will lose access to 242 spaces at a Con-way lot.

Con-way growing

Craig Boretz, vice president of corporate development for Con-way, said his company plans to develop 2 acres of surface parking near one of its buildings later this year.

But construction on two sites where its workers now park means the company will need the spaces leased to Good Samaritan later this year, at least for now, he said.

The company -- creating a mini Pearl District-style development, including a New Seasons Market and several other buildings -- needs at least 600 spaces for its 1,000 employees, Boretz said.

Once new parking is developed, he said, the company expects to have spaces to lease again - but that might not be until late 2016.

'Getting worse'

Cruz said he's heard only anecdotally that residents and commuters use the Good Samaritan lots.

But Cinema 21, the independent theater around the corner from the campus, tells patrons on its website to park at the hospital garage.

Cruz does see the parking situation getting worse.

"I don't have a driveway or a garage," Cruz said of his Northwest Johnson Street home. "So it's a never-ending challenge to try and find parking in the neighborhood."

Su Cheng, owner of Ling Garden on Northwest 21st, said neighborhood visitors who aren't patronizing her restaurant still use its parking lot.

"We know if they tow the car, that's expensive," she said. "Usually we just try and find the person or leave a note on their car."

A 2012 neighborhood parking plan set the framework for meters and expanded permit zones.

That plan included a poll of 400 residents, asking how to improve area parking. A parking garage was the No. 1 response.

Support has been "damaged" since then, Cruz said, because developers haven't provided enough parking.

"Parking is expensive to put in, so most developers don't want to put it in if they don't have to," he said.

Commuter challenge

Turnell, the hospital spokeswoman, said commuters park in the garages for free before heading off to work elsewhere in the central city. "What we've heard is a lot of people are parking there who don't even live there."

Last year, Good Samaritan hired parking attendants to monitor the exits to ask whether drivers had business at the hospital, but some drivers would simply navigate around them, Turnell said.

Now crews are installing gates at the three garages and parking lots, with tentative plans to restrict access starting Monday.

Employees will have electronic sensors that will allow them to enter and exit freely. Patients and visitors will need a validated ticket from hospital staff to exit - or they'll face a \$65 fine.

More delays coming

City officials said Tuesday that the parking program will be delayed at least one month from its expected April debut.

Portland Bureau of Transportation officials said more than 2,000 people applied for the new parking permit in the past few weeks. Signs marking the new zones will start going up this month.

The meters - "smart" pay stations like elsewhere in the city - should be installed sometime in May. An initial estimate projects \$3 million a year in revenue.

Portland Parks Foundation Executive Director leaving to head Audubon Society of Portland

*By Andrew Theen
March 04, 2015*

Nick Hardigg is leaving the Portland Parks Foundation to head the Audubon Society of Portland.

Hardigg spent four years as the executive director of the nonprofit parks foundation, which helps raise money for the Bureau of Parks & Recreation through private philanthropists and other partnerships.

His first day at the Audubon Society, the venerable protection and conservation charity with more than 100 years of advocacy work focusing on native birds and their habitat, is Mar. 23.

Hardigg, who previously led the Alaska Conservation Foundation prior to leading the three-person staff of the parks foundation, called the new job a big promotion.

"They have a steady stream of success getting people engaged in nature, and a strong team is in place," Hardigg said of the Audubon Society. "My job is to help them continue that tradition."

The Audubon Society has 31 employees, dozens of seasonal educators and annual revenue of \$5.7 million, according to the latest financial report.

Hardigg said he feels like the parks foundation, founded in 2001, is on firm footing -- citing the popular volunteer Parke Diem program and other initiatives.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz, who oversees the parks bureau, said she looks forward to working with Hardigg in his new position. "He was a key partner and leader in getting the Parks Bond passed last November. The Audubon Society is very fortunate to have Nick as their next Executive Director," Fritz said in a statement.

Hardigg said he believes the foundation should play a larger role in future advocacy for parks, citing equity of access to parks and funding problems as the top priority. He said the new executive director should "continue our growth" and make the organization more visible.

Prior to his work in Alaska, Hardigg worked in finance for The Nature Conservancy in Oregon and as Chief of Tourism and Concessions Management at Grand Canyon National Park and Denali National Park, according to Audubon's website.

Hardigg graduated from Yale University with an MBA and received his undergraduate degree from Wesleyan University.

The parks foundation plans to start a national search for a new executive director by the end of March.

Job hunt for new Bureau of Environmental Services director is on: Portland City Hall Roundup

*By Andrew Theen
March 04, 2015*

The city of Portland is searching for a new director to lead the Bureau of Environmental Services.

