

The Oregonian

Should Portland taxpayers pitch in \$1.9 million for track event? Charlie Hales says yes

*By Andrew Theen
May 23, 2015*

Next March, athletes from more than 200 countries will descend on Portland for the World Indoor Track and Field Championships – the first time the event will be on U.S. soil in nearly 30 years.

Organizers envision a \$12 million extravaganza starting with the U.S. Indoor Track and Field Championships the week before, with both events at the Oregon Convention Center.

Portland Mayor Charlie Hales is all in.

In a departure from his proposed "back-to-basics" budget, the mayor has agreed to spend \$1.9 million to help showcase the event and offer related activities. The idea, according to him and his chief of staff, Gail Shibley, is to seize the chance to put Portland on the world stage to drive business and tourism opportunities down the road.

"It fits with our economic development strategy. It fits with our identity," said Shibley, who traveled to Monaco in 2013 to help win the Portland berth. "We've got the attention of the entire world."

But the plan has raised eyebrows at City Hall, including those of Commissioners Amanda Fritz and Steve Novick. They're not too worried about security-related costs but have questions about other estimated expenses, which include \$250,000 for extensive advertising, \$500,000 to "co-sponsor" events at city-owned Pioneer Courthouse Square, and \$100,000 for "exclusive" signs on a 19-foot-tall, 3,945-pound countdown clock being installed at the square next week. (See a detailed list below.)

The proposal "seems high," Fritz said. "I hope we're looking for other sources to bring it down." She added that while many businesses would see economic benefits from the event, "the taxpayers shouldn't be on the hook for it."

Novick, at a budget work session this week, said some of the expenses are "easier to justify as public expenditures than others," but he also said the city built credibility with the public by devoting nearly \$20 million in the budget to street projects.

Vin Lananna is president of Track Town USA Inc., a nonprofit formed in 2012 to attract track and field events to Eugene and the rest of Oregon. He's also the chairman of a more than two-dozen-member local organizing committee raising money for the 2016 championships.

Track Town paid \$5,415 to cover the cost of Shibley's trip to Monaco, where Portland won the rights to the 2016 event over Birmingham, England; and to Poland to survey the 2014 world championships.

He acknowledged that the 2016 event will happen with or without Portland's money. But he said even with the city's contribution, he's at least \$4 million short of being able to put on his dream event.

He cited an analysis by E.D. Hovee & Co. that estimated the event -- at least the one he and organizers envision -- would pump \$24 million into the state economy through lodging, meals and other spending.

"It's really almost a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," said Lananna, a University of Oregon associate athletic director and former track coach, who expects hundreds of athletes and 7,000 fans to attend the championships.

Hales said at a budget briefing this month that he expects the City Council to support the plan.

"There are times when it's appropriate for us to walk out onto the world's stage and take our place," he said. "But we don't want to do that too often, and we don't want to do it too expensively, but we certainly want to do it well in the rare cases that we do."

He compared the championships to the Major League Soccer All Star Game held in Portland last August, which included free children's activities and a free watch party at Pioneer Courthouse Square.

Portland didn't contribute any public money to that event, though. MAX cars sported giant ads, for example, but MLS or corporate sponsors paid for them.

Shibley said the track championships will be much bigger. The MLS game "was one team from one country. This is more than 200 countries," Shibley said.

When asked whether the money would be better spent on street projects – say, new sidewalks in east Portland – she said that's "a great question" but "a false choice."

The track event will benefit east Portland, she said, in part by bringing international role models for the area's residents, who are more likely to be immigrants and low income.

"You will have athletes and cultures and trainers who look like you, who speak your tongue or your grandparents' or parents' first language, who are literally competing with the best of the best of the world," Shibley said. "That's a pretty cool, pretty powerful thing for a kid to experience."

There's no sign that Portland leaders ultimately won't go along with Hales' plan, but Lananna said organizers can adjust if the city backs out or lowers its contribution.

