

## The Oregonian

### Portland City Council OKs buying land for Right 2 Dream Too

*By Brad Schmidt  
July 15, 2015*

Portland's downtown homeless camp is one step closer to a new location in the Central Eastside despite opposition from neighborhood and business groups.

The Portland City Council on Wednesday authorized officials to spend up to \$254,044 to buy land identified as a likely new spot for the Right 2 Dream Too homeless camp.

But Mayor Charlie Hales emphasized repeatedly Wednesday that buying the land is not the same as approving it for the campsite.

Don Gardner, a board member for the Southeast Uplift neighborhood coalition and a former city transportation employee, said he found the city's distinction "disingenuous."

Three months ago, Commissioner Amanda Fritz announced that officials were attempting to buy the very same parcel from the Oregon Department of Transportation specifically for Right 2 Dream Too.

Hales acknowledged that's still "a very real possibility." But he tried to emphasize it's not a done deal.

"Lots of things could happen," Hales said -- suggesting that the land could instead be used for parking, or a park, or future development, "and again, we make no decision about the use of the site today."

Right 2 Dream Too began as an unsanctioned campsite in Old Town Chinatown in October 2011. Fritz announced a deal to move the camp to the Pearl District in 2013 but it fell apart after complaints from residents and influential developer Homer Williams, among others.

Fritz and Hales have now zeroed in on property at Southeast Third Avenue and Harrison Street.

Debbie Kitchin, president of the Central Eastside Industrial Council, complained Wednesday that officials haven't been open about the decision-making process. She opposed the purchase on grounds that officials purportedly don't know what they'll do with the land.

"We think it is premature and not responsible when you haven't determined the use for it," she said.

The City Council voted 4-0 to authorize the acquisition. Hales, after giving his thoughts, missed the vote so he could leave on a prearranged trip to the Vatican. Fritz said the City Council will hold a hearing on Right 2 Dream Too's potential move, probably this summer or in the fall.

City officials say the site has some contamination 9 feet below the surface that should be easily addressed, if necessary.

Ibrahim Mubarak, who co-founded Right 2 Dream Too, urged officials to ensure the land is safe in case his camp moves there.

### Portland approves deal to keep Mt. Tabor reservoirs filled

*By Brad Schmidt  
July 15, 2015*

Portland's historic Mt. Tabor reservoirs will look an awful lot like they do today – heck, maybe even better – after they're officially disconnected from the city's water system later this year.

The Portland City Council on Wednesday voted 4-1 to spend at least \$4 million for reservoir improvements while also pledging to keep water in the open-air reservoirs to maintain the picturesque panorama.

The deal followed lengthy negotiations between city staff and the Mt. Tabor Neighborhood Association over the fate of the reservoirs, slated to be disconnected from the city's drinking-water supply by year's end to comply with federal regulations.

"Neighborhood associations are influential," said Mayor Charlie Hales, adding that the group's efforts validated the impact residents have when they get involved.

A who's who of Mt. Tabor residents testified in support of the deal, including former Portland mayoral candidate Eileen Brady and Steven Wax, Oregon's former federal defender. Neighbors have a long history of defending or debating any changes to the reservoirs, perched on a leafy hillside that provides the area's namesake.

The neighborhood association and city staff found themselves in front of the City Council after appealing a decision by the city's Historic Landmarks Commission about conditions for a shutdown.

Told to seek a compromise, the two sides met eight times in the past two months, negotiating without the help of a mediator. After about 16 hours, they reached an agreement they could live with.

As part of the deal, the three open-air reservoirs -- which make up four water basins -- will be kept full for most of the year, with exceptions for cleaning, draining and refilling.

But the water is only for aesthetics, not drinking.

The City Council also pledged to spend at least \$4 million in the next four fiscal years for improvements identified in a 2009 historic-structures report. Officials will consider spending an additional \$1.5 million, too.

Commissioner Steve Novick voted against the plan, saying he didn't think the City Council should commit itself to new spending outside the annual budget process.

The City Council didn't address where any of that money would come from. But documents accompanying the decision say Water Bureau money will be requested, which would result in a rate increase. The documents also state that general fund money could be in play.