An advertisement posted on the city's website includes an eight-page brochure promoting the city and the position. The deadline to apply is March 27.

Portland pitched BES as "an international leader in green infrastructure, natural resources protection and watershed restoration." The application highlights the role of the Big Pipe in cleaning up the Willamette River.

City leaders envision the new bureau head leading the office to become "a trusted service provider and innovative environmental leader through a demonstrated commitment to clean rivers, healthy watersheds, and our community."

Former bureau director Dean Marriott, at the time the longest-tenured and highest-paid administrator in city government, resigned in January as part of a legal settlement with the city.

Commissioner Nick Fish, who oversees the bureau, plans a nationwide search for Marriott's replacement.

Marriott's ouster came on the heels of news that a staff building at the North Portland Columbia Wastewater Treatment Plant had cost far more than planned, and amid a documented lack of trust between Fish and Marriott. Marriott, who had been director 21 years, received \$199,160 in severance.

The director position is an "at-will" job, meaning the administrator could be dismissed at any time. Marriott was the last remaining city bureau director with civil service protections.

According to the job brochure, the salary ranges from \$138,986 to \$199,160, depending on qualifications and experience. The director will oversee 500 employees and an operating budget approaching \$900 million.

Here are some of the duties outlined in the job description:

The Office of the Director coordinates bureau activities, oversees the development of the bureau budget, develops and maintains bureau policies, coordinates with other city bureaus and key community stakeholders, and represents BES on various inter-bureau committees. Specific program areas in the office include internal communications, public information, public involvement and community outreach, clean rivers education, environmental policy and the Portland Harbor Superfund program.

Fish's office hopes to have a new director in place by summer.

Portland fined \$25,000 for dumping chlorinated wastewater into Columbia Slough

*By Andrew Theen
March 03, 2015*

Oregon state environmental regulators fined the city of Portland \$25,000 for illegally dumping chlorinated wastewater into the Columbia Slough last October.

Last week, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality said the fine is related to a 300,000-gallon discharge of chlorinated wastewater into the slow-moving slough, adjacent to the Columbia Wastewater Treatment Plant in North Portland.

"Chlorine is highly toxic to fish and aquatic life at very low concentrations," DEQ said in a press release.

Last year, DEQ fined the Water Bureau \$40,800 after a contractor dumped chlorinated water into Johnson Creek during tests on a new Powell Butte reservoir.

Portland's permit specifically allows for dumping treated wastewater into the Columbia River.

Linc Mann, Bureau of Environmental Services spokesman, said the chlorination discharge occurred due to a "faulty valve" at the plant. He said the overflow on Oct. 23 could be attributed in part to heavy rainfall.

According to the DEQ's report, BES staffers were at fault for "neglecting to regularly inspect and maintain the valve that failed."

State officials said the city "failed to exercise reasonable care to avoid the foreseeable risk of committing the violation."

City officials immediately noticed the valve issue, Mann said, and notified DEQ on the day of the violation.

Mann said chlorinated wastewater typically travels from the plant north through a 2.5-mile pipeline into the Columbia River, where the chlorine is treated before the wastewater enters the waterway.

Portland has until Mar. 6 to appeal the fine.

The Portland Tribune

City, county to consider fossil fuel export policy

*By Steve Law
March 3, 2015*

Portland and Multnomah County would adopt a firm position against coal and oil exports through their territories, under a draft revision of their joint Climate Action Plan.

If adopted by the Portland City Council and Multnomah County Board of Commissioners, that would make it hard for any oil or coal export projects to win permits or facilities needed from either jurisdiction.

There appears to be consensus among Multnomah County commissioners and residents against coal and oil exports, based on their potential health and safety impacts, says John Wasiutynski, director of the county Office of Sustainability.

But the draft policy, which goes out for public review this week, is silent on exports of natural gas and propane, which have lower carbon emissions than coal and oil and produce far fewer air pollutants.

There are two major proposals to export Liquefied Natural Gas on pipelines through Oregon to export terminals in Coos Bay and the north coast, as well as a proposal to build a \$500 million propane export terminal in North Portland at the Port of Portland.

The draft Climate Action Plan update calls for both government agencies to adopt a formal policy on fossil fuel exports. That could eventually lead to a city and county policy on exports other than coal and oil, such as natural gas and propane.

"We'll continue to see these as an issue, because Multnomah County is a chokepoint for fossil fuel exports," said Tim Lynch, a senior policy analyst in the county's Office of Sustainability. "For the communities in the (Columbia River) Gorge, this is going to continue to be an issue," he said, because of existing or proposed use of barges on the Columbia River or rail lines alongside the river for coal, oil and propane shipments.