"We'll just have to scale back some of the things," he said. Organizers plan to approach Adidas, which has its flagship U.S. operation here and is the main corporate sponsor of the international track federation, and Nike, which is based near Beaverton, to help make up the overall shortfall.

The City Council will vote on Hales' overall spending plan, including the Track Town USA money, on Wednesday, with final approval set for June 18. Later Wednesday, Track Town officials will unveil the countdown clock in Pioneer Courthouse Square.

What Portland would pay for:

According to cost estimates from a local organizing committee headed by Vin Lananna, president of Track Town USA, Portland's contribution from the general fund would pay for:

\$500,000: Activities at Pioneer Courthouse Square, such as medal ceremonies, entertainment, video links and "athlete/fan engagement"

\$500,000: Security, emergency management preparation and escorts for "medaling parades" from the Oregon Convention Center to Pioneer Courthouse Square

\$300,000: Broadcast sponsorship to 160 countries, including a video of Portland and the "possible ability" to show Portland tourism ads

\$250,000: Advertising, including logos on competitors' bibs, streetlight banners, ads on TriMet vehicles, and signs at the Convention and Moda centers

\$150,000: Free events for middle and high school students -- track activities over three days at the Convention Center and a one-day pole vault festival at the Moda Center

\$100,000: "Exclusive" signs on a 19-foot-tall countdown clock at Pioneer Courthouse Square

\$100,000: Local sponsorship rights that could be transferred to youth-focused nonprofits such as the Boys & Girls Club

\$50,000: Sponsorship of a welcome dinner, and opening and closing ceremonies; medals; "welcome bags"; and gifts

\$50,000: Traffic and transportation safety management

Portland parking solutions must recognize that cars aren't going away: Editorial Agenda 2015

*By The Oregonian Editorial Board
May 23, 2015*

It's hard to know who to side with in the ugly parking wars that have overtaken some of Portland's up-and-coming neighborhoods.

There are obnoxious foodies who partially block residents' driveways while visiting nearby Restaurant Row. Or the inconsiderate newbie tenants who signed up to live in an apartment complex with no parking only to stash their cars on the street for weeks at a time. And then there are the crotchety residents who view the public road in front of their homes as their private stretch of asphalt. You can almost hear a collective "How dare they" rise up as fingers point every which way.

Or maybe, it's just that you've got a lot of people with legitimate reasons for parking their cars on a street that now has a whole lot less street available for doing so.

Give Commissioner Steve Novick his due – and a flak jacket – for wading into the parking wars where any solution will likely leave some people very unhappy. Novick recently told The Oregonian/OregonLive's Brad Schmidt that he and transportation leaders are hoping to identify potential solutions that ease parking conflicts. A committee convened by the Portland Bureau of Transportation is studying the issue with the goal of offering a "toolkit" of solutions to ease the battles that have erupted on such popular corridors as Southeast Division Street, North Mississippi and Northeast 28th Avenues. A separate committee is looking at changes in the downtown core.

Some of those tools will include strategies to reduce parking demand or manage existing on-street spaces, said senior planner Mauricio Leclerc. Others will look at code changes that allow businesses or others with parking lots to rent out their unused spaces in off-hours. A fourth area would be to look at creating new parking, he said, although that would be among the most expensive options.

But the framework reveals some gaps that the committee – and PBOT – should keep in mind as they try to unscramble the parking mess facing neighborhoods.

1. Aim to solve parking scarcity, not just parking conflicts. The city needs to reconsider the parking minimums for new apartment complexes. As it stands, buildings of up to 30 units in neighborhoods "well served" by public transit don't have to have any parking. As noted by Allen Field, a committee member who lives in the heavily developed Richmond neighborhood, five of those in a two-block area means 150 more units, yet no required parking. Consider, too, that some areas lose parking lots or availability due to such construction, exacerbating the problem. The city should not let developers cry poor over having to meet higher parking minimums and shove the social costs of such growth onto residents.

