

The Oregonian

Portland explained: Why the city is taking Mount Tabor, Washington Park reservoirs offline

*By Andrew Theen
June 25, 2015*

On Thursday afternoon, the Portland City Council is expected to make it official: The era of open-air drinking water reservoirs in the Rose City is coming to an end after more than a century.

Portland leaders are expected to vote to demolish two reservoirs at Washington Park that date to 1894, and to finalize plans to disconnect three reservoirs in Mount Tabor park.

By 2020, all of Portland's drinking water, and the water source for nearly 1 million Oregonians, will be in covered reservoirs.

Related: Read this timeline of historic events in Portland water history

Thus will end a fight that dates back more than a decade and that served as one of the catalysts behind an unsuccessful 2014 ballot measure that would have removed control of the city's water and sewer bureaus from the City Council.

Here's a primer with all the basics about the long battle over the reservoirs.

What is happening?

Portland is removing three open-air reservoirs at Mount Tabor Park in Southeast Portland from service. The city is also demolishing and removing two historic reservoirs in Washington Park from the drinking water system.

What about all of that water storage?

The city built two new underground reservoirs, one at Powell Butte and the other at Kelly Butte (more than doubling capacity at the latter) in Southeast Portland. Collectively, those two new facilities hold 75 million gallons of water. The city will also build a new 15 million gallon covered reservoir at Washington Park to replace a 16 million gallon structure.

Why is this happening?

Portland's costly decision (more than \$200 million to build new structures, with more costs to come) to remove the open air reservoirs from service and build underground tanks is directly associated with a 1993 outbreak in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. After hundreds of people died and some 400,000 were sickened from an outbreak caused by cryptosporidium parasites, the federal government looked into new regulations on drinking water nationwide.

In 2006, the Environmental Protection Agency released new rules that meant Portland must "either cover the reservoir or treat the reservoir discharge" to battle giardia, another intestinal illness caused by parasites, and cryptosporidium.

Did Portland try to fight this order?

Yes. For years, the city sought a waiver to avoid the EPA rules. In June 2013, city leaders said they would give up their fight and move forward. Longtime reservoir neighbors and water activists say the city didn't fight hard enough. More recently, some urged the city to wait until 2016 when the EPA is expected to revise its rule.

Where does my water come from now?

Don't fret. Portland's water still comes from the Bull Run Watershed, the natural basin-like area in the Mount Hood National Forest 26 miles from downtown Portland.

Will there be water in the Mount Tabor reservoirs? I love how they look.

That's the plan. City officials and neighborhood leaders have worked to iron out specifics to ensure that water remains in the reservoirs at historic levels while also allowing the city to clean and maintain the structures. You'll be able to look but not drink.

Portland approves 'make or break' South Waterfront deal with Zidell

*By Brad Schmidt
June 24, 2015*

Calling it the missing puzzle piece to a complete South Waterfront District, the Portland City Council unanimously approved a historic deal Wednesday to subsidize redevelopment of about 30 acres owned by the Zidell family with at least \$23.8 million of public money for parks, roads and other improvements.

The deal outlines a multi-phase building boom that would grow the upstart district by 1.44 million square feet of office, residential and commercial space and add at least \$210 million to the tax rolls.

"This development agreement is the make or break for the entire area," Commissioner Amanda Fritz said. "If we can get it right, it's going to be a wonderful community to live, work and play in for 100 years or more. If we don't, it'll be a, 'Huh, not quite what we thought.'"

The agreement marks Portland's most sweeping development deal with the private sector in more than a decade. Officials hope to replicate successes from earlier compacts with developers Homer Williams and Dike Dame, who resurrected the Pearl District and later led the high-rise condo craze that jump started the South Waterfront.

But the deal has not been without setbacks and delays, as efforts to secure property for low-rent affordable housing and parks threatened progress. But both sides now say they've reached a fair deal.

"It's had its ups and downs," said Jay Zidell, president of a family business slowly transitioning from barge building to real estate. "We'll all be able to sit around years from now and look back at the great things we've accomplished."

Zidell's acreage straddles the Ross Island Bridge and is the largest undeveloped canvass in the central city, but today it largely remains a no-man's land bookended by marquee projects.

The family's northern property is bounded by the new light-rail line set to open Sept. 12. The southern edge bumps against land held by the region's largest employer, Oregon Health & Science University, and the expensive condo towers that remade Portland's skyline in the mid-2000s.

Build out of the Zidell property will begin with a first phase featuring at least 440,000 square feet over three projects along Southwest Moody Avenue – the only existing road.

Two of the projects – called Block 1 and Block 6 – must begin construction by no later than July 2017. The third project, Block 4, is expected to have a similar timeline but could begin construction as late as June 2025.

Combined, the three projects are expected to add at least \$60 million in assessed value to the tax rolls.

Plans for the larger second phase exist only in broad-brush strokes.

Zidell wants to build at least 1 million square feet of office, commercial and residential space on property north of the Ross Island Bridge and east of the to-be-constructed Southwest Bond Avenue extension.

The first project would begin construction by July 2019 and construction on all phase-two projects would launch by June 2025. In all, the second phase would produce \$150 million in tax-assessed value.

To cover public costs for road and park projects, city leaders plan to tap property taxes generated by development in the overarching North Macadam urban renewal district. Officials for the city's urban renewal agency, the Portland Development Commission, say they won't pay for key projects if the Zidell family doesn't develop its property as expected.

The PDC would spend about \$4.6 million extending Bond Avenue, a key inland north-south route, plus three connections between Bond and Moody. The Portland Bureau of Transportation would also kick in \$750,000 toward the effort.

The urban renewal agency also would spend \$11.7 million to develop a park along the riverfront, called the South Waterfront Greenway. Additionally, \$5 million of urban renewal funds would be used buy land for a city park underneath the Ross Island Bridge. Portland Parks & Recreation is also expected to contribute toward the eventual acquisition. Finally, \$2.5 million would be spent on other efforts, such as putting power lines underground.

Beyond that, the development commission has pledged money to extend Bond north to River Parkway under the Marquam Bridge. That \$3.65 million project had originally been included in the deal but will move forward regardless, city officials say, because of its benefit to OHSU.

City and company officials also outlined an affordable-housing commitment that delayed progress for months.

The Portland Housing Bureau will have the option to buy land for about 200 units by 2021 – with a price to be set next year and escalate annually based on local inflation.

The new units will fall short of overarching goals adopted by the City Council in 2003. To date, just 209 units for low-income renters have been built.

"There is work to be done on affordable housing, beyond this," said Dan Valliere, chief executive officer for Reach Community Development, which operates the only affordable housing complex in the South Waterfront District.

With little objection to the overarching deal, the City Council took the unusual step Wednesday to vote on the agreement the same day it took public testimony.

Portland Mayor Charlie Hales praised city staff and Zidell for sticking with sometimes-difficult negotiations in pursuit of a vision for the property, where the Zidell family has operated since 1929.

More than \$25 million of environmental remediation work on Zidell property set the stage for Wednesday's deal.

Across the country, Hales said he could think of only a half-dozen examples of large-scale urban redevelopment. And Hales said he believes Portland's two efforts – the Pearl and South Waterfront – are at the top of the class.

"I look forward to the day when South Waterfront as a neighborhood is as far along as the Pearl District is today," Hales said. "We're well on the way to that vision."

But that fully realized vision remains years out.

The Zidell family's barge business, just south of the Ross Island Bridge, is slated to remain in place for at least another decade. Phase three construction would eventually redevelop the property – but it isn't expected to begin until June 2025 and wouldn't finish until 2035.

Until that happens, the South Waterfront will lack several completely connected roads and a united Greenway project.

If Zidell launches its third phase before the city's urban renewal district expires in 2025, officials have pledged to reinvest undisclosed property taxes to pay for those road and park projects.

"We hope you're wildly successful," Commissioner Nick Fish told Zidell. "If you are wildly successful, then the whole South Waterfront and the whole city benefits."

Portland contracting system needs 'intervention,' auditor says

*By Brad Schmidt
June 24, 2015*

Portland's system for awarding about \$600 million a year to outside contractors needs "intervention" by the City Council, according to a new city audit.

Portland purchasing officials labor under conflicting roles and, as a result, it's not clear if taxpayers receive the best deals when city contracts are awarded to outsiders, according to the report released Wednesday by Auditor Mary Hull Caballero.