"The conversation around natural gas and propane is more nuanced," said Michael Armstrong, deputy director of the Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. Both are seen as important transitional fuels that could wean the world from burning coal and oil until there is enough wind, solar and other forms of clean, renewable energy.

Natural gas, when burned, produces about half the carbon emissions as coal, without most of the air pollutants. However, to the extent natural gas leaks into the atmosphere, that advantage can be reduced or lost, because it's largely composed of methane, a far more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide.

Propane has a lower carbon impact than coal or oil, but it produces 19 percent more emissions than natural gas, said Susan Anderson, director of the city Planning and Sustainability Bureau.

But propane burns cleanly, so it can be very useful when replacing older school buses and commercial trucks that run on diesel fuel, Anderson said. Diesel is now officially a carcinogen, and is traced to an estimated 460 deaths a year in Oregon.

The catch is the city and county don't want to see a situation where natural gas and propane are institutionalized as fuel sources, instead of being viewed as transitional fuels. If we merely substitute natural gas for coal and leave it at that, Armstrong said, that will slow our transition to solar, wind and other clean energy sources.

Anything done to lower natural gas prices can delay the adoption of wind and solar, Anderson said, because of price advantages.

Ironically, LNG exports are likely to raise the cost of domestic natural gas, because that will reduce the supply.

Coal exports "is really an easy case," Wasiutynsky said, but propane is more complicated. "There's potentially climate benefits depending on how the fuel is used."

However, using an existing supply of propane to power school buses is different from building an expensive export terminal, he said, because that would mean the region is investing long-term in fossil fuels.

In any case, it's doubtful any emerging fossil fuel export policy would have any bearing on the propane plant proposal, which is now expected to go before the Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission for a vote on April 7.

Hundreds talk about improving city at 2015 Community Summit

*By Jim Redden
March 3, 2015*

On Saturday, hundreds of Portlanders voiced their opinions on city problems that ranged from homelessness to racial profiling to residential demolitions, at the 2015 Community Summit.

Among them were Mayor Charlie Hales and Hands Up, Don't Shoot protesters, who presented him with letters saying they intend to sue the city over the police interfering with one of their demonstrations last November. The protesters briefly interrupted a question-and-answer session Hales was having with about 60 people on livability issues. It continued when the protesters left after a few minutes.

Organizers with the city Office of Neighborhood Involvement were surprised that so many people decided to spend a sunny day inside the Ambridge Events Center at 1333 N.E. MLK Blvd. More than 500 people registered in advance and most appeared to attend the daylong event in the sprawling complex.

"It means a lot that you chose to spend your time indoors in Oregon on a day like this," ONI director Amalia Alarcon de Morris said in her welcoming remarks.

The summit was the first citywide community gathering organized by ONI since 2009. In contrast to previous versions that focused primarily on the issues faced by neighborhood associations, Saturday's event was designed to also address the concerns of other communities in the city, including minority groups. This was the result of a deliberate effort begun under former Mayor Tom Potter in 2004 to involve more people in city affairs.

As a result, subjects addressed at dozens of workshops held throughout the day involved both neighborhood and citywide issues. Neighborhood concerns were well represented with workshops on such issues as liquor license renewals, noise ordinance violations, and residential demolition and infill projects. But workshops were also held on such border topics as police accountability and growing old in Portland. Issues pushed by more traditional advocacy organizations were also addressed, such as increasing the minimum wage, which is supported by union-supported groups such as 15 Now PDX.

The lunch break included a panel presentation by representatives of five minority organizations the city has helped fund to increase community involvement. The speakers thanked the city for its support, with several saying their organizations had enabled people to become involved in city affairs who would never otherwise considered it.

The organizations are the Urban League of Portland, the Center for Intercultural Organizing, the Latino Network, the Immigration and Refugee Community Organization, and the Native American Youth and Family Center. They have received around \$3.2 million from the city since Potter launched the Diversity and Civic Leadership project.

"If we come together, we can make things happen in this city," said Kayse Jama, executive director of the Center for Intercultural Organizing.

Three blocks of workshops were held throughout the day. The tone of them changed dramatically with the subject matter. Some were almost academic, such as a presentation by Terry Cross, director of the Native American Youth and Family Center, at a morning workshop titled, "The Relational Worldview Model as a Theory of Change." Others were more emotional, such as testimonials at a workshop titled "Policing the Police" that included a history of police killings of minorities. Retired Oregon Supreme Court Justice Paul DeMuniz, who is now working to implement the U.S. Department of Justice's civil rights settlement with the Portland Police Bureau, encouraged those who attended the workshop to give the recent reforms a chance to work.

