

The Oregonian

Polling on Pembina? Charlie Hales' re-election campaign discloses poll

*By Brad Schmidt
June 30, 2015*

When Portland Mayor Charlie Hales abruptly yanked support last month for a controversial propane terminal, a shell-shocked port executive said the about-face was driven by Hales' 2016 re-election campaign.

Inside City Hall, word spread about public-opinion polling that helped cement the decision.

"We do not have any polling numbers," mayoral spokesman Dana Haynes told The Oregonian/OregonLive in an email May 7.

But there was, indeed, polling. Just not publicly funded polling.

Hales' re-election campaign this month reported spending \$19,750 for polling and surveys. The transaction date is listed as May 18 – after Hales' decision to pull support of the Pembina Pipeline Corp. project – but it isn't immediately clear when the polling was completed.

The poll was conducted by California-based Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates.

This marks Hales' second expenditure on polling in 2015. His campaign also spent \$5,000 in January on a poll by California-based Goodwin Simon Strategic Research.

Around the same time, Hales and Commissioner Steve Novick opted to put their controversial proposal for a street fee on hiatus, although they've said they did so at the behest of state politicians.

Regarding Pembina, Hales told The Oregonian on May 7 that he pulled his support for the propane project after receiving thousands of emails and phone calls from opponents.

"At some point," he said, "those of us in power have to listen to those who put us there."

Jay Clark, Hales' campaign fundraiser, declined to talk about the poll Tuesday and referred questions to Hales or strategist Mark Wiener. Neither immediately returned messages seeking comment.

Haynes on Tuesday said he doesn't know if Hales' polling included questions about Pembina. Haynes said he purposely doesn't ask about campaign issues in an attempt to avoid violating state campaign rules, as he's done in the past.

"This is one of those situations where I chose ignorance as a policy," he said.

City backs off bill sent to Portland photographer for selling pictures of iconic sign

*By Aimee Green
June 30, 2015*

The city on Tuesday said it will no longer demand a \$100 fee from a photographer who took pictures of the iconic "Portland Oregon" neon sign in Old Town after the photographer filed a lawsuit.

A city spokeswoman chalked it up to a "misunderstanding" that the city sent a letter to Jeff Kunkle of Portland demanding a minimum \$100 fee because he'd put up photos of the sign for sale on Etsy.com.

The city has owned the sign, at the west end of the Burnside Bridge, since 2010. That's when the city changed the sign's wording from "Made In Oregon" to "Portland Oregon" and soon after trademarked the sign with the state.

The city then enacted a fee ordinance that allowed officials to charge businesses \$100 to \$20,000 annually for using images of the sign in their movies, TV shows, advertisements or photographs.

Kunkle, owner of Vintage Roadside, had been selling photos of the sign when it read "Made In Oregon" and as it currently reads "Portland Oregon," but months ago removed the "Portland Oregon" sign photos

from his Etsy.com page. He'd heard that city officials were ordering photographers who were selling the photos on Esty.com and at Saturday Market to pay up.

Kunkle continued to sell "Made In Oregon" sign photos -- for \$25 to \$40 each -- because he believes that the city can't trademark a sign that it didn't own. He also believes that the city wrongfully received a trademark for the "Portland Oregon" sign because the city isn't using the sign to denote goods or services.

He filed a lawsuit asking a Multnomah County Circuit judge to strike down the city's fee ordinance. The Oregonian/OregonLive published a story about Kunkle's quest Monday.

On Tuesday, city spokeswoman Jen Clodius sent an email, reading:

"The City is taking no enforcement action against Vintage Roadside. The lawsuit appears to reflect a misunderstanding of the City's position since the City is not challenging Vintage Roadside's right to use the ("Made In Oregon") sign image in its art and previously offered it a free license to do so. The City's assumption is that once this misunderstanding is cleared up, the lawsuit will be dismissed."