City procurement officials blasted the audit in an uncharacteristically pointed response. Fred Miller, the city's chief administrative officer, wrote that auditors disregarded their feedback and citizens who read the report might reach conclusions that are "misleading or incorrect."

Auditors say Portland's procurement division doesn't monitor the overall level of competition among city contracts or analyze data to spot trends or problems. Procurement officials also operate under a system of competing priorities – such as promoting social equity instead of competition, which could reduce opportunities to cut costs.

Auditors say they couldn't make more sweeping conclusions about the effectiveness of contracting because the city's database is poorly maintained, prohibiting meaningful analysis.

Among other things, the City Council should clarify objectives and set top priorities for how officials award contracts, according to the report.

Procurement officials will do a better job categorizing contracts for analysis but "most of the recommendations lacked meaningful suggestions," Miller wrote.

The audit made no reference to the city's infamous contracting scandal and new revelations that former parking manager Ellis K. McCoy unequivocally manipulated contracting in 2006 while taking bribes from a parking-meter company.

Portland studying how to draw more visitors, make money at Delta Park, Portland International Raceway

*By Andrew Theen
June 24, 2015*

Portland is interested in seeing how, and if, the city could make more money, create more jobs and draw more visitors to a trio of publicly owned facilities in North Portland.

Portland parks and recreation officials want to study how Delta Park, Portland International Raceway and Heron Lakes Golf Course could benefit from "enhancements" and new amenities in the future.

The City Council will vote Wednesday to approve a \$48,000 contract with EcoNorthwest to study the overall economic impact of the entire Delta Park Sports Complex, Portland's formal name for the three facilities.

According to city documents, the consultant will analyze how adding new facilities and services on the property— such as indoor concessions, a hotel, parking garage and other amenities at PIR —might affect the surrounding economic landscape.

EcoNorthwest will conduct surveys to determine "spillover spending," meaning money visitors currently spend on nearby hotels, restaurants and other services. One focus of the study is "how much spillover spending Portland loses to Clark County."

Portland owns and operates 7 softball fields, 9 soccer fields at East Delta Park. Four of the soccer fields have lights and artificial turf and are used by the Portland Timbers development squad. The site also has a concessions building.

"The use of these facilities only going to grow," said Jennifer Yocom, parks community relations manager. Yocom said the city is interested in studying the economic realities and market situation surrounding those facilities.

She said Portland is strictly in the information-gathering phase, but the report could help direct future investment or actions. "When you're running these revenue generating sites you really have to understand the market," Yocom said.

The trio of public facilities were all added in recent decades, following the devastating flood that wiped out Vanport, Oregon's second-largest city at that time, in 1948.

"These facilities produce substantial economic impacts for nearby hotels and businesses," city documents said. "However they could support additional spending and jobs in Portland with further investment in capacity enhancing projects and improved visitor amenities."

The 268-acre PIR site is due for an updated master plan. According to a draft document released in March, the city isn't interested in adding more motor sports related events — in fact, documents indicate the city is interested in continuing to "look for alternative events that generate less noise. PIR has become a popular location for walks, runs and other events in recent years.\

PIR, while owned by the city, doesn't receive general fund dollars. In recent years, revenue ranged from \$1.4 million to \$1.7 million, according to Yocom. PIR has 450 event days each year, generating 300,000 visitors annually.

The ordinance Wednesday is an emergency, meaning the City Council members in attendance must approve it unanimously.

Portland could start booting cars to collect \$32.4 million in unpaid parking tickets

*By Joseph Rose
June 24, 2015*

Portland Commissioner Steve Novick is looking for ways to deal with the city's \$32.4 million in unpaid parking tickets, possibly by using wheel-locking "boots" that have proven effective in getting scofflaws to pay up in other cities.

Responding to a recent Oregonian/OregonLive examination of Portland's worst parking scofflaws, Novick said Tuesday he has several ideas to address the problem and plans to launch an initiative in response to the story by the end of July.

"I didn't know the backlog was that big," said Novick, who oversees the Portland Bureau of Transportation. "I actually have a bunch of ideas on the topic, but I need to talk with PBOT and maybe the court before I share them."

Presumably, the plan would take a more aggressive approach to collecting the overdue revenue, while identifying strategies to keep the city's collective parking debt from climbing so high in the future.

Among other things, Novick said his staff is exploring the viability of using yellow U-shaped tire boots to lock up the wheels of cars with unpaid tickets.

Although booting has proven effective in other U.S. cities, Portland parking officials have for years rejected the approach, determining it isn't feasible in stumptown. They say it belies their goal to keep parking open on the street.

Currently, the city's primary enforcement tool is to tow vehicles with six or more unsettled citations in which the fines have doubled or amount to at least \$500 — and only if they happen to stumble across one during daily patrols.

"I understand the argument that booting ties up spaces," Novick said. "I want to talk to other cities to see how much of a problem that really is."

He also said he's uncomfortable with Portland's reliance on towing. "When there's a \$166 tow charge, for some people, it makes it even more unaffordable," Novick said.

The Oregonian/OregonLive story showed how, in recent years, City Hall has been sluggish about hunting down people with big parking bills, especially when compared to other U.S. cities.

In Seattle, for example, city officials have switched to a plan that dedicates two officers to tracking down parking scofflaws in high-tech vans equipped with license-plate recognition cameras. When a van detects a plate with four or more tickets, the officer stops and locks the car's wheels with a 16-pound yellow boot until the bill is paid.

Scores of motorists owe Portland thousands of dollars in unpaid parking citations. In many cases, people who owe thousands of dollars decide it's cheaper to just buy a new car than recover one towed because of unpaid tickets by the city.

Novick also isn't comfortable with the current policy of waiting until a motorist has \$500 in tickets before PBOT takes action. "That's too high," he said. "We don't want to wait until we get to the point where many people literally can't pay."

The story elicited hundreds of comments from readers via OregonLive, social media and email. Many of them offered up their own proposed fixes.

Here's a sample of the most intriguing ideas for the city and state to consider:

*** Suspend driver's licenses for people who owe certain amount in unpaid parking tickets.** In Oregon, more than 100 different offenses can lead to temporary license suspension. Some of them have no connection to driving at all. But having \$10,000 – or any amount – of unpaid parking tickets isn't one. "It seems like taking away someone's license would get their attention real quick," said Jim Gleeson, a retired Multnomah County judge pro tem.

*** Lower the threshold of unpaid tickets before a "tow warrant" is issued on a vehicle.** Seattle and Salt Lake City have reduced the unpaid ticket limit for tows and wheel boots to four and two, respectively. The strategy is, in part, designed to catch scofflaws before their bills get out of control and impossible to pay.

*** Unleash the boot.** "I missed paying the city's Arts Tax by a day and the fee went from \$35 to \$50," wrote OregonLive reader Jayson. "Why so lenient on parking tickets? Boot for up to 2 days, then tow."

*** An amnesty program for people caught in the backlog that would waive additional fees and fines.** Of course, it's hard to know how popular that would be, considering much of the money could be used to shore up the city's shaky transportation budget. Perhaps a low-interest payment plans would be a smarter.

*** Let the worst offenders, including one woman who owes more than \$12,500, work off part of their bill with community service.**

*** Lease a couple of those snazzy license-plate-scanning vans that they use in Seattle.** "Sounds like Seattle has a working solution," wrote OregonLive reader Mirtis. "Don't get creative."

The Portland Tribune

A rational look at Portland's parking future. Grrrr.

*By Peter Korn
June 25, 2015*

Portland transportation commissioner Steve Novick says he gets more complaints about parking than any other transportation issue, including street repairs and bicycle improvements.

Of course he does, says Jeff Tumlin, the keynote speaker at Monday's Portland symposium on the future of parking. When you're in your car hunting down a space, parking isn't just about parking, says Tumlin, a national parking consultant based in San Francisco.

"Parking is oftentimes a proxy for deeper concerns and anxiety about place," Tumlin says. "Parking becomes a flashpoint, the thing that people can focus on when they're having a hard time figuring out what the underlying problem is."

Road rage has entered the public consciousness, but parking rage is just as real, according to Tumlin. There have been murders committed over parking spaces, he says.

"Parking does something that sparks the reptilian centers of the brain," Tumlin says.

The battle over parking spaces is really a fight for social status and territory, according to Tumlin. Next time you're at the movies, he says, notice how the star of the film always gets a parking space right in front of the building he or she needs to enter. Status. In many companies, he adds, the employee of the month doesn't get a raise, he or she gets a prized parking space by the front door. We care about parking in front of our homes because it's an extension of our personal territory, he adds.