2. Accept the fact that cars aren't going away anytime soon. Although Portland prides itself on its network of bike lanes and on the walkability of neighborhoods, even PBOT acknowledges that the total number of vehicles owned by Portland residents is going up as population grows. People may bike or use transit for the majority of their trips, but they still have cars, those cars need to be parked somewhere and people should not be vilified because of it. The city needs to plan for the future it will face, not the one it imagines might happen by wishing hard enough.

3. Don't forget the tools that already exist. The city could alleviate many hot-button conflicts if it enforced existing parking requirements – such as not allowing vehicles to block driveways. Regular parking enforcement patrols can go a long way toward easing residents' frustrations and sending a message to visitors.

4. Beware of unintended consequences. Streets are owned by the public and it's fair to question whether residents who park their cars on the street should be compensating the public for taking up the right-of-way. However, a neighborhood permit program, in which residents pay an annual \$65 fee per car to park in a zoned area, could exacerbate the sense of entitlement by homeowners who believe they should have the right to park outside their home. That could lead to even more heated conflicts with other members of the public who are visiting and parking their cars.

The Portland Tribune

Park development fee change goes to council

*By Jim Redden
May 26, 2015*

The City Council is scheduled to consider changing the methodology for setting System Development Charges for parks this week — a change that Commissioner Amanda Fritz says is necessary to adequately fund parks in the future, but which some in the business community criticize as too large of an increase.

Fritz is in charge of Portland Parks & Recreation. She says the change will ensure that new development pays for the parks that will be needed as the city grows. Her proposal changes the way SDCs are charged to both residential and business construction, increasing some of them by 100 percent or more. The highest residential fee would increase from \$8,594 to \$13,409.

The ordinance Fritz submitted to the council says the new fee structure will generate \$552 million over 20 years. It does not say how much would be generated if the SDCs stay the same.

However, that calculation was done by the Home Builders Association of Metropolitan Portland for the last fiscal year. In a May 5 letter to the council, association CEO David Nielsen says single-family residential developers would have paid 42 percent more and multi-family residential developers would have paid 31 percent more. The increases would have been highest on units outside downtown and close-in neighborhoods.

“The bottom line is these increases are significant, they will affect a high percentage of housing units, they will be especially burdensome on non-central city housing, and they will have a huge impact on affordability,” the letter reads.

The Oregon Chapter of the Commercial Real Estate Development Association (also known as NAIOP) also opposes the proposal. In an April 15 letter to the council, Oregon NAIOP Executive Director Kelly Ross said the proposed increases could slow commercial development, especially east of 82nd Avenue, where the city is hoping to grow.

The council amended the proposal last week to make it take effect on July 1, 2016, instead of this July 1 or Jan. 1, 2016, which Fritz had previously wanted. At the time, Mayor Charlie Hales said he expects the council to approve the proposal.

No protests allowed on open reservoir vote

*By Jim Redden
May 26, 2015*

Portland officials say they will not tolerate protests at City Council ahead of what is anticipated to be an emotional hearing on disconnecting the open reservoirs on Mount Tabor.

In a May 20 press release, the Office of Management and Finance note that protesters disrupted a council vote on a and use issue and a report from Independent Police Review by screaming and booing.

“Disruptive behavior like this hinders the orderly consideration of the public’s business at council meetings and interferes with the public’s ability to hear presentations and deliberations,” the release said.

“If protesters are disruptive in future meetings, the city will enforce its conduct rules. People will be warned to stop engaging in disruptive conduct or face expulsion. If they do not stop, they may be subject to future exclusions.”

The release included a copy of Rules for Conduct for City of Portland Properties that says people can be immediately excluded from them without warning for a variety of reasons, including the need to “provide a safe and healthy environment for visitors and employees of City Properties.”