Kunkle, reached by phone Tuesday, said he has not determined how to proceed. He said he will need to talk to his attorney first.

Read [Tuesday's story here](#).

The Portland Tribune

City offers carrot to developers

*By Steve Law
June 30, 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 last week.

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 or \$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, the money 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 roundtable 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, Calif. and Arlington County, Va.

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, support 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 tenants.

The housing and planning bureaus recommended targeting people earning 80 percent of the 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 is 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."

City free to invest urban renewal money at PSU

*By Steve Law
June 30, 2015*

In a big win for Portland State University, a judge tossed out a lawsuit challenging the use of urban renewal funds to develop PSU properties.

Oregon Tax Court Judge Henry Breithaupt ruled recently that Portland urban renewal funds for the PSU projects shouldn't count as property taxes going to education services, and thus aren't subject to the school funding cap in Oregon's Measure 5 property tax limitation.

Attorney Greg Howe, a supporter of Measure 5, had argued that subsidizing PSU projects with urban renewal money should be considered part of the pool of property taxes spent on education, and thus subject to the Measure 5 caps. The suit was brought by schools activist Theresa McGuire and 10 other citizens. If they prevailed, spending by the Portland Development Commission for PSU projects would have triggered reduced property taxes flowing to Oregon public schools, Portland Community College and Multnomah County Education Service District. That could have jeopardized city funding.

"This is great news for PSU and our students, for the south end of downtown, and for Portland," said Scott Gallagher, PSU communications director.

Mayor Charlie Hales' policy director for urban renewal, Jillian Detweiler, also hailed the decision.

"We have a comprehensive and, we think, a very strategic development agreement with PSU that furthers the city's goals for a lively university district, and that agreement has been upheld," Detweiler said.

In his 13-page ruling, Breithaupt ruled that PDC money spent on PSU properties would be for commercial spaces, not classrooms or other direct educational services. Therefore, any property taxes spent should be classified as "general government" under the Measure 5 caps.

Measure 5, the granddaddy of Oregon's property tax limitations passed in 1990, capped tax collections at \$5 per \$1,000 of assessed property value for schools, and \$10 per \$1,000 for general government, which includes the city and county. That shifted much of Oregon's school-funding burden from property taxpayers to the state general fund. Schools had to compete for money with human services, public safety, universities and other essential programs, leading to a downward spiral in Oregon school funding that persists today.

Though Howe lost his case in a summary judgment, his watchdog efforts regarding Measure 5 appeared to prompt a change in approach by the city.

The Portland City Council had approved the Education Urban Renewal Area, mostly covering PSU's campus and surrounding blocks, in 2012 at the urging of then-Mayor Sam Adams. Money was earmarked to redevelop Lincoln High School and subsidize PSU's business school and other academic buildings.

When Hales took office in 2013, he quickly set about recasting Portland's patchwork of urban renewal districts, and scrapped the fledgling Education Urban Renewal Area. Some PSU properties were added to the adjacent North Macadam Urban Renewal Area, but Hales deliberately shifted money from academic buildings into the university's commercial spaces and other investment properties. Much of the money will go to PSU properties along the new MAX line in the south part of downtown, where Hales anticipates increased commercial development.

McGuire said the plaintiffs may have lost in the courtroom, but their actions resulted in changing where PDC is spending tax dollars.

The group has decided not to mount an appeal, Howe said.

Hales names new chief of staff

*By Jim Redden
June 29, 2015*

Mayor Charlie Hales has promoted policy director Josh Alpert to be his new chief of staff.

Alpert replaces Gail Shibley, Hales' first chief of staff, who has accepted a position at the Oregon Youth Authority.

"Josh will make for a smooth transition," Hales said in a prepared statement. "He previously served as interim chief of staff when Gail was out of the office. He has a great understanding of how things work at City Hall, and of my priorities."

The promotion is effective June 30.