Which explains why parking policy is rarely rational.

"We're perfectly OK with every other commodity in society — food, clothing, housing, airline tickets — using the free market to balance either supply or demand. Except for parking and driving," Tumlin says.

He added that building more parking garages will only encourage more driving. Soon, he insists, driverless cars talking to each other will be getting about 30 percent more cars in each lot by playing Tetris with all the lot's vehicles, eliminating the need for most of the lot's driving corridors.

Tumlin's vision of the future? "Owning a car in the city will be like owning a boat or a plane," he says. He's talking 10 years out.

But beware the law of unintended consequence. Imagine a future where driverless cars have become popular, Tumlin says, and parking spots become expensive. Your car drops you off at a shop. Does it park itself and pay?

"Why would driverless vehicles ever park?" Tumlin asks. "People would have them drive around in circles."

Still, very little progress is going to be made until people begin to think about parking rationally. That won't be easy.

"I'm a (parking) consultant. I have an hourly billing rate. I know the value of my time. But even I find myself driving around in circles looking for that free space," Tumlin says.

Audit: City Council must reform purchasing policies

By Jim Redden

June 24, 2015

Portland's purchasing policies and practices are in disarray and need to be reviewed and prioritized by the City Council.

That is a conclusion of a city audit released Wednesday titled "City Procurement: Contracting process needs Council intervention."

The audit, conducted by the City Auditor's Office, did not find an examples of mismanagement or corruption. But auditors had trouble locating all purchasing contracts on multiple data bases and found that policies to promote social purposes, such as benefiting minority owned businesses, may not be achieving their goals.

The audit found the city purchases approximately \$600 million worth of goods and services, with most of the contracts being approved by a Chief Procurement Officer in the Office of Management and Finance. Not every contract is recorded in a single data base, however, making comprehensive reviews difficult.

Although state law requires governments to put contracts out to bid to reduce costs, it allows for exemptions to achieve social purposes. Portland has improved numerous exemptions, including supporting emerging small business, that are not regularly reviewed to ensure they are reaching their goals.

"The procurement process needs City Council's attention. Portland procures about \$600 million each year in goods and services through a variety of methods. The Chief Procurement Officer acts under your delegated authority and would benefit from clarity about your priorities when wielding the City's considerable purchasing power. This is especially true when purchasing objectives are in conflict, such as when contracts are awarded non-competitively to emerging small businesses without an affirmative action purpose," reads a June 24 cover letter signed by City Auditor Mary Hull Caballero.

The audit included 15 recommendations to reform the purchasing system, beginning with the council clarifying its objectives.

The Office of Management and Finance responded to the audit with an unusually critical letter, saying auditors ignored information it offered the public should know when evaluating it. Although the letter from Chief Administrative Office Fred Miller agreed with some of the audit's recommendations, it said others were all but meaningless.

"We are gratified that Audit Services found no instances of mismanagement or fraud and the audit only references situations that 'may' or 'could' result in risks or oversight gaps. As we discussed at the exit interview, we find some worthwhile information in the audit report, but most of the recommendations lacked meaningful suggestions to be acted upon or specifics regarding what should be attained," reads the June 8 letter.

The audit can be found at www.portlandonline.com/auditor/index.cfm?c=66565&a=535050.

City agrees to Zidell deal on South Waterfront

*By Steve Law
June 24, 2015*

As City Commissioner Nick Fish describes it, Portland's six years of negotiations over the Zidell family's South Waterfront development were like a high school romance: on again, off again, often sidetracked by new issues and new circumstances.

Well now the two sides are engaged to be married.

The City Council unanimously approved a long-term development agreement with the Zidells on Wednesday. That commits the city to spend tens of millions of dollars on a new road, Willamette riverfront greenway, storm drainage and affordable housing. In exchange, the Zidell family's ZRZ Realty agreed to erect a new neighborhood valued at more than \$210 million, hosting up to 1,000 condos and apartments and 2,500 jobs on a 30-acre site due north of the Ross Island Bridge.

This is a part of town where the city has long held "big hopes and dreams," and it now looks like those will come true, said Mayor Charlie Hales.

Hales said there are only six areas in North America where cities have had a chance to create entirely new close-in neighborhoods from scratch. Those include two in Vancouver, B.C., one in San Francisco and one in New York. The other two: Portland's Pearl District and now the South Waterfront area.

Fish hailed the provisions for affordable housing that were hammered out in recent months to fulfill the city's longstanding commitment to provide a mix of income groups in the South Waterfront area. The city recently sought bids to build at least 200 units on a site in the RiverPlace area, and the deal with the Zidells calls for the family to sell the city another site for at least 200 more affordable apartment units.

"That means 400 families that cannot afford to live in our city can have a choice and a chance to live in a very desirable neighborhood," Fish said.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz said the South Waterfront hasn't yet turned out as city officials hoped, as it attracted more housing than expected and fewer jobs. But now the Knight Cancer Research Institute plans to erect a new complex there, aided by \$4 million the city agreed to deploy yesterday to extend an access road called Bond Street. Bond also will be extended to the Zidell property to open that up.

As Zidell invests, that will raise property values that in turn will give the money urban renewal funds to build the greenway from the Marquam Bridge to the Ross Island Bridge. Urban renewal funds also will

pay for the affordable housing project and give Portland Parks & Recreation \$5 million to buy a site from the Zidells for a future park. Since the park likely will cost lots more than that, Fritz said the bureau, under her direction, might not choose to proceed with the park, depending on available funds.

Fritz said the Zidell development agreement will be a “make or break” deal that will determine if the area lives up to the potential city leaders originally saw in the area.

Vision Zero: 'Commit to changing behavior'

*By Jennifer Anderson
June 23, 2015*

Getting to Vision Zero is a personal quest for city leaders. As Commissioner Nick Fish mentioned in his testimony last week just before the City Council approved the Vision Zero resolution, both he and Commissioner Amanda Fritz have lost someone close in a traffic incident.

At age 11, “I lost my mother,” Fish told the Tribune after Wednesday’s session. “She was killed in a car accident at the foot of our driveway (in rural upstate New York). She left four children. That’s one of the reasons it was especially meaningful to me personally to have had the chance to support Amanda (Fritz) during her struggle. I was sitting next to her in her office when the phone rang and she heard she lost her husband.”

Fish writes more about his experience in an essay published in Street Roots on Friday.

No matter how much heart city leaders invest in the ambitious plan, it will come down to public buy-in — a cultural mind shift, city leaders say.

“We need an attitude change,” Portland Police Sgt. Kelli Sheffer says. “Everyone’s going to need to participate, being aware of what’s around you and being mindful. If we could all do that, we wouldn’t need enforcement.”

As a private citizen, Sheffer says, she’d like to see the city adopt a positive message campaign rather than a negative one with shock value, like billboards in New York City — another Vision Zero city — that show victims of traffic deaths.

“To me, it’s kind of lost in all the blood and gore,” she says.

As a mother, Sheffer wants all drivers to be mindful when they get behind the wheel of a 6,000- to 8,000-pound vehicle. “We should be looking at everyone around us, but we’re such a self-centered society, we’re pretty much saying everyone else isn’t as important,” when drivers are impaired or distracted by food or cell phones or the radio, she says. “We can do all the engineering in the world and we’ll make a small dent, but we won’t achieve the goal.”

While the Portland Bureau of Transportation added a feature last week on its website that invites people to take the Vision Zero pledge — agreeing to not drive impaired, use caution in neighborhoods, adjust their speed during bad weather and other common-sense steps — that’s just one tool in their arsenal.

“I’m skeptical taking a pledge (alone) is going to fix anything,” Fish says. “What it’s going to take is a community-wide effort to effectively shame people into doing the right thing.

“Everybody knows when you drive and text it’s as if you’ve consumed the limit on alcohol. Everybody knows distracted driving results in accidents and injuries. Everybody knows distracted driving results in accidents and injuries. Everybody knows when you speed you lose certain control over your vehicle.”

It’s a matter of connecting the dots, Fish says: “Showing people the consequences of what their selfish behaviors are, which is literally people die.”

Fish and advocates compare the “shaming” campaign to the ones led by Mothers Against Drunk Driving, which included stern enforcement, tougher laws and grisly courses for offenders.

“Most of the injuries and deaths here are preventable,” Fish says. “Let’s collectively commit to changing behavior.”

Collective effort needed

While police resources are strapped, Sheffer says, it'll take a concerted effort between the city, state, business leaders, community leaders, advocates and citizens.

