

## The Oregonian

### The Central Question: 5 things to know about Portland's vision for Central Eastside

*By Andrew Theen  
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Construction cranes, new apartments and trendy restaurants are already a fact of life in Portland's Central Eastside Industrial District.

On Wednesday afternoon, the Portland City Council could vote on a blueprint for what the district might look like in 2035.

Where an earlier plan for the West Quadrant plan — which included downtown, South Waterfront the Pearl District and Goose Hollow — drew wide opposition from neighborhood groups opposed to height limits in some areas of the district, the Southeast Quadrant proposal has mostly garnered support from interested parties.

Long the service entrance to the city, the Central Eastside — the area east of the Willamette River and bordered by Interstate 84, 12th Avenue and Powell Boulevard — is increasingly an attractive place to live and do business because of its access to downtown.

Change is already happening throughout the district. Two train stations will open in September, the first eastside locations on TriMet's Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail line.

**Read more:** Read The Oregonian's occasional series on the Central Eastside

The City Council decision is the product of nearly two years of meetings with local business owners and residents. City planners tried to juggle all the existing change, envision what may come in the future, and help protect the industrial flavor of the district.

Here's what you should know:

#### **Employment Opportunity Subarea**

As the city decides what to do with a district held as an industrial sanctuary since the 1980s, it's rethinking the definition of "industry."

The city already created rules for part of the district where it allows more types of companies — makers of software, for example, would be considered industry along with manufacturers and warehouseers.

A stakeholders group had already agreed to expand those rules to much of the district. The city planning commission took it a step further, extending the rules to all industrial zones in the Central Eastside. Now the City Council will decide how much zoning leeway to allow in the district.

#### **OMSI**

The Oregon Museum of Science & Industry is more than just a popular destination for families and school field trips, the 71-year-old institution owns close to 20 acres of land in the Central Eastside.

It's primetime property, including big parcels adjacent to a new light rail station and at the bridgehead to the Tilikum Crossing.

OMSI views the land bank as essential to its financial future, and leaders want to ensure development plans pencil out. Housing is a key piece of ensuring the economic viability of future projects.

But city planners disagreed with the nonprofit, and specifically forbid housing on OMSI's land in a draft plan.

Mayor Charlie Hales and company can thank the planning commission for tackling what was perhaps the most polarizing section of the 2035 plan. The commissioners disagreed with the planning bureau, and allowed OMSI to apply for housing projects through a conditional zoning application.

OMSI hired high-powered land use attorney Christie White, a well-known figure inside City Hall.

City Council could reverse course and agree with city planners, but that's unlikely.

## **The Waterfront**

The 214-page Southeast Quadrant plan could help breathe new life into long dormant plans along the east bank of the Willamette River.

The Vera Katz Eastbank Esplanade is the signature waterfront project along the eastside, but decades ago planners envisioned a grander place -- with soaring viewpoints over the river, more public access and an amphitheater for events that would rival the westside.

Dan Yates, owners of the Portland Spirit, says he wants to build a ferry network to connect downtown to the Clackamas County suburbs.

It's a dream planners acknowledge is decades old. "Water-based transportation to and within the Central City remains underdeveloped," the plan reads. "A handful of docks provide public access for small watercraft, kayaks, and other leisure boats, but these docks are aging and were not constructed for long-term use."

Hales, who was on the 1994 City Council that adopted the sweeping vision for the eastside riverfront, put \$300,000 in his budget to explore a beach underneath the Hawthorne Bridge.

Two weeks ago, Hales toured the river with stakeholders. It will be interesting to hear how much the City Council expresses support for providing beach access and other activities along the river.

## **Parking**

A conversation about the future of the Central Eastside almost always turns to parking.

New kinds of businesses in the district, like marketing and software development companies, usually employ more people per square foot, so competition for limited street parking is fierce. And it's made more so by downtown workers who dodge downtown parking rates by leaving their cars across the river.

City leaders are already discussing both immediate and long-term solutions.

On the former, it's currently illegal for businesses to lease spaces in their off-street parking lots to residents and other businesses. Closing this loophole would potentially address the issue of congested street parking.

On the latter, Portland could address the district's parking needs through the eventual development of portions of three state-owned blocks on Water Avenue. The Portland Development Commission has expressed interest in buying the roughly 2-3 acres from the Oregon Department of Transportation, where any new development will likely include a parking garage.

## Development

Whatever the City Council decides, its plan will be implemented against a backdrop of rapid development that's already surged in recent years. Warehouses and workshops have been adapted for office tenants, as well as commissary kitchens and retail storefronts.

And on the periphery of the district, as well as along Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Grand Avenue, developers are building apartments that will bring hundreds of new residents to the district in coming years.

The first new construction in the core of the industrial area is close to getting underway. Killian Pacific is planning a 60,000-square-foot "industrial office" at the site of the former Taylor Electric Supply Co., which was mostly destroyed in a fire eight years ago.

## Willamette Week

### Portland Dispensaries Will Need \$1,500 City Permits to Sell Recreational Weed This Fall

*By Aaron Mesh  
July 6, 2015*

State lawmakers are about to give medical marijuana dispensaries a huge economic windfall: the chance to sell weed to all adults starting Oct. 1.

But first, dispensary owners will have to give a taste to Portland City Hall.

A document produced by the city's Office of Neighborhood Involvement shows city officials will begin taking applications Sept. 1 for a permit that will be handed out to "existing medical marijuana dispensaries interested in selling recreational marijuana through Dec. 31, 2016."

Sources in City Hall say the permit will likely cost \$1,500. Victor Salinas, the city's marijuana policy program coordinator, tells WW officials haven't finalized the price—but confirms it's probably between \$1,000 and \$1,500.

WW reported in March that Portland planned to require a \$1,500 permit for recreational pot stores. That's 15 times what a bar or pub pays the city for a liquor license.

Office of Neighborhood Involvement officials have said the city would use permitting dollars to track "neighborhood public safety and livability concerns."

As state lawmakers hatched a plan to allow medical dispensaries to sell to all adults starting Oct. 1, Portland officials adjusted their own strategy.

The city began preparing the temporary permit even as the bill that allows early weed sales was still in the Oregon Legislature. (The bill now awaits the signature of Gov. Kate Brown.)

Dispensaries are likely to pay whatever the city asks. Business owners tell WW the medical marijuana market has become glutted, leaving dispensaries with an acute need for new customers—which they'll get under the state's plan.

"I know a lot of dispensary owners who are breathing a lot better," says Meghan Walstatter of Pure Green Gardens in the Hollywood neighborhood. "Honestly, I don't know how you survive without [early sales]."