Alpert was hired in December 2012 for then-Mayor-elect Hales as his first policy adviser. He has served as special projects adviser, overseeing such issues as homelessness, transportation network companies and environmental issues.

Alpert is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and Lewis & Clark School of Law. Before moving to City Hall, he was the Northwest Conservation Strategies Director with The Trust for Public Land. There, he led successful ballot initiatives to protect lands in several western states including Oregon.

Alpert, a Portland resident, previously worked for Hales when he was a city commissioner.

Audit: City finances good, but problems persist

*By Jim Redden
June 29, 2015*

Portland's overall financial health is in good condition, but growing maintenance and pension needs could pose financial problems in the future.

Those are among the findings of an audit on the city's financial condition that was released Monday by the City Auditor's Office. Its findings are similar to previous audits on the city's financial condition in recent years.

"Portland's financial health is currently stable, but increasing liabilities, unmet infrastructure maintenance needs, and growing debt weaken the City's ability to provide existing levels of service on an ongoing basis," reads the audit.

The audit can be read at bit.ly/1djehIG.

The audit found several favorable things about the city's short-term financial condition. Among other things, its revenue base is diverse, city revenues and revenues per resident are increasing, and the city has favorable liquidity and a good credit rating.

But the audit also warned the city's long-term financial position is more problematic. Among other things, it found that city expenses exceeded incoming revenues in eight of the last 10 years. The audit also said the city's net position continues to decline due to unfunded liabilities and deferred maintenance.

The audit found that total property tax revenue grew 14 percent over the past 10 years, from \$397 million in 2005 to \$454 million in 2014. But the audit also found obligations and debt payments have increased. In 2005, 48 cents of every property tax dollar went to the General Fund, which the City Council has the most discretion spending. Today the amount is 44 cents. In contrast, payments to the Fire & Police Disability Fund increased from 25 to 26 cents, urban renewal debt increased from 19 to 26 cents. Local levies and other debt dropped from eight to four cents.

The audit also found the condition of the city's assets varied greatly by bureau. The Bureau of Environmental Services reported the highest percentage of its assets in good condition (70 percent), while the Portland Bureau of Transportation reported the lowest percent (33 percent).

PBOT also has the highest annual maintenance funding gap (\$181 million), while BES is the lowest (\$12 million). The total annual maintenance funding gap is \$304 million, the audit says.

In a June 5 response letter, the Office of Management and Finance suggests the audit makes the city's financial condition look worse than it actually is. The letter written by Chief Administrative Officer Fred Miller and Chief Financial Officer Ken Rust said the audit ignored some of the office's early comments.

"Our primary concern is that the report lead to a better understanding of relevant issues by the Council and the public. We note that you, too, want it to be 'read and understood by a wide audience.' Attention to our comments could help meet that objective," reads the letter.

Willamette Week

Purveyor of Vintage Images Sues Portland Over Use of "Portland Oregon" Sign

Suit asks judge to declare Portland's trademark invalid and unenforceable.

*By Beth Slovic
June 26, 2015*

Vintage Roadside, a Portland company that sells photos of the old "Made in Oregon" sign on Etsy, is suing the city of Portland, which recently sought a licensing payment from the company for use of the image.

The suit, filed in Multnomah County Circuit Court on Thursday, asks the court to declare the city's trademark of the sign, which changed to "Portland Oregon" in 2010, invalid and unenforceable.

Jeff Kunkle, owner of Vintage Roadside, tells WW that attorneys for the city have been going after artists for using images of the sign—in both its current form and its previous iteration—alleging trademark violation.

Kunkle argues, though, that the city's understanding of its trademark is overly broad and that it harms artists.

The city of Portland charges companies between \$100 and \$20,000 each time they seek to use the sign's imagery. The fees depend on the annual gross revenue of the companies. The money is meant to offset the cost of maintaining the sign—an estimated \$28,000 per year.

Portland took control of the sign in 2010 after a heated struggle with the University of Oregon, which wanted to change the sign to promote UO.