The Citizens' Utility Board of Oregon -- a ratepayer watchdog group -- urged the City Council to make it clear that the disconnected reservoirs will no longer be part of the city's water distribution system. The City Council considered making the change but then backed off when neighbors complained.

The distinction could prove important. A Multnomah County judge last year ruled, as part of a lawsuit, that city officials should only spend water or sewer money on efforts "reasonably related" to providing water and sewer services.

## **Uber pilot project a success so far: Editorial Agenda 2015**

*By The Oregonian Editorial Board  
July 15, 2015*

It was impossible to know just what sort of chaos would ensue when the Portland City Council decided to throw open the doors to competition and encourage a transportation free-for-all with ridesharing companies Uber and Lyft and the city's taxicab companies.

Would drivers for Uber and Lyft, which allow customers to hail their ride service through a smartphone app, steal away taxi companies' business? Would Uber once again serve as its own worst enemy and trigger customer backlash with some cataclysmic faux pas? Would there be a taxi-versus-Uber showdown at the airport?

So far, based on a status report presented to Portland City Council on Wednesday afternoon, the reality of a 120-day pilot program has not been chaotic at all. Information based on the first full month of service leads to this primary conclusion: People are getting rides to and from various destinations with the vast majority of people waiting less than 10 minutes for a pickup. In Portland, which for years restricted the number of allowable cabs to a miserly 460 and forced residents and visitors into long waits or long walks when public transit closes up shop, that is a dramatic statement. The city that works is, at least for now in this respect, living up to its motto.

Taxi companies, of course, aren't so happy with the arrangement, but they should devote their attention to helping shape the future. A city task force is now working on recommendations for a more permanent regulatory framework to govern taxis and the "transportation network companies," or TNCs as Uber and Lyft are called.

Here are a few findings worth highlighting as the task force develops its proposals for City Commissioner Steve Novick to consider in August.

**The city needs to recognize that TNCs are here to stay.** Uber and Lyft are fulfilling a need that has gone ignored for too long. Bryan Hockaday, a policy adviser to Novick, notes that for the month of May, taxis and the TNCs collectively provided 230,000 trips. That does not include taxi rides from hotels or hailed off the street. While there are no year-over-year data, transportation officials believe traffic easily exceeds the business cabs handled in May 2014. How? Unmet demand is finally being met.

**The pilot program has directed long overdue attention to the transportation needs of people with disabilities.** Nickole Cheron, the disability coordinator for the city who also uses a wheelchair, recalls a time several years ago when she needed to arrange for a taxi to get her to the Kennedy School in Northeast Portland for a work event. She reserved the taxi the previous night for an 8:30 a.m. pickup. It arrived at 9:15 a.m.

That appears to be shifting with Uber and Lyft, according to the report, although the TNCs handled less than a third of the calls for wheelchair accessible vehicles as traditional taxis. But customers calling Uber and Lyft had average wait times of 10 minutes, according to the status update, while nearly half of the taxi customers waited 30 minutes.

Previously, the city mandated that taxi companies' fleets include a minimum percentage of wheelchair-accessible vehicles. But companies often did not meet those minimums, and the city did little to address the problem. Other solutions similarly fell short. Now, disability advocates want the city to consider how well companies meet performance targets, such as waiting times, rather than just dictate a minimum number of vehicles.

**Help taxi companies adopt the same technology** or business practices that make transportation convenient for customers. Many already use the Curb app that allows people to hail cabs. But the taxi industry complains that they are not allowed to take credit card information in advance, unlike TNCs, which require it.

**Insurance remains a murky area that may need further attention.** Steve Entler of Radio Cab says one of his taxi drivers was injured in a crash with an Uber driver on his way to pick up a customer. But the driver's personal insurance carrier is challenging whether it should have to pay because the Uber driver, in the carrier's view, was on the clock doing business. Although the insurance market is evolving with new policies that address these potential conflicts, the city should work with the TNCs to backstop drivers in the event of a crash.

One month of data – and incomplete data at that - is not enough to predict with certainty how this industry will develop and what regulations will ensure fair and vigorous competition. And perhaps that is the biggest takeaway that the city should keep in mind as it structures the new framework: Periodic evaluations and adjustments are necessary to keep Portlanders moving and preventing the kind of years-long buildup of frustration that the city allowed to fester.