The Water Bureau is proposing to disconnect the reservoirs to comply with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency rules. The decision is opposed by activists who do not believe the decision is justified. The council will consider it Thursday, May 28.

The Portland Mercury

Portland Police Are Planning the Toughest Campsite Crackdown in Years, Starting Next Week

*By Dirk VanderHart
May 23, 2015*

Portland police are planning their most intensive crackdown on homeless camping in years, saying complaints over "entrenched" homelessness have reached a tipping point. Beginning Tuesday and

extending into June, officers will target encampments throughout the city's Central Eastside—demanding campers take down their tents, and pushing social services on them.

"For a couple of weeks there's gonna be sort of an ongoing effort to address the entrenched camps," Portland Police Bureau spokesman Sgt. Simpson told the Mercury Friday afternoon, adding cops would be looking to "get people into services that are not connected now, or avoiding them. Clean up some of the garbage."

Portland's got a reputation for treating homeless camping with a relatively light touch, but it's nothing new for officers to cite people for living in tents throughout the city—cops have been doing so for a while now, even arresting campers by leveraging the state's law against "interfering with a peace officer."

The effort that will begin next week is more intense. In some respects, it sounds like the sweeps Mayor Charlie Hales ordered around City Hall in 2013. Simpson says orders for the action—he insists "sweep" is the wrong word, though many homeless people and homeless advocates would call it that—came at the direction of Assistant Chief Bob Day, who helped pioneer similar efforts when he oversaw the bureau's Central Precinct.

"It definitely is one of the most coordinated efforts to address the homeless problems on the Eastside and the entrenched camping there," Simpson said. Officers from each of the city's three police precincts will work the clean-up effort. Simpson didn't know how many cops would be involved all told.

The enforcement comes as Hales and Commissioner Amanda Fritz say they've found a new home for homeless rest area Right 2 Dream Too. It would sit just east of the new Tilikum Crossing bridge, not far from the areas police are planning to clear out.

And it's a big push as Hales' proposed budget for next year includes more than \$1 million for an "intensive street engagement and clean-up initiative." As explained by Hales and his staff, the effort partly involves offering intensive services to bad actors in the most-concerning camps, the theory being that once the nucleus of problem activity is taken away, people disperse.

Hales is also pushing money to find housing for homeless veterans, and to provide year-round shelters for women. If the projects are funded by city council, money will be available starting July 1.

Cops, politicians, and advocates for the homeless all anecdotally say Portland's homeless community is growing larger, and pushing increasingly into areas like the Springwater Corridor trail. And it's true homelessness is as visible as it's been in recent memory on the Central Eastside.

After Simpson and I hung up, I checked a few of the areas cops plan to focus on: the Eastbank Esplanade and camps around SE Water ("Definitely not limited to those areas," Simpson said). There are tents on the grassy areas overlooking the river near the east end of the Hawthorne Bridge, and tents below the bike/pedestrian walkways that curlicue from the bridge down to the esplanade. Some of those were likely dispersed by a recent sweep, and have since made their way back.

Police insist they're being inundated with calls, and our yearly survey of Hales' voicemails shows his office is no stranger to these complaints.

"This is not the Portland police telling people this is a problem," Simpson said. "This is people telling us it's a problem."

At the same time, results of an every-other-year homeless count that will soon be released by the Portland Housing Bureau aren't expected to show a marked uptick in houseless people from the 2013 count, which found 2,869 people sleeping outside or in an emergency shelter.

The thing is—and Simpson acknowledges this—the sort of targeted enforcement police are planning isn't doing much to solve that problem. It may convince some people to accept social services, but it'll largely push encampments to another part of the city, since there's still not enough shelter space or affordable housing to actually address homelessness in Portland. And it's almost certainly going to result in people going to jail.

"Our goal is not to arrest people," Simpson says. "It's not an effective way to address the problem." But, he concedes, "we'll arrest people if people just flat-out refuse to comply."