This isn't the first battle over the sign's trademark. The city of Portland squared off with Pabst Blue Ribbon over the beer company's use of the sign's imagery in advertisements for a musical festival. In that case, the city threatened to sue Pabst.

The Portland Mercury

Hall Monitor

Three Minutes to Midnight

*By Dirk VanderHart
July 1, 2015*

YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN the optimism in May 2014, when an assured City Commissioner Steve Novick unveiled an \$11.56 monthly "user fee" he planned to leverage to repair Portland's deficient streets.

Novick and Mayor Charlie Hales had arrived at that number after months of "town hall" hearings, and were confident they had the votes to push the new fee through Portland City Council.

They even had a cute way of packaging the fee. As Novick told reporters gathered in a sun-dappled park for the proposal's unveiling: "11:56 is four minutes to midnight. Our transportation system is also about four minutes to midnight."

It's actually alarming to go back and read all the ways those sunny park vibes were wrung out of the plan in the eight months that followed. The user fee became an income tax, then an income-based fee tied to gas consumption. Then there was the brief promise of an "advisory vote," in which voters would essentially recommend a fee structure to city council.

And finally, blessedly, we were at rest. In mid-January, Novick and Hales announced they'd be taking a break while state leaders—including a governor who would soon be punted from office—promised to use all their muscle to find more transportation money.

Now it's time to talk about the street fee again.

Governor Kate Brown announced Thursday, June 25, that slapdash efforts to raise the state's 30-cent gas tax —while keeping in place new fuel standards that will reduce Oregon's carbon emissions—have

failed. Gone with them are hopes for paltry millions in new state revenue to help fill what's been estimated as a nearly \$900 million need for Portland streets in the next decade.

So are Hales and Novick readying their latest proposal? Hardly.

In the face of Brown's announcement, staffers in both men's offices stuck to the same hashed-out script—thanking Brown and House Speaker Tina Kotek for the attempt, and insisting they'd still wait and see.

"The pavement is littered with people who assume issues are dead," Hales' spokesman Dana Haynes told the Mercury shortly after the announcement, from the governor of Oregon, that the issue was dead. "That's rarely true in Salem."

It's easy to understand the reticence to take up a fresh battle cry.

Both Hales and Novick are raising money like crazy in preparation for presumed challengers in next May's primary election. They've enjoyed the five months away from the constant screaming of the "street fee" war—the biggest muddle either politician has found himself in while in office, and a ready drum for opponents to beat (as one of Novick's challengers, Nick Caleb, has already indicated he might).

They've also given themselves breathing room, injecting an unheard-of \$20 million for roads into the budget that kicked in July 1. Novick and Hales will point to that money, no doubt, as a show of goodwill when the streets debate reignites.

As to the timing of that debate, it may be determined more by political considerations than practical ones.

But it's got to be three minutes to midnight by now, right?

Portland Business Journal

Proposed \$500M propane terminal in 'cooling off' period as Portland, developer weigh options

*By Wendy Culverwell
July 1, 2015*

A standoff continues in Portland's City Hall as the mayor refuses to advance a commission's recommendation it approve an environmental amendment for the Pembina Pipeline Corp.'s proposed propane terminal at the Port of Portland.

"It's a cooling of period," said Gary Conkling of CFM Strategic Communications, Pembina's Portland-based communications firm.

But it seems there's plenty happening behind the scenes.

The Oregonian reports the mayor's re-election campaign paid nearly \$20,000 for a poll by California-based Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates to measure public opinion of the project. The poll was apparently commissioned less than a week after May 12, when the mayor pulled his support for the project.

Hales' decision came after the Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission had recommended the city council approve an amendment and also that it levy a \$6.2 million first-of-its-kind climate charge on the project in recognition that propane is a fossil fuel.

The commission is in the mayor's portfolio. Under city protocol, it is up to him to advance the recommendation to the full City Council.