## **Open the discussion, Portland, to a fine parking option: Editorial Agenda 2015**

*By The Oregonian Editorial Board  
July 14, 2015*

Notice was short and sudden: an item on the Portland City Council's agenda asking that the city approve – without discussion – an action by the Bureau of Transportation to seek bids on a smartphone-based, on-street parking system worth more than \$6 million.

The bad news: In being listed in the "consent" portion of the agenda for Wednesday's meeting, city councilors are unlikely to discuss it. The consent agenda typically is used by individual commissioners, in this case Steve Novick, to win the cursory waive of approval of the full council. Yet anything so sweeping as a potential change in downtown public parking options must be freely and publicly discussed by council members. Councilors should remove the item from the "consent" realm, opening it to full discussion as a regular item of business on Wednesday.

But let the good news in this development not be lost: The request is a smart call by PBOT for clearance to seek proposals by parking contractors nationwide to make it possible for Portland drivers to pay for their downtown parking spaces from their smartphones – while sitting in their cars. This would obviate the trip to the kiosk meter to swipe a credit card and then return to the car to place a time-stamped receipt in the curbside window – an attractive option for any driver, particularly the disabled, those disinclined to

stand in the rain or anyone challenged by managing restless children. A nominal use fee – perhaps 35 cents per transaction – would be added to the parking charge and paid by the user. (By contrast, a limited smartphone-based system already operating in Washington Park and under the management of the Portland Parks & Recreation Department has the use fee absorbed by the department.)

Portland's pay-and-display kiosk system works well and efficiently. But it is currently blocked from expansion into Northwest Portland owing to the illegal shenanigans of former PBOT parking manager Ellis McCoy. Brad Schmidt of The Oregonian/OregonLive reported Tuesday that the Council earlier this year ordered up to another 1,000 meters for nearly \$12 million from Cale America but froze the order following the recent discovery that Cale had received emails detailing actions by McCoy intended to benefit Cale. While the pay-and-display approach stands separately from any potential expansion into the smartphone-based approach to fee-based public parking, it's only reasonable to assume that at some point down the line parking meters will go the way of the dodo bird. It's time Portland explore what the options are.

First things first. Can a new payment option for car-parkers help Portlanders and act as worthy complement to Portland's current pay-and-display on-street parking system? Yes – as long as it doesn't cost Portland any money in the long haul.

PBOT officials interviewed on Monday by the editorial board of The Oregonian/OregonLive made clear that the \$6.2 million "cost" of the system is an estimated value of pay-by-phone use to the contractor furnishing it over five years. There would be front-end costs borne by Portland, however, including the erection of signs that assign numbers to parking spaces so that the parking driver can identify his or her location. But the hourly parking charge as posted would be forwarded in full to Portland by its contractor. Overtime? Meter-readers would not search for window receipts in cars that don't have them but instead electronically scan license plates to verify payment. Perhaps the most attractive potential benefit of such a parking option, however, is that the driver could "feed the meter" by conducting another transaction remotely from his or her phone – as long as the cumulative parking time did not exceed the total allowable stay as posted now on kiosks.

Much is to be learned about this approach, already embraced in a handful of American cities, among them Chicago. But the learning, as well as an operational integration with the city that will protect it financially, will come only from frank open discussions that start with the full Council on Wednesday. When the invitation for proposals goes out, and it should, it must be clear to any would-be contractor that Portland is a prime growth franchise and will not bear unforeseen costs.

## **The Portland Tribune**

### **Taxi drivers give earful to City Council about impact of deregulation**

*By Steve Law  
July 15, 2015*

Out with the old taxi workers, in with the new.

That's the apparent impact of Portland's move to deregulate its taxi industry, at least according to much of the testimony delivered to the Portland City Council on Wednesday afternoon in a three-and-a-half-hour hearing.