I asked people hanging out around Central Eastside encampments if they'd heard about the cops' impending action.

"They're here everyday, anyway," said a young guy who gave his name as Bob, and didn't want to talk further.

Living underneath a viaduct on the eastside of the Hawthorne Bridge, near SE 3rd and Madison was a man named Emilio. He was eating takeout in a red padded chair, outside of a squat shelter wrapped in brown tarp. Two smaller green chairs were set out, as if for visitors, and the area around Emilio's tent was immaculate.

"I don't have a drug addiction, I don't have a smoking addiction, I don't drink," Emilio told me (he didn't want to give his full name). "I just can't find housing."

Emilio survives on a combination of Supplemental Security Income and money from odd jobs. He says he takes care of his block, picking up rubbish for the businesses in the area and encouraging neighboring encampments to respect the property ("This is the cleanest block in the whole area."), and makes a point of dressing in clean clothes (a white t-shirt and jeans Friday evening). He talks knowledgeably about the push for a \$15 minimum wage, and he thinks the system for helping people out of homelessness is deeply broken.

Emilio says he's been homeless since he got out of prison two years ago. He lived in Dignity Village for a time, he says, and on other property near the airport before heading closer to downtown. He wants a home, but says his block of SE Madison is clean, and that people respect him and his possessions. I don't know whether Emilio is an especially sympathetic example or not, but he's unquestionably an example of the "entrenched" campers police are going to move next week.

Emilio's heard the cops are coming, too. A friend told him.

"As far as I know, things are gonna change," he said. "I don't know when. I don't think they should pick on this block."

I asked where he'd go if police officers demand he take down his structure—a violation of city code—next week. Emilio repeated my question back to me.

"Where will I go?"

Daily Journal of Commerce

Old Town, Lents URAs are priorities in PDC budget

*By Beverly Corbell
May 22, 2015*

The Portland Development Commission introduced its new budget for fiscal year 2015-16 to the Portland City Council earlier this month. For the first time, the budget is tied to the agency's new strategic plan, said PDC executive director Patrick Quinton.

"This budget is the first budget you'll see that begins to implement our new strategic plan, and it's broken down by funds as required by law," Quinton told city commissioners.

Action plans for Old Town Chinatown and Lents urban renewal areas are at the top of the list, Quinton said.

The Old Town/Chinatown Five-Year Action Plan, approved by City Council in August, calls for waiving the city system development charges for construction of up to 500 units for renters who earn up to 100 percent of the region's median family income. The aim for the development subsidy – estimated at \$7 million over the next five years – is to trigger diversification of the neighborhood's housing stock, according to city officials. Currently, 72 percent of apartments in Old Town are restricted to low-income renters, compared to 6 percent citywide.

Old Town's five year plan includes several "measures of success" that include:

- a net gain of five new retail stores;
- the creation of 500 new living wage jobs in the district;
- the creation of 500 new middle-income housing units;
- the rehabilitation of five buildings completed or under way ;
- the identification of a district parking strategy;
- the implementation of four annual neighborhood events using public space;

- the development of marketing collateral to promote district; and
- the implementation of Community Livability Grant projects.

The five-year plan for the Lents Urban Renewal Area calls for five town center redevelopment projects built or under construction, two West Foster redevelopment projects, and complete construction for the upper Garden at Leach Botanical Gardens and the Urban Grange at Zenger Farms. Other goals include serving 100 business and property owners through PDC grant and loan programs, and providing 75 families with financial assistance to buy or remain in their homes.

The PDC has just under \$300 million in total resources for the coming fiscal year, Quinton said, with the bulk of resources on hand.

“Debt proceeds from bonds already issued – about \$180 million – has been growing over the last few years because some projects have not moved forward as quickly as hoped,” he said.

But with “pay-as-you-go” short-term debt, the PDC doesn’t have to issue long-term new debt, Quinton said.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz said she would like to see housing in neighborhoods included in next year’s budget, an approach Quinton agreed with.