"We'll never have enough resources to manage (everything required of Vision Zero)," she says. "There is a lot that doesn't just fall on the shoulders of enforcement."

That said, Portland Police and the Portland Bureau of Transportation will hold a crosswalk education and enforcement mission on Tuesday in Northeast Portland.

Police will be enforcing the marked crosswalk at Northeast Glisan Street and 87th Avenue between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. to raise awareness of pedestrian safety and Oregon traffic laws.

Drivers who fail to stop for pedestrians in the crosswalk can be issued a warning or given a citation with a \$260 fine.

People who jaywalk can receive a warning or citation with a \$110 fine.

Now that it's summer, more children and families are walking outside.

"Children are smaller and often harder to see in or at the crosswalk," PBOT officials say. "Children don't always make the most appropriate decisions about when and where to cross, and they frequently dart out or run to get across the street. Drivers need to make sure they drive at or below the posted speed limit especially around parks, pools, community centers and other similar locations and scan your environment watching for pedestrians in the crossing or about to cross."

Police remind motorists that under Oregon law, every intersection is a legal crosswalk, whether it's marked or unmarked.

Drivers must stop and stay stopped for pedestrians when the pedestrian is in the motorist's lane or the adjacent lane. Drivers must remain stopped until the pedestrians clear the driver's lane plus the lane before and after it.

A bike lane and a parking lane are extensions of the adjacent motor lane.

Police and PBOT conduct enforcement missions once a month.

They've issued hundreds of citations and warnings this year. The two biggest actions were in March at Southeast 82nd Avenue and Cooper Street, where police issued 61 violations and four warnings; and in May at Southeast Powell Boulevard and 24th Avenue, where police issued 60 violations and two warnings.

Offenders were cited for failure to stop and remain stopped for a pedestrian; using a cell phone; driving while suspended; driving uninsured; careless driving; failure to wear a seatbelt; and others.

The City Council last week approved a Vision Zero resolution, which includes naming a stakeholder committee to advise PBOT on law enforcement, education, public health and emergency response.

The council also accepted a \$150,000 grant from the Oregon Department of Transportation to develop the Vision Zero Transportation Safety Action Plan.

PBOT will use consultants and analysts to examine crash data that will generate specific policy recommendations and actions to reach Vision Zero by 2025.

New Climate Action Plan targets fossil fuels

*By Steve Law
June 24, 2015*

The Portland City Council voted unanimously Wednesday to approve an updated version of the joint city/county Climate Action Plan, and the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners is expected to follow suit Thursday.

The plan expands upon the prior joint Climate Action Plan enacted in 2009, calling for tough new policies to address fossil fuel use. County and city leaders could go on record opposed to coal and oil exports through their jurisdictions, and establish formal fossil fuel export policies. Those could make it harder to win approval here for propane export proposals and perhaps even Liquefied Natural Gas pipelines. Both would also divest their investments in fossil fuel companies.

The two jurisdictions also suggested they might try to levy a tax or fee upon carbon here if the state doesn't enact a carbon tax or cap and trade system.

The plan goes beyond the past version by outlining specific goals to achieve over the next five years, including:

- Promote Meatless Monday campaigns, to draw attention to the high carbon footprint of beef and other red meats.
- Develop a "sustainable consumption policy," to encourage residents to consider the lifetime carbon impact of all the "stuff" they purchase.
- Promote the purchase of 8,000 new electric vehicles per year.
- Require all homes to have an Energy Performance Standard label, which functions much like a miles-per-gallon sticker on cars. The stickers would state the home's monthly utility cost for heating and other energy usage.
- Nudge Portland General Electric and Pacific Power to accelerate their move away from coal power in their local energy mix.

Portland issued the nation's first Climate Action Plan by a big city back in 1993, and has achieved so much success that other cities and institutions have adopted their own plans.

The joint city/county plan calls for lowering carbon emissions locally by a whopping 40 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2030, and 80 percent by 2050. Those are the amounts experts say are needed worldwide to avert major climate disruption from global warming.

The good news, at least locally, is that the Climate Action Plan has already helped reduce total carbon emissions by 14 percent in Multnomah County, and 32 percent on a per capita basis, a remarkable achievement.

But much more needs to be done to achieve the ambitious goals, which would require a 1.5 percent annual drop in carbon emissions each year until 2030, and then 1.8 percent annual drops to meet the 2050 goal.

To read the 2015 Climate Action Plan: www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/climate or www.multco.us/sustainability.

Taller downtown buildings could bring more affordable housing

*By Steve Law
June 23, 2015*

Developers could build three stories higher in Portland's central city if they add some affordable housing to their project or pay an offsetting fee, under a proposal presented to the City Council on Tuesday.

City officials figure the new "density bonus" could yield 800 to 1,300 more affordable apartment units over the next 20 years, or generate \$120 million to \$200 million so others can build such units.

"I am frustrated that we are not capturing an adequate share of new private development that's affordable," said Commissioner Dan Saltzman, who oversees the Portland Housing Bureau. "We are not getting there with our public programs."

Providing more incentives for developers could help build the city's affordable housing stock, now in short supply, Saltzman said.

The city housing and planning bureaus proposed that developers could get the extra three floors by providing some apartment units affordable to people earning 80 percent of the median family income — or \$58,800 for a family of four, \$41,200 for an individual. The units must be maintained at that affordability level for 60 years.

For developers who choose to pay a fee in lieu of building the affordable housing, funds would go to the city's Housing Investment Fund. That money would be earmarked for lower-income people earning 60 percent of median family income.

Saltzman noted there is a bit of a "war" over what income groups to support from the policy, which could prove a sticking point.

Commissioners Nick Fish and Amanda Fritz stressed the need to house the neediest groups.

"We know where the crushing need is," said Fish, and that's people earning 0 to 30 percent of median family income. Many of those people are now homeless, living in cars or other nontraditional housing.

Fritz cautioned that providing units to those earning 80 percent of the median will exclude many people of color earning lower amounts, making the central city "more white."

The two bureaus hired consultants Economic & Planning Systems Inc. and Otak to evaluate density bonuses. The consultants met in two round-table discussions with local developers, and concluded that the system should work in the central city if done properly.

They advised pruning some of the city's existing incentives that allow developers to exceed ordinary height limits, which include 18 density bonus categories and six categories that allow the transfer of density from one building to another.

For instance, in the 1980s, the city allowed developers to add up to three stories if they built downtown residential projects, at a time when the city was trying to attract residents to the central city. That worked well, but now planners say that incentive is no longer needed, along with several of the other ones.

Some of those, such as the density bonus adding bike lockers or ecoroofs, "are pretty sweet deals," said Joe Zehnder, chief city planner.

Fritz suggested the city should simply require ecoroofs on all new buildings with flat roofs.

The two bureaus recommend pruning down the list so that affordable housing becomes the top priority for density bonuses. They also want to strengthen density transfers for buildings doing historic renovations and providing open space.

The city hopes to structure its system so it's a better deal for developers to build the housing, because it can then tap their expertise. But developers may find building or managing affordable units is out of their area of expertise, or too much hassle.

In six other jurisdictions that have such density bonuses, it's more common for developers to choose payments in lieu of building the housing, said David Schwartz, a Denver consultant with Economic & Planning Systems.

"It's an unfortunate reality, but that is the case in most of these communities," Schwartz said.

Those communities are Seattle, Denver, Austin, Chicago, Anaheim and Arlington County, Virginia.

In a typical development, a project initially limited to four stories could go up to seven stories, by including nine to 36 affordable units. A commercial developer could get the same added density by putting money into the fund.

The looming debate over what income levels to target could be a repeat of a recent fight over exempting developers from paying Systems Development Charges if they build middle-income housing in Old Town/Chinatown. Saltzman and Mayor Charlie Hales, who won that fight, supporting the idea of having more middle-income residents in an area now dominated by low-income people. Fish and Fritz and many low-income housing advocates resisted the idea, preferring to reserve the tax breaks for poorer people.

The housing and planning bureaus recommended targeting people earning 80 percent of median income sector, because more units can be built that way, Zehnder said.

If the city targets units for people with lower incomes, fewer units could be built.

Portland has a growing affordable housing crisis. It projects the need for 24,000 additional units in the next two decades just for those earning 50 percent to 80 percent of median income.

An additional 800 to 1,300 units could make a dent in the problem, supplemented with other efforts and financing streams. Saltzman said his staff are working on a proposal to rework the city's property tax abatement system, another one of the city's tools to get more affordable housing.