A string of veteran taxi drivers said their income had been slashed 30 to 50 percent since late-April, when the city allowed Uber and Lyft and their low-cost, do-it-yourself taxi network into the once heavily regulated Portland taxi market for a four-month pilot project. An equal number of Uber and Lyft drivers who are new to the field testified that they've found lucrative and enjoyable new work when they had little, and are quite happy with the money they're making since turning their personal cars into taxis hailed via smartphones.

City Commissioner Steve Novick, who oversees transportation and is leading the charge to deregulate the taxi industry here, said the city's experiment seems to be paying off, at least for some.

"It seems to be working pretty well for consumers," Novick said at the onset of Wednesday's hearing. "I want to have more information about the impact on and welfare of drivers."

Then he got an earful on that subject — glowing reports from Uber and Lyft drivers and angry complaints from traditional taxi drivers.

Jeanette, a Radio Cab taxi driver who declined to give her last name, said she's considering applying for food stamps because of reduced income. To cut her living expenses, she's now living with three other adults in a one-bedroom home.

Heather Dunn, in contrast, said she was able to get off of food stamps after landing a driving job with Uber.

Raye Miles, president of Broadway Cab, said her company's ridership in June was down 30 percent from the prior year.

Brooke Steger, Uber's Northwest general manager, said her drivers in Portland are taking home close to \$20 an hour on average.

One of those drivers, David Holmquist, said he made \$885 last week and is averaging \$23 an hour the first two months of his new job.

Jan Weston, who's driving for both Uber and Lyft, said he's making around \$35 an hour.

But some taxi drivers said they are seeing some Uber and Lyft drivers violate the rules and try to pick off passengers at hotel stands, which are reserved for regular taxi companies under the pilot project.

Wynde Dyer, a Green Cab driver, urged the City Council to reinstate some sort of cap on the number of taxi drivers after the four-month pilot is done.

"I understand taxi drivers have taken a hit," Novick said at the close of the hearing. "I think a lesson that I get from this session is how hard things are for working people in this economy."

Even Weston, who's doing quite well driving for Uber and Lyft, expressed sympathy for longtime taxi drivers after hearing how they've been affected.

"My biggest concern is there's something going on here that is not working well for the cab drivers," Weston said. He called for the city to establish a "level playing field."

That could be a huge challenge for the city. Uber and Lyft drivers have relatively little cost to enter the market, and their use of smart phones appears far cheaper than traditional taxi dispatch systems. Regular taxi companies also are burdened by past city caps on the number of vehicles they could provide and limits on what they can charge customers. The cab companies also have plenty of fixed costs not borne by Uber and Lyft, including city requirements to paint and detail their cars, install a video camera in every vehicle, and fit 20 percent of their fleets with wheelchair lifts.

The pilot program will last another two months. Then the City Council will take up the issue in August of how to regulate — or not — the taxi industry into the future.

## **Mt. Tabor reservoirs: Council approves preservation plan**

*By Jim Redden  
July 15, 2015*

The City Council approved a plan to preserve the three open reservoirs in Mount Tabor if they are disconnected from the water distribution system Wednesday — but postponed the final decision to actually disconnect them until next month for technical reasons.

The plan was spelled out in a resolution calling for the reservoirs to be restored and preserved in their historic appearance, including maintaining water in them at traditional levels most days of the year. The resolution was negotiated by the Water Bureau and the Mt. Tabor Neighborhood Association, which represents the area that includes Mount Tabor and the reservoirs.

The resolution commits the council to spending \$4 million to restore the reservoirs over the next four fiscal years, and to consider spending an additional \$1.5 million to restore the historic lights at two of them.

"This is binding policy, the law of the land," Commissioner Nick Fish said of the spending requirements. Fish is in charge of the water bureau.

Mayor Charlie Hales and the other council members praised bureau officials and MTNA representatives for reaching agreement on the proposal intended to resolve years of public dispute over the future of the reservoirs. The council has agreed to disconnect them by the end of the year to comply with U.S.

Environmental Agency rules intended to prevent the spread of water-borne illnesses. Many neighbors and other city residents do not believe disconnecting the reservoirs is necessary.

During the discussion, Hales also affirmed the resolution binds the council to spending \$4 million on the reservoirs over the next four fiscal years and considering the other \$1.5 million appropriation. Commissioner Amanda Fritz noted the resolution does not specify whether the money should come from the water ratepayers, the discretionary general fund or other sources.