Hale's session was billed as a follow up to the State of the City speech he presented at the Portland City Club on Jan. 30. In fact, his opening remarks were more pessimistic than that upbeat assessment, which stressed accomplishments during the first two years of his administration.

Hales started out by telling those in the room that Portland is in danger of becoming another San Francisco, a city so unaffordable that only the rich can afford to live there. At the same time, Hales said poverty was an increasing problem in Portland, with the number of census tracts with 30 percent or more of the people living below the poverty level increasing from just three in 1970 to 11 today.

"Our ability to work together to create the quality of life for our children is important," Hales said.

Hales' comments mirrored the concerns of most of the people in the room, who peppered him with questions about affordable homes being torn down and replaced with more expensive houses and apartment buildings. Other concerns included providing more housing for the homeless and how to guarantee density increases will also increase the supply of affordable housing.

Though dramatic, the interruption by about a dozen Hands Up, Don't Shoot protesters was only a minor distraction. The demonstrators, led by community organizer Teresa Raiford, happened near the the end of Hales' question-and-answer session. He accepted the letters and chatted briefly with Raiford, who then led the protesters in several chants before they left the room where Hales was speaking.

The sudden appearance by the protesters was the first time police accountability issues had been raised during Hales' session, which mostly focused on planning and livability issues. After the protesters left, Hales asked the approximately 60 people remaining in the room if anyone had any questions about the police. No one did and the discussion continued with questions on density and affordable housing.

Although Hales has yet to announce for reelection in 2016, his opening remarks and answers clearly indicated an interest in the city beyond the next two years.

The Portland Business Journal

PDC taps Portland startups to solve city bureau problems

*By Malia Spencer
March 4, 2015*

The Portland Development Commission is unveiling a new program that aims to better connect the city's startups and entrepreneurs with city bureaus.

In so doing, PDC will steer startups to bureaus that face challenges in hopes of rectifying those issues. As a result, the startups could gain valuable early customer.

The Portland Early Adopter Program officially launches with an event March 17 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the PDC. The event will feature city bureaus pitching some of their challenges, followed by roundtable sessions for all participants.

"It's really getting bureaus another tool in terms of how they find solutions," said Amy Nagy, one of the PDC's project managers for the program. "It's a dynamic way to start building the cooperation and think about problems differently."

The PDC received an \$80,000 grant from the Mayor's Innovation Fund to fuel the effort.

For several years the PDC has been evaluating what role it can play in the growing startup ecosystem. The group launched the Startup PDX Challenge, which offers mentorship, capital and free office space for a year.

But there are other groups in town that offer similar support, including the Portland Seed Fund and the Portland Incubator Experiment.

"We got a lot of feedback and people knew about the seed fund and the startup challenge but in addition to mentors and capital an equally important milestone is a first large customer," said Chris Harder, business and industry division manager at the PDC.

At the same time local companies such as Zapproved, GlobeSherpa and Lucid Energy have launched and gained traction with local government customers.

"We came to the realization that perhaps there is a better way to institutionalize the relationship to connect startups to city bureau opportunities," he said.

The program is starting small by connecting startups to opportunities that would yield contracts of less than \$50,000. At that level, the larger procurement process isn't necessary.

Harder noted that simply working with startups could help bureau staffers better define problems before seeking traditional procurement bids.

In addition to acting as a general connector and convener of regular events, the PDC is launching an online portal using the local company Switchboard that will allow the city to post "asks" and startups to post "offers."

GoLocalPDX

Audit: Police Training Needs To Improve Impact on Officer Performance

*By Joanna Evoniuk
March 3, 2015*

Portland's Police Training Division needs to improve how it evaluates the effect it has on officer performance, according to an audit released Tuesday by City Auditor Mary Hull Caballero.

Although the Training Division has improved by including staff trained curriculum development and program evaluation, Caballero said in the audit there is room for improvement in training, documentation and procedures.

The staff has yet to complete a full training cycle, but the audit says they appear to be on track to meet the requirements for a well-run training operation. A total of 12 recommendations were outlined in the audit.

Portland's Training Division trains over 900 police officers, as well as maintaining training records reporting to the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training. Training is crucial to the safety of police officers, and the public, the audit notes.

Police Chief Larry O'Dea responded to the audit's recommendations positively and the improvement of the Division.

"They have already made significant changes in the way it develops, conducts and evaluates training. They have created timely curriculum to align with changes in the Bureau's directives, especially in the area of use of force and less lethal force," Chief O'Dea said in his response letter.