"Looking at who benefits is important as you go through this process," said André Baugh, chairman of the Planning and Sustainability Commission.

However, he added, "You're not going to solve the problem with this. It's one more tool."

What's next?

The City Council will hold a hearing on the density bonus idea on July 9.

Council to consider demolishing Washington Park reservoirs

*By Jim Redden
June 23, 2015*

The City Council will be considering demolishing the two open reservoirs and a support building in Washington Park on Thursday, even though they are historic landmarks.

The council has approved replacing the two open reservoirs in Washington Park and three others in Mt. Tabor with underground storage tanks to comply with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency rules. Land use findings released Tuesday would authorize the demolition of the Washington Park reservoirs and the Weir Building.

Among other things, the findings say an ongoing landslide in Washington Park has compromised the structural integrity of the reservoirs since before they were completed.

The findings can be read [here](#).

The council is also scheduled to consider the future of the Mt. Tabor reservoirs at Thursday's hearing, which begins at 2:00 p.m. The Water Bureau has requested a land use permit to disconnect the Mt. Tabor reservoirs from the rest of the water distribution system.

Community activists oppose disconnecting and demolishing the reservoirs. A previous Portland Tribune story on the issue can be read at portlandtribune.com/pt/9-news/264507-137035-council-to-decide-fate-of-mount-tabor-reservoirs-on-thursday.

City, county to update Climate Action Plan

*By Steve Law
June 23, 2015*

Portland and Multnomah County are set to formally oppose coal and oil exports through their jurisdictions, and may divest their holdings in fossil fuel stocks. They also may consider a tax or fee on carbon emissions if the state won't do it.

Those are some of the latest additions to the city and county's joint Climate Action Plan, being updated for the first time since 2009.

The Portland City Council is set to adopt the updated plan on Wednesday, followed by the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners on Thursday.

Portland issued the nation's first climate action plan by a big city back in 1993, and has achieved so much success that other cities and institutions have adopted their own plans.

The joint city/county plan calls for lowering carbon emissions locally by a whopping 40 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2030, and 80 percent by 2050. Those are the amounts experts say are needed worldwide to avert major climate disruption from global warming.

“Business as usual is not going to get us there,” says Michael Armstrong, deputy director of the Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. The Climate Action Plan includes a “laundry list” of ways to get there, he says.

The good news, at least locally, is that the Climate Action Plan has already helped reduce total carbon emissions by 14 percent, and 32 percent on a per capita basis, a remarkable achievement.

But much more needs to be done to reach the ambitious goals — which require a 1.5 percent annual drop in carbon emissions until 2030, and then 1.8 percent a year to meet the 2050 goal.

Europe tends to use regulations to lower carbon emissions, while Portland and Multnomah County have largely chosen to use incentives, says Susan Anderson, director of the Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. In the past, Anderson says, Portlanders’ top motivation for adopting environmental practices often stemmed from other goals, such as improving their children’s health or lowering their utility bills. But now residents seem more willing to take action explicitly to address climate change, she says.

Promoting a Meatless Monday campaign, one of the new Climate Action Plan tasks, is a perfect example of the city’s and county’s softer approach. That would be an effort to draw attention to the high carbon footprint of beef and other red meats.

“Food choice matters,” Armstrong says.

But reaching the city’s and county’s ultimate goals likely will require more mandatory changes with bigger impacts. An example would be attaching a price to carbon — a policy that most experts say is essential if the world’s nations are going to adequately address climate change. By putting the city and county on record opposed to coal and oil exports, that could thwart efforts by coal and oil companies to ship products through the area.

The 2015 version of the 161-page Climate Action Plan is chock full of goals and projects involving public policies, government investments and efforts to change human and business behavior. Each goal is assigned to different city bureaus and county departments to take the lead. The most imminent new goals in the plan must be achieved over the next five years. Those include:

- Establish a fossil fuels export policy, which could determine how the city and county respond to future propane export proposals and Liquefied Natural Gas pipeline projects.
- Develop a “sustainable consumption policy,” which tries to get people to consider the lifetime carbon impact of all the “stuff” they purchase.
- Promote the purchase of 8,000 new electric vehicles per year.
- Require all homes to have an Energy Performance Standard label, which functions much like a miles-per-gallon sticker on cars. The stickers would state the home’s monthly utility cost for heating and other energy usage.
- Play a more direct role in limiting “black carbon” from diesel engines and wood stove emissions.
- Work with residents, businesses and local utilities to reduce the carbon content in local electricity sold here by 3 percent a year. That means getting Portland General Electric and Pacific Power to accelerate their move away from coal power in their local energy mix.

Mayor names two new PDC leaders

*By Steve Law
June 23, 2015*

Mayor Charlie Hales has nominated two new members to serve on the Portland Development Commission to replace two men whose terms are expiring.

Hales wants to appoint Gustavo Cruz Jr. and William “Willy” Meyers to fill the seats being vacated by John Mohlis and Charles Wilhoite.

Cruz is senior counsel at the Ater Wynne law firm, and active in the Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and the Northwest District Association.

Myers is executive secretary of the Columbia Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council, and formerly worked for the Sheet Metal Workers Local 16. He is on the state Prevailing Wage Advisory Committee and the Metropolitan Alliance for Workforce Equity.

Hales’ appointees must be confirmed by the full City Council next month.

The Portland Development Commission is the city’s urban renewal and economic development agency. It’s run by a five-member board. Myers and Cruz will join continuing board members Mark Edlen, Aneshka Dickson and Tom Kelly.

Kelly is chairman of the panel and Dickson is vice chairwoman.

Willamette Week

Aiming to Increase Affordable Housing, Dan Saltzman Proposes Streamlining Incentives

City commissioner proposes changes to Portland's "density bonus."

*By Mackenzie Broderick
June 24, 2015*

If you soon hear about the city awarding “density bonuses,” don’t get your hopes up that you’re getting a cash handout for putting up with an increasingly crowded city.

The concept floating around City Hall is part of a proposal from City Commissioner Dan Saltzman, who wants to encourage more developers to use financial incentives to build affordable housing in the central city.

Saltzman's proposal, which got a favorable airing from the City Council on Tuesday, revamps an existing incentive program. It would reward developers who add to Portland’s supply of affordable housing by letting them build projects that are bigger or taller than usually allowed. To pencil out, it would eliminate existing financial incentives for adds-ons such as bike storage and eco-roofs—building features that Saltzman says the market already demands anyway.

Saltzman’s idea is to streamline Portland’s incentive program to put the emphasis on affordable housing. If approved, developers would get “density bonuses” for only three options, down from 18. They’d get bonuses if they build affordable units in their own projects, pay into a fund to build or preserve affordable units elsewhere, or a combination of the two.

The need is great. Officials predict that by 2035 the city will require 24,000 new units of affordable housing for households earning between 50 and 80 percent of median family income. (That’s between \$36,750 and \$58,800 a year for a family of four.) Saltzman’s proposal would make only a small dent in the problem, creating an estimated 800 to 1,300 units in the next 20 years.

“It’s important we look at every opportunity,” Saltzman says, “to increase the supply of affordable housing in our city.”

Uber vs. Portland Gets the Bloomberg Businessweek Feature Treatment

By Aaron Mesh
June 24, 2015

How big a deal was Portland City Hall's standoff with Uber? It just made Bloomberg Businessweek. The financial magazine's feature story, "This is How Uber Takes Over a City," recounts city regulators' uphill battle with Uber in the days following the \$41 billion ride-hailing behemoth's invasion into the Portland market in defiance of city rules.

"In Portland, the 28th-largest city in the U.S., 10 people would ultimately register to lobby on Uber's behalf," reporter Karen Weise writes. "They'd become a constant force in City Hall. City officials say they'd never seen anything on this scale."

The insider history Bloomberg recounts will be familiar to WW readers. There's the angry phone call between City Commissioner Steve Novick and Uber exec David Plouffe, the aborted attempt to sting Uber drivers, and the crucial role of lobbyist Mark Wiener in brokering a truce.

Bloomberg updates the story with a play-by-play of how Uber got its way in the spring rule-making process that led to the current test period legalizing Uber and its competitor Lyft. Once again, Wiener plays a part, this time winning the support of swing vote (and Wiener client) City Commissioner Dan Saltzman.