Commissioner Nick Fish questioned whether any money allocated for the Old Town Chinatown would be subject to settlement of lawsuits against the city.

Fish was referring to long-standing lawsuits filed against the city related to expenditures in the utility department, said to his chief of staff, Sonia Schmanski. But Quinton said there is no connection.

“Our money is outside that,” Quinton said. “Our priorities are clear with those properties and we expect to get full value and development.”

The proposed PDC budget has \$213 million in expenditures, Quinton said, which leaves money that will roll over into future years.

“If we need additional expenditures beyond the \$213 (million), we have money to do so,” he said.

Half of the money on hand is in the broad category of property redevelopment.

“The bulk sits on a handful of projects like the county health building with line items for specific projects,” Quinton said.

The PDC held two open houses earlier this year to get feedback on its updated strategic plan. The plan’s first three objectives are to increase citizens’ access to healthy, complete neighborhoods; create opportunities for high-quality employment; and increase opportunities for minorities and low-income residents to foster wealth creation.

The proposed budget includes several changes related to six urban renewal areas, including a reduction in tax increments in the River District URA budget; no longer collecting tax increments in the Willamette Industrial URA budget; ending and no longer collecting tax increment resources to the Education URA budget; increasing the area and extension in the final date to issue debt for the Central Eastside URA; and increasing the area for the North Macadam URA.

The Portland City Council will vote to accept the budget on May 27.

The entire proposed Portland Development Commission budget can be viewed online.

Portland Business Journal

Did Charlie Hales effectively kill a \$500M energy project?

By Wendy Culverwell

May 22, 2015

The fate of highly-controversial propane export project could rest on the city of Portland’s unusual administrative structure.

Pembina Pipeline Corp., the Calgary-based company that wants to export Canadian propane to Asia by way of Portland under a deal to lease space from the Port of Portland near its T-6 terminal in North Portland, needs an environmental zone change to do so.

So far so good.

The Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission signed off on the zone change but tacked on a \$6.2 million climate charge as hundreds of opponents voiced opposition during a marathon hearing. The commission's vote is only advisory, however.

It's up to the Portland City Council to make the final decision.

It's unclear if it will ever even come up for a discussion.

That's because of Portland's administrative structure. Elected council members oversee the city's various bureaus and by tradition are responsible for moving action along to the council.

Portland Mayor Charlie Hales is responsible for the planning and sustainability commission. And he opposes the Pembina export terminal. He also vowed that he won't introduce it to the council.

His spokesman, Dana Haynes, said it's "highly unlikely, but not impossible" that the zone change would go before the council. Hales has said he won't advance it. Another city council member could, though Haynes said that would be unusual.

Port officials have vowed to support Pembina's application. As Ted Sickinger reported in The Oregonian this morning, the port has attempted to eliminate the \$6.2 million climate change fee levied by the planning and sustainability commission.

Spokesman Steve Johnson said it's up to the city to say if Pembina can move ahead without the council's blessing. But it appears the port and Pembina are still pursuing a hearing before the city council. The port is discussing the project with city commissioners, Johnson said.

Bottom of Form

Pembina said it will continue to pursue the project, which would accept shipments of propane by train.

"Pembina is committed to the proposed project and is working to understand from the city what the next step of the process will be. Pembina has been patient, as asked by Mayor Hales for his process going back to September 2014, and will continue to be so.

"In the meanwhile, we are advancing our engineering and environmental plans to keep the project moving forward," it said in a statement in response to a request for the status of the many permits it will need from city, state and federal agencies.

While the Pembina project remains stalled, the outrage it stirred galvanized the environmental community against it and other fossil fuel export projects.

The Climate Action Coalition, which united environmental groups such as 350PDX, The Children's Trust, Raging Grannies, Greenpeace and others, said it will continue to marshal opposition to all projects designed to move fossil fuels through the state.