Commissioner Nick Fish asked the city's legal counsel for advice. As of Wednesday, his office said there has been no movement to bring the project forward.

Conkling said Pembina remains committed to the project and is considering its options. He declined to say if that could include a lawsuit to force the issue to the council.

"There's all kinds of options. I don't know that they've even settled on what the list of options is," he said.

Pembina, based in Calgary, wants to develop a \$500 million terminal to receive propane by rail. It would be transferred to tanks and then to oceangoing vessels for shipment to Asian customers. It is the largest private investment in Portland history.

Environmental groups rallied against the plan, challenging it on safety and climate grounds. Supporters counter that it would bring welcome jobs to North Portland and that propane is a cleaner-burning fuel than the coal and wood it would replace.

The environmental overlay in question is relatively minor. The current zoning allows Pembina to move propane from tanks to ships by rail or truck but not by pipe. The Port of Portland, Pembina's proposed landlord, wants approval to construct a relatively short pipe.

Check back for updates from the Port of Portland on what it is doing to move the project forward.

'Portland Oregon' sign photo fee leads to court battle

By Andy Giegerich

June 30, 2015

A Portland photographer wants the city to stop charging companies fees for various portrayals of the "Portland Oregon" sign image.

The Oregonian reports that David Kunkle asked a judge to squelch the ordinance that allows Portland to charge fees for using images of the sign, which sits on the Burnside Bridge's west end.

The paper said Kunkle had received a trademark infringement letter from the city attorney's office.

The city had set various rates for the sign's usage in early 2013. The rates differ depending on the user. Nonprofits can use it incidentally for free and use it for merchandizing for \$100.

Small businesses can use it incidentally or for merchandizing for \$100.

The former "Made in Oregon" neon sign was named a historic landmark in 1977 and is commonly used to depict the city's entryway.

The City of Portland's Office of Finance and Management had published a notice on its website titled "Sign for Hire" that invited anyone planning to use the sign for news stories, commercial filming or photography to contact the Bureau of Internal Business Services Administration Office.

GoLocal PDX

Battle Over Broadway Corridor Property Heating Up

By Melanie Sevcenko

July 1, 2015

The neighborhood surrounding Portland's Union Station, better known as the Broadway Corridor, is a long-underutilized swath of property at the west end of the Broadway Bridge.

Located on the edge of the Pearl District, it's considered prime real estate by developers and city officials who say it hasn't reached its full potential.

Yesterday, the Portland Development Commission (PDC) held its first in three Open Houses to discuss the "guiding principles" of the Broadway Corridor Framework Plan, which aims to redevelop the area as part of the Central City 2035 West Quadrant Plan.

It comes with no surprise that a central pillar in the project is Union Station, home to Amtrak's Portland hub. By integrating the station into its neighboring properties, the PDC hopes to re-position it as a gateway to Portland.

"Union Station currently feels isolated from the adjacent neighborhoods for a variety of reasons," said PDC's senior project manager Sarah Harpole, citing its position to the Broadway Bridge ramp and the massive United States Postal Service (USPS) facility that blocks it from the Pearl District.

Under a separate project, the PDC is also assessing a re-design of Union Station to bring it up to speed.

The timing is good, too, as Amtrak's popularity has risen in recent years. Portland ranked 16th in its 25 busiest stations nationwide, with total ridership at 652,455 according to a 2013 statistic.

The Framework Plan also intends to connect the “Green Loop” through the corridor and provide more open space in the area.

Negotiations back on the table

Like a strategic game of chess, the PDC has managed to attain several of the properties in the Broadway Corridor, including Union Station, which it acquired in 1987.

But the missing piece in the plan is the 13.4-acre USPS facility on NW Hoyt Street, which the PDC has been trying to acquire for years.

The post office site has been identified in the West Quadrant Plan as a key property for high-density employment and signature city attractions.