"Records show the company had 19 in-person meetings with city officials in the first three months of the year, including one at the end of March, when Uber brought back the big gun, Wiener, to meet with Saltzman, the likely swing vote. Wiener had consulted on Saltzman's past campaigns. All the meetings, combined with phone calls, meant Uber spoke with City Hall on average almost every other workday. E-mail traffic was even heavier. The city hasn't released the correspondence, which Bloomberg Businessweek requested in early April, saying it's taken longer than expected because Uber and city staffers exchanged about 300 e-mails that may fall under the request."

One measure of how successful Uber has been: It announced today it has contracted with 1,500 drivers in Portland, triple its numbers just two months ago.

Another sign of Uber's victory? Today it's launching a free-ride campaign with Venture Portland, the neighborhood-business guild that's funded, to the tune of \$308,000 annually, by Portland City Hall.

Mayor Charlie Hales Will Nominate Two New Portland Development Commissioners

By Nigel Jaquiss
June 23, 2015

Mayor Charlie Hales today announced the names of two new nominees for the five-member Portland Development Commission.

Hales is nominating Gustavo Cruz, a business lawyer with the Ater Wynne firm and Willi Meyers, executive secretary of the Columbia Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council.

The PDC, the city's economic development and urban renewal agency, is Hales' most flexible tool for reshaping the city.

That's because more than any other city agency, the PDC has discretion as to how it uses its budget. The agency played a major role in developing the Pearl District and South Waterfront; its efforts to remake Lents have been less successful. Among the major projects the agency is contemplating now are the

relocation of main U.S. Post Office downtown and the redevelopment of the derelict Centennial Mills site on the west bank of the Willamette River.

The new nominees, if confirmed by City Council vote, will replace Charles Wilhoite, a management consultant, and John Mohlis, executive secretary for the Oregon Building and Construction Trades Council.

The Portland Mercury

The Soft Sell

The City Can't Require Affordable Housing. Here's What It Can Do

By Shelby R. King

June 24, 2015

ECO-ROOFS AND BIKE LOCKERS are regularly found in Portland's new apartment buildings, largely because "green" Portlanders demand such amenities. But under the city's outdated incentive program, builders also get special permission to build taller or denser by including such features. That's probably going to change.

Last May, Housing Commissioner Dan Saltzman launched a study looking at Portland's density bonus incentives. Now the results are in, and it turns out the city's practically giving them away.

"Many of those are no longer necessary or effective," Saltzman said at a city council work session on the report Tuesday, June 23.

Developers building in central Portland currently have a smorgasbord of 18 density bonus incentives—things they can do to win permission to build higher or denser than a parcel's zoning allows. In addition to bike storage and eco-roofs, bonus options include open spaces, water features, and underground parking.

But as Portland's growth spurt continues with no sign of slowing, the city doesn't need more water features. It needs affordable housing. So city officials are considering cutting the list of incentives to bare bones—making affordable housing on site or paying into an affordable housing fund the only two options available to builders who want a density bonus.

"This is an arcane and complicated menu of options," Mayor Charlie Hales said at Tuesday's work session. "It may seem a radical option, but we really need to look at skinny-ing that list."

According to projections, the affordable housing bonus plan that commissioners are considering could result in up to 60 affordable units (at 80 percent of median family income) each year. Which could mean up to 1,300 new units over the next two decades. During that same time, inner Portland is expected to gain 30,000 new households.

"Obviously narrowing the options makes a whole lot of sense," says Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission Chair André Baugh. "But we're not going to solve the problem of affordable housing with the bonus system."

Without the ability to force developers to include affordable housing (an option currently precluded under state law), altering the density bonus is one way to coax cheaper housing into the city.

"We need to put development of affordable housing at the top of the list," says Susan Anderson, director of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. "The bottom line is that the results of this study show that an affordable housing bonus would work well here."

David Schwartz, vice president of Denver-based Economic and Planning Systems, Inc., the consulting company hired to conduct the study, said his firm looked at six other cities to determine what options other municipalities use that could be viable for Portland.

"It's important to get rid of overlapping policies that allow the density bonus to just be given away," Schwartz said. "It's an unfortunate reality, but developers often don't have the expertise or ability to provide affordable housing on site."

Schwartz also says that revamping the list will make it clear to developers that the city places real importance on creating cheap units.

Hales says Portland has been "too permissive" about what types of developments it's allowed, and that in the current housing market the city should make affordable housing "the most attractive bonus for developers."

Developers are worried about their bottom line, and much of Schwartz's presentation to commissioners focused on explaining how restricting the bonus could pencil out, allowing for a 15 percent profit margin. City Commissioner Amanda Fritz, who seems to support the plan, thinks that's an awfully optimistic number.

"I wish I could make an investment and know I was going to get a 15 percent rate of return," she says. "I guess I would need to get together a huge amount of money and invest in real estate."

City council's scheduled to hold a public hearing on the revamped incentive plan July 9.

Hall Monitor

An End to the Shouting

By Dirk VanderHart
June 24, 2015

YOU EXPECT to hear members of the public throw shade at the Portland Water Bureau when it comes to the city's beautiful, beloved, soon-to-be-decommissioned drinking water reservoirs.

The venom spewed over the Mt. Tabor reservoirs, as Portland works to bury its water supply, could easily fill them. It's gotten to the point that city hall goes into a state of lockdown when the issue comes before Portland City Council.

What was surprising late last month, as city council took up a proposal that'll disconnect the Tabor ponds from Portland's taps for good, was hearing government functionaries pile on.

Brian Emerick, chair of the city's Historic Landmarks Commission, told Portland city commissioners he was "deeply concerned" about opposition to the changes, "and the water bureau's dismissal of that opposition."

"It feels like there's really just a lack of planning," Emerick said. "This could become the most-expensive water feature in city history."

Another landmarks commission member, Harris Matarazzo, said the issue had produced "the most contentious meeting I've ever been at," and that he was troubled by the water bureau's refusal to budge or enter mediation.

It's a moment city council members would be wise to remember as they finally close this fraught chapter for good.

On Thursday, June 25, the corridors of city hall will swarm with private security guards again—a buffer against the boisterous booing city council has come to expect with water politics. City staffers will probably be stopped and questioned before being allowed into their own offices, as at least one commissioner's chief of staff was back in May. And council will at last round the bend on an issue that's consumed certain segments of the population for decades.

The weight of the actual decisions council will make are easy to lose amid all the stultifying land-use jargon. In the plainest terms, commissioners will seal the fate of Washington Park's two reservoirs—slated for demolition so an underground tank can be created—and mostly work out how to disconnect Tabor's four massive pools from the water system.

There are still questions to work through, mostly surrounding how many days each year the reservoirs can be empty for cleaning. But the hearing is going to mark the substantial end of an issue that's caused protests and arrests (the Occupy Tabor movement of 2013) and helped spark a failed bid for the entire water system to be snatched from council's control.

This is an issue that's occupied an incredible amount of our time.

There's speculation curveballs might arise at Thursday's hearing, or that the water bureau will ease up on its imperiousness and acquiesce to some of the neighbors' wishes. If commissioners are smart they'll spackle their statements with acknowledgements of the people who've spent countless hours rooting—loudly, pugnaciously—for the reservoirs to remain.

But nothing at this point is going to change the reservoirs' fate. That was sealed back in June 2013, when the city announced it had run out of options in the fight against federal rules requiring burial of open-air reservoirs.

This is it! Let's find something better to yell about.

Steve Novick Says Bikes and Density Are Keys to Fighting Climate Change

*By Dirk VanderHart
June 24, 2015*

Last week, City Commissioner Steve Novick pulled me aside and said he was concocting a statement in advance of city council's consideration of updates to the Climate Action Plan (which is going on as I write this).

It was a brief discussion. Novick said the broad strokes of his argument were that, sure, people get frustrated by cyclists and new developments, but bicyclists and new developments might be vital for Portland to meet its ambitious climate goals (the city wants its emissions at 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050).

I nodded and told Novick it sounded interesting. Now he's unveiled his statement, and it's definitely that. The lengthy piece is a doozy—particularly coming from the city's transportation commissioner. Novick's essential thesis: Who cares that you're annoyed by that new apartment building and you don't like cyclists? Those things are helping us combat the gravest threat of modern times.

[Update: Novick disagrees with my summation: It's not "who cares that you're annoyed" he says. It's "yes, I know it's annoying, but it's for a good cause."]