Commissioner Steve Novick was the lone vote against the resolution. He said he felt uncomfortable committing future funds outside the normal budget process.

The resolution places conditions on a land use permit the bureau needs to disconnect the reservoirs. After the resolution was approved, the council directed city staff to prepare legal findings to support approving the permit and set Aug. 19 as the next hearing on it.

The MTNA agreed not to challenge the permit before the state Land Use Board of Appeals if the council approved the resolution. Other critics who testified on the permit could do so, however, including the grassroots Friends of the Reservoirs, which is considering it.

## **Council buys property for homeless camp...or maybe not**

*By Jim Redden  
July 15, 2015*

The City Council agreed to buy surplus property in Southeast Portland from the Oregon Department of Transportation on Wednesday that has been discussed as the next location for an Old Town homeless camp.

The decision raised more questions than it answered, however.

Mayor Charlie Hales and Commissioner Amanda Fritz have repeatedly talked about the property at Southeast 2nd Avenue and Harrison Street as the next site for the Right 2 Dream Too homeless camp. They even gave reporters a tour of the site.

But at Wednesday's hearing, Hales said the purchase was part of a previously unannounced plan to buy all surplus ODOT property that comes up for sale, and that no decision had been made on its use.

"A separate hearing will be held if we decide to use it for Right 2 Dream 2," Hales said.

"I find today's deliberations a little disingenuous," testified Don Gardner, vice-chair of Southeast Uplift, the coalition office that represents 20 Southeast Portland neighborhoods, including the one where the site is located.

Gardner and several other witnesses said they had never before seen the council buy property without having a declared use for it. Debbie Kitchin, chair of the Central Eastside Industrial Council, said her board opposed the purchase because there was no plan for it or even announced process for creating one.

"This is very premature," said Kitchin, whose organization represents business owners in the inner southeast Portland industrial sanctuary.

No list of all surplus ODOT properties was available at the hearing. But Hales referred to a parcel where dirt is currently being stored, an apparent reference to a construction-related piece of property in inner Southeast Portland. That promoted some who testified to call for the creation of a formal public process to decide what to do with all of the properties before they are bought.

Several representatives of R2DToo — as the homeless camp is commonly called — testified in support of the purchase, even though they said their board has not yet decided whether to move there. Board member Trish Roberts said she was in favor of the city buying all the property ODOT considers surplus and puts up for sale.

After the vote, Fritz added to the confusion by saying she intends to meet with the R2DToo board, neighborhood residents and area business leaders before bringing a proposal to the council for it this fall.

An environmental study of the southeast Portland site is currently underway. So far it has detected contaminated soil nine feet below the surface that must be cleaned up.

## **PBOT exceeded 100 mile street maintenance [sic] goal**

*By Jim Redden*

*July 15, 2015*

The Portland Bureau of Transportation exceeded its goal of preserving 100 lane miles of streets in the fiscal year that ended on June 30 — by three miles.

The 103 miles equals the total preserved in the previous fiscal year, but more than doubles the lane miles preserved in the fiscal year before that.

Mayor Charlie Hales and Transportation Commissioner Steve Novick promised PBOT would preserve at least 100 lane miles of streets when they were seeking public support for their proposed street fee. Although further discussions about the fee have been put on hold while leaders of the Oregon Legislature decide whether to pursue a transportation funding package next year, Novick says maintaining the commitment is important.

“Basic maintenance is a smart investment because it saves money in the long run,” Novick said at a July 14 press conference in North Portland where street preservation techniques were demonstrated. “If we spend a little money now to keep roads in good condition, more costly road rebuilds can be prevented and delayed. The Mayor and I set the 100 miles of preservation goal, and I’m glad the transportation bureau is making it an annual tradition to surpass that goal, even with limited resources.”

Transportation Director Leah Treat said that PBOT has its sights set on a third year of preserving 100 miles of streets in fiscal year which started July 1.

“This is no longer an aspirational goal. This is business as usual for the City of Portland,” Treat said.