Since 2007, the PDC has been in negotiations with the USPS to acquire the building. In 2008 they attempted to release \$500,000 to the USPS for exclusive negotiations. The offer expired in 2013.

But since last April negotiations are back on the table, with the PDC again proposing to pay \$500,000 to re-open talks.

According to the PDC, the two parties agreed that a replacement facility must be considered before moving forward with negotiations.

“The USPS is currently completing preliminary designs for a new facility,” said Harpole.

The price tag on the site would be determined by the cost to relocate it, confirmed Harpole. Therefore, “the designs are not site-specific and are intended to inform the relocation costs, which in turn inform acquisition costs,” she said.

The River District Urban Renewal Area has allotted close to \$35 million to support the possible acquisition and redevelopment of the USPS site. But the actual cost will likely exceed that figure.

A 2007 appraisal of the property valued it at \$45.5 million, and the following year it rose to \$53 million.

But the USPS is remaining button-lipped on the matter.

Peter Hass, USPS corporate communications, released the following statement: “The Postal Service is in discussions with the Portland Development Commission, as we have been for years. At this point in time, we have no written agreement in place for anything regarding the facility at 715 NW Hoyt St. We have no further information to share at this time.”

Its corridor neighbor Greyhound is supportive of the Framework Plan – which includes a redevelopment of the bus company – if it means re-positioning them to better serve the community and its customers.

“I would hope that, regardless what the PDC does, there would still be at least some postal service to benefit the general area,” said Greyhound district manager Bradley Chatterton.

Portland’s most-sought property

Size isn’t everything, but in property development that’s less true.

At almost 14 acres, the USPS property is considered the city’s most desirable site. It offers flexibility from Portland’s street grid, considered small by most standards.

“We don’t have a lot of single, contiguous sites that large left in the central city,” said urban designer Mark Raggett of the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS), which is behind the Central City 2035 Plan.

The post office sits smack dab in the middle of a transportation hub, which includes Amtrak, MAX Light Rail, Greyhound, and improved pedestrian and bike paths.

Even more advantageous, the site could potentially bridge the gap between the Pearl District and Old Town Chinatown.

Suggestions for the site have included a wide range of uses, including a baseball field back in 2004, and more recently office headquarters, a campus development, or an educational institute.

Although residential units could be a part of the picture, Raggett said the city’s not leading with the housing market.

"This is a major opportunity to land a city and regional attraction, something we don't have. It's large enough to host just about whatever we would want," said Raggett.

But the slow-churning negotiations continue to keep the property at bay.

"We've taken a few cracks at this before, so it doesn't mean we're necessarily going to be able to move the post office this time either," Raggett continued.

If the PDC is not successful in acquiring the USPS site, Raggett said the city at least gets a better sense of the property's value and can plan around it.

"The benefit of the corridor plan is that are there several other sites in the immediate vicinity that we can think about contributing to a larger vision," he said, "that at one time will likely include the post office site, even if it doesn't happen in the near term."

Mayor Hales Names Josh Alpert New Chief Of Staff

*By Robby Davis
June 29, 2015*

Today Mayor Charlie Hales appointed his former policy director, Josh Alpert, as the new chief of staff. Alpert will officially begin his new position on July 20th.

Alpert will be replacing Gail Shibley, the mayor's first chief of staff, who recently accepted a position at the Oregon Youth Authority.

"Josh will make for a smooth transition," said Mayor Hales. "He previously served as interim chief of staff when Gail was out of the office. He has a great understanding of how things work at City Hall, and of my priorities."

Alpert was hired back in December of 2012 for the then-mayor-select, as his first policy advisor. He has also served a special projects advisor overseeing issues pertaining to homelessness, transportation network companies and environmental issues.

Alpert is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and Lewis & Clark School Of Law. Before he made the move to City Hall, he was the Northwest Conservation Strategies Director with The Trust For Public Land.

Previously, Alpert served for Commissioner Charlie Hales on the Portland City Council.