An excerpt:

I think it's time we saw the fight against climate disruption in similar terms. I want to get to the point where some people, when they see a bicyclist getting off their bike, say: "Thank you for your service." I want to get to the point where people say at dinner parties: "So there's a new apartment building going in next door, and the construction's noisy and it'll mess with my view and it might make it harder to find a parking space. But I'm not complaining. Anything for the cause."

Bikes are always controversial in this city, and the fury over displacement and expensive new apartments has been intense lately. But Novick's clearly correct that anything that can get people out of their cars more is going to help the city meet its very ambitious aims.

The good news is: Novick controls PBOT! Hopefully his next post is all about what he's going to do to increase bicycle use and discourage driving.

Read the whole statement after the jump.

As the Council considers the Climate Action Plan this afternoon, I offer some observations about climate and the city.

Climate change, or, as I prefer to call it, climate disruption, is the defining issue of this century. I wish it were not true that burning fossil fuels changes the climate. But unfortunately, science tells us that this is fact. If we do not drastically reduce our fossil fuel use, we will see more and more severe weather events, leading to floods and forest fires, which will impose huge increased costs on families, businesses and governments. We will see disruption of our food supply, because,

due to drought or other factors, places where we now do grow food will become places where we can't grow food. We will see massive population displacement, as places where lots of people now live become uninhabitable – in fact Portland has already seen some migration of “climate refugees.” Furthermore, we will see the extinction of many, many species– perhaps 20%, perhaps 50%, of all the species in the world.

We in Portland have both a moral obligation and an economic imperative to take steps to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. I think people understand the moral obligation: we need to do our part to save the world. Even though what we do in Portland will not in and of itself change the course of global history, the worldwide effort will be a collection of local efforts, and we should do our part. But we also have an economic imperative. Eventually, either the world will suffer a climate catastrophe, or national governments will take drastic action to require the reduction of fossil fuel use. They might very well put a price on carbon– either directly, through taxation, or through regulation. When that happens, communities that consume lots of fossil fuels – communities where you have to drive everywhere, for example – will be very hard hit, economically. Communities that have deliberately reduced their fossil fuel use will be much better prepared to live with those new taxes or regulations.

People in Portland are aware of the threat of climate disruption, and they want to do something about it. According to the periodic “values and beliefs” surveys by the firm DHM, 79% of people in Multnomah County agree that there should be stronger government policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. 88% of Portlanders agree that “climate change requires us to change our way of life.”

Every day, people in Portland deliberately choose to take steps to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. They recycle, and that helps; recycling old materials takes less energy than making entirely new stuff. They put in more efficient light bulbs. They put in more efficient furnaces. People who are aware that growing lentils takes a lot less energy than growing beef might decide to have lentil soup, instead of a hamburger, for dinner.

But I think a lot of people are not aware that one of the things they can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is simply to tolerate things that other people are doing that might sometimes be annoying, or inconvenient, but which serve to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

I'm thinking in particular of two of the policies that we have in Portland to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that generate a large number of complaints from the public. We have policies that encourage and accommodate bicycling, and we allow new apartment buildings to be constructed, especially along transit corridors sometimes without parking attached. The Climate Action Plan addresses bicycle infrastructure on page 75, and the role of compact growth on page 76.

Many people are irritated by the fact that we build bicycle infrastructure – either because they believe they have been inconvenienced by the addition of bike lanes, or because they think we spend too much money on bicyclists. And many people feel that the addition of new apartment buildings in their neighborhoods is both an inconvenience and an affront.

I think that we – and in saying “we,” I include myself – have made two mistakes in talking about these issues. First, I think people sometimes feel that their concerns are minimized, which makes them feel like they aren't being heard. Second, we have not made it clear that simply by putting up with bicyclists and new apartment buildings, people can make a major contribution to the fight against climate disruption.

When it comes to people's complaints about bicycles, we tend to say things like: “We don't really spend very much money on bicycle infrastructure, and putting in that bike lane either isn't increasing anyone's commute time at all, or if it does, it's only a minute a day.” Those statements are generally true. But a minute stuck in traffic seems like a lot, and any public expenditure should have a strong justification.

I think we need to start saying: “We know many people find it annoying to have to deal with bicyclists, and yes we do spend some money on bicycle infrastructure. But when people are on their bikes, they aren't using gasoline. And there really are modern cities, like Copenhagen, where a third of people travel by bike, and that's a major way they have reduced carbon emissions. If we

want to meet our carbon emission goals, we are going to need to make it easier for people to bike and walk, instead of drive. So, although we will do our best to crack down on rude bicyclists who break traffic laws, we are going to continue to build bicycle infrastructure. We know many people will never ride a bike. But just by agreeing to put up with the idea of more bicycles on the road, you can still make a significant contribution to fighting climate disruption.”

When it comes to people’s complaints about new apartment buildings, we tend to say: “But wait – because those new buildings are going in, there will be enough of a market in your neighborhood for groceries and ice cream that you might get a new grocery store within walking distance, and a new Salt and Straw, too. It’ll be a 20-minute neighborhood! And trust us, you’ll still be able to find a parking spot.” But some people’s response is: “I don’t mind driving to the grocery store. And I don’t want eggplant-flavored ice cream with kale sprinkles. And if I can’t find a parking spot in front of my house ten times a year, that’s ten times too many. And despite all the talk about our great transit system, there’s a lot of places I just have to drive to.”

I think we need to say to those Portlanders: “We realize that those new apartment buildings can bring inconvenience. But adding more apartment buildings in the city is critical to reducing carbon emissions. For one thing, people in apartments tend to use less energy for heating and cooling than people in stand-alone houses. Also, when you have a lot of people in one place, grocery stores and restaurants do spring up within walking distance, and driving less is one of the keys to reducing carbon emissions. And when you have a lot of people living close together, public transit becomes more viable – a light rail line is a lot more economical if it picks up 30 people a stop instead of 5 people a stop – so even for longer trips, transit will become a better option. New York City has far lower carbon emissions than we do, and that’s largely because they take the subway everywhere, but the subway only makes sense because there’s a lot of people per stop. We know that the promise of better transit in the future doesn’t help you right now, but we’re asking you to be patient.

“And we know that you’re especially concerned about apartment buildings without parking, and we’re working on policies to mitigate the impact of those apartment buildings on parking availability. But we’re not going to require a parking space with every new apartment, because if we build the city around the idea that everyone will always drive, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. So we’re asking you to put up with those apartment buildings, as annoying as they might be, as part of your contribution to fighting climate disruption.”

We know from history that Americans are willing to sacrifice for a cause. During World War II, people put up with rationing of food and gasoline; rich people put up with incredibly high taxes. They knew the stakes were high, and they were ready to do their part.

I think it’s time we saw the fight against climate disruption in similar terms. I want to get to the point where some people, when they see a bicyclist getting off their bike, say: “Thank you for your service.” I want to get to the point where people say at dinner parties: “So there’s a new apartment building going in next door, and the construction’s noisy and it’ll mess with my view and it might make it harder to find a parking space. But I’m not complaining. Anything for the cause.”

And yes, I realize that might sound crazy. But the only way we are going to avert climate catastrophe is if a lot of things that seem crazy now become true.

It's Official: South Waterfront Is About To Be Pearl District Redux

*By Dirk VanderHart
June 24, 2015*

The city of Portland's been looking for ways to build out the scrubby acreages southwest of the Marquam Bridge for decades. Commissioner Dan Saltzman, dean of the Portland City Council, recalls puzzling over the problem in the 90s under then-Mayor Vera Katz.

"Nobody thought anything could be done with it," Saltzman said at this morning's city council meeting. "It was all snarled land."

That's no longer the case, of course. Glimmering high-rises house rich professionals, and retirees, and medical students in the South Waterfront these days. A neighborhood once envisioned as holding a cross-section of Portland's incomes and demographic has become largely the province of the privileged, though it's still sort of desolate down there—particularly as you head north of the condo cluster.

Look for that to change in the next couple decades. City council this morning unanimously approved a huge development agreement that will transform 33 still-rough acres into something akin to the Pearl District.

The agreement, between the Portland Development Commissioner and the moneyed Zidell family, incited all manner of developer-style backslapping and shaking of hands in council chambers this morning. People are psyched about it.

The development agreement sets the stage for at least two phases of development, which would involve something like 1.5 million square feet of new housing and commercial space, a park, and a greenway trail along the river. All that building's expected to bolster the tax increment financing (TIF) money the PDC collects to reinvest back in the neighborhood by more than \$23 million. In all, the city plans on spending \$35 million to move the plan (\$28 million of it TIF money), and Zidell's planning about the same. Things are going to get fancy.

But as we've reported, it's not all going to be reserved for the well-to-do. A highlight of the agreement is that it forces Zidell to sell a plot of land to the Portland Housing Bureau (PHB) that will be reserved specifically for housing people who make 60 percent of the median income or below. The PHB envisions roughly 200 affordable units in the still-undetermined space sometime after 2021 (a baseline price will be hammered out next year, before the property shoots further up in value).

Taken along with another affordable housing development being readied down the road (to the horror of some Riverplace residents), the South Waterfront may have something like 600 affordable housing units a decade from now, which will be 600 more than it had in 2010.

"Four hundred families who cannot afford to live in our city are going to have a chance to live in a very desirable neighborhood," Commissioner Nick Fish said this morning (he wasn't counting the 209 affordable units that already exist in South Waterfront). "Folks who don't have a lot should have a choice of where to raise their families."

The agreement, as I say, was the subject of much verbal backslapping. You got the feeling that a few people in the room might have liked to light up a stogie right there.

"We engaged in some deep soul searching," said Jay Zidell, President of Zidell Companies, about his family's vision for their acreage. "We concluded that our desire is to see the site become something quite special for our family and the city."

But there were concerns, too—most substantively from Debbie Aiona, chair of the League of Women Voters of Portland, which has been calling the city out for flubbing the South Waterfront project for years.

Aiona was worried about loose deadlines for constructing a park, and that the city might be putting too much faith in the Zidell family's ZRZ Realty Company, which she says is under no obligation to actually build the projects it's proposing.

"If development does not occur, TIF fails to materialize, and the city does not meet (its goals), what happens?" Aiona asked, urging the city council to inject some further safeguards into the agreement. Instead, council sped the thing up. Commissioner Nick Fish suggested commissioners' assent be passed as an "emergency," meaning it won't get a second reading in a week and goes into effect immediately. Everyone agreed.

"This development agreement is the make or break for the entire area," Commissioner Amanda Fritz said, noting South Waterfront is still fairly spare, 15 years after its development was set in motion.

Mayor Charlie Hales was unflinchingly optimistic, saying Portland's got an exceptionally rare chance to build a neighborhood out of nothing (a job he says the city's done better than similar projects in San

Francisco, New York, and Vancouver, BC). And the mayor knows what he'd like that neighborhood to look like a decade or two down the line.

"I look forward to the day when the South Waterfront as a neighborhood is as far along as the Pearl District is today," he said.

City Council Is Voting On An Updated Climate Action Plan Today And Advocacy Groups Are Keeping Tabs

*By Shelby R. King
June 24, 2015*

Portland City Council plans this afternoon to adopt an updated version of the Climate Action Plan, a guide to help the metro area reduce carbon emissions by 40 percent from 1990 levels by 2030 and 80 percent by 2050. As of 2013, the area's reduced emissions 14 percent from their 1990 levels, which is certainly a start considering how much our population and production has increased in the 25 intervening years.

The plan's authors are making a point during this update (the last update was in 2009) to stress the fact that Portland's work to be "green" has been a bit too white-centric, and have written in specific language showing Portland and Multnomah County's commitment to fighting the gentrification we've seen over the last couple decades. Here's an example of some of the language in the 2015 Climate Action Plan:

Portland's work to protect our climate has already delivered community benefits. However, we have not shared equitably in those economic and health benefits. In particular, many communities of color and low-income people have been left out ... The City and County are committed to leveling this playing field. We're working to: Increase access to transit, sidewalks, bike lanes and other transportation options, reduce pollution exposure, improve access to parks and other natural resources, (and) reduce burdens of housing and energy costs.

City Council will likely accept the draft report, and the Multnomah County Commissioners plan to do the same tomorrow.

The Climate Action Plan is a great thing, and it's also great that the action items within the plan focus on creating complete neighborhoods, improving transportation options, and increasing employment opportunities for communities of color and other historically underrepresented groups.

A coalition of local advocacy groups have come together to suggest a way that Portlanders can be both victorious in reducing carbon emissions while also protecting these groups.

Several local groups, including the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA), the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO), the Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC), OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon, and too many others to list, have spent months working on a plan that would keep the focus, going forward, on the fact that communities of color are particularly vulnerable to climate change and pacts like the CAP.

The coalition of community advocacy groups has nearly completed a plan outlining a vision for Portland and Multnomah County that will offer policy makers options for how to best move forward with implementing the goals of the CAP without further harming communities of color. The full report is not final yet, but, in the spirit of today's adoption by City Council of the CAP, I got permission to share some of what the group is working on:

Portland, Oregon is not the predominantly white, environmentally green city most Americans imagine it to be. In reality, Portland continues to rapidly grow in diversity: more than 50% of youth under age 18 are non-white. And our region's climate resilience infrastructure grows increasingly fractured and largely benefits wealthier, whiter neighborhoods. Gentrification worsens the situation as economic forces push communities of color and low income away from resilience infrastructure and out of city limits. The insecurity our communities face continually disrupts our senses of social cohesion and interdependence. We reject the notion that race or income should predetermine the fate of our children. We present a plan to ensure our families experience

multiplicative benefit of public policy actions intended to mitigate or adapt to climate change, making our communities more secure in years ahead.

Matt Morton (Squaxin Island), NAYA Executive Director, says the forthcoming report is part of a larger movement the groups hope will lead future decisions by local policy makers.

"Mainstream environmentalism often devalues the experience of low income people and people of color," Morton says. "We're leading a movement for climate resilience rooted in environmental justice, which honors the history, perspectives, and expressed desires of diverse people."

NAYA (and associates) aren't the only ones keeping tabs on what policy-makers are doing. There are groups protesting downtown as we speak, calling for a stronger action plan and better enforcement of policies. The Climate Action Coalition and PDX Bike Swarm folks put on one of four protest rides (and were nice enough to send photos, thanks guys and I'll hopefully post some later).

Here's what they had to say on their Facebook page about today's rally:

With dozens of businesses in Portland who profit off extreme energy, we must radically update our Climate Action Plan to reflect the reality of worsening climate catastrophe. Join us and the Tank of DOOM with your banners and best formal attire or business casual. We may have defeated Pembina Propane, but now we must stop Portland's fossil fuel economy in its tracks.

Check out their Facebook page and look for the #floodthesystem hashtag on Twitter for updates.

City Council's public hearing on the updated Climate Action Plan is scheduled for today at 2 pm. I'll be there listening in, so you can follow any live tweets [here](#).

Daily Journal of Commerce

Portland City Council tweaks seismic design rules

*By Beverly Corbell
June 23, 2015*

According to the Portland Bureau of Development Services, structural engineers and owners of older buildings in particular should take note of changes to the city's seismic design requirements, bureau spokesman Ross Caron said.

"New tenants might require upgrades, and these changes are something they should be aware of," Caron said. "They are mostly administrative and code clarifications around seismic evaluations and retrofits of existing structures."

The changes also add provisions for adding seismic design levels, he added.

Portland City Council last week approved an ordinance adopting the changes. They will take effect July 17.

Portland Business Journal

Uber in Portland: 1,500 drivers, top 5 destinations and a lot of free rides coming your way (Video)

*By Malia Spencer
June 25, 2015*

It's been about two months since San Francisco-based Uber relaunched in Portland and according to the ride-hailing company, 1,500 drivers have already provided 100,000 rides in the city.

Portland and Uber had a rocky start back in December when the company launched despite city rules forbidding its operation. After some negotiation, and a public process with the Transportation Innovation

Taskforce, the city opened a 120-day pilot program to test how transportation network companies like Uber fit into the overall transit system.

Now both Uber and rival Lyft are operating within the city.

In April, an Uber executive said the company expects to eventually have 10,000 drivers in the Portland metro.

As part of its continued launch in the city, Uber is partnering with Venture Portland, a nonprofit composed of several neighborhood business district groups, to offer free rides (up to \$20) to specific neighborhoods.

Up first is the Central Eastside, which will start June 26 and run through July 13. Other neighborhoods on the list include Division/Clinton, Montavilla and Foster. Businesses in the various districts will offer discounts for Uber riders.

In its first two months of operation in Portland, Uber says the No. 1 destination of riders is downtown, followed by the Buckman neighborhood, Northwest Portland, Old Town/ Chinatown and the Lloyd District.

Portland City Council will examine data from Uber, Lyft and traditional cab companies following the pilot program to determine ride-for-hire policies going forward.