According to Treat, Portland Progress, the two-year workplan that PBOT adopted in February, makes it clear that street preservation is fundamental to its mission as the steward of the city’s transportation system.

“Our asset managers pick the right projects to preserve the system. And our maintenance crews work hard and always search for new techniques to get the job done,” Treat said.

Hales and Novick made street maintenance a high priority in next year’s city budget. It includes the largest General Fund investment in transportation in 30 years. The Council approved \$20 million more for basic transportation investments, for a total \$29 million from the city’s General Fund, the revenue source the council has the most discretion over.

A lane mile is one mile of street that is 12-feet wide. Crews preserved the 103 lane miles using a variety of street preservation techniques. For example, during the last fiscal year, PBOT completed a total of 56 lane miles of grinding and repaving the street surface — work that is mainly conducted on high-traffic streets.

Another technique is using a fog seal preventive sealant that costs at least \$8,500 a lane mile. According to PBOT, if that same street falls into poor condition, it could cost at least \$1 million to \$2 million to rebuild. Crews treated 44 lane miles with fog seal, a technique used mainly on low-traffic neighborhood streets.

In the current fiscal year, PBOT expects to apply more crack sealing to arterial streets, as a way to extend the life of those streets and avoid more costly rebuilds and repaving projects.

“We make the most of limited resources by doing the right work, at the right place, at the right time,” said Treat, explaining that for every \$15 million invested in preventive maintenance, PBOT estimates the city can avoid at least \$50 million a year in future costs.

## The Portland Mercury

### Surplus Stores

#### The City Doesn't Have a Ton of Money for Housing. But It's Got Property.

By Dirk VanderHart

July 15, 2015

THE GREAT RECESSION came, and Metro Auto Wholesale's customers went.

So the car dealership's empty lots—straddling SE 72nd on Foster—sat unused and bank-owned when, in 2011, the City of Portland saw an opportunity.

For \$1.4 million, the Portland Development Commission (PDC) purchased the three distinct parcels that had made up the old lot ("by far the worst dealership I've ever dealt with," reads a lengthy posthumous Yelp review of the business).

It was a solid deal. The PDC bought the land for less than the bank's initial asking price, and the property sits near transit, parks, and groceries.

The PDC even knew what it would do with the land: It convinced the Portland Housing Bureau to contribute nearly a third of the purchase price, according to a PDC resolution, "because it is anticipated that the property will be redeveloped as a mixed-use project with affordable housing as one component."

More than four years later, one of the three lots purchased in the deal has become the Portland Mercado, a celebrated new business hub aimed at Latino culture, offering food carts, groceries, a coffee shop, and more. The other two plots have failed to inspire anything more than overflow parking and weeds.

There's still no affordable housing—or definitive plans for any—though the PDC says that's still a goal.

Portland housing boosters say it needs to be. Criticism of Portland's lack of affordable housing, echoed by housing advocates for many years, is growing increasingly louder as the sizzling economy sends more and more construction cranes skyward. If there was ever a doubt, there isn't any longer: Affordable housing is the most pressing issue the city faces.

"The problem is so huge and visible that it can't be ignored anymore," says Nick Sauvie, executive director of ROSE Community Development, which develops and manages affordable housing in outer Southeast Portland. "To some degree, I feel like [nonprofit organizations] have been the voice crying in the wilderness."

As the enormity of Portland's housing challenges has dawned on the community at large, so has an expectation: that the city will use its resources to help solve the problem.

On July 1, Portland City Council considered a new policy, nearly two years in the making, that would ensure neighbors, interested citizens, and city bureaus would have ample warning when the city intended to offload a parcel of its surplus property.

The plan was largely hailed by city commissioners, but greeted with alarm by some housing advocates. It contained no suggestion that the city should make new cheap housing a priority on its unwanted land.

"I don't even think the question was asked," says John Miller, executive director of the Oregon Opportunity Network, who attended the hearing to speak out for affordable housing. "There was a breakdown along the line."

Miller showed up at the sparsely attended meeting with Cameron Herrington, an anti-displacement worker with the community group Living Cully. Both men were worried the city would neglect to prioritize its own land holdings as potential sites for cheap housing.

"We have an affordable housing crisis on our hands in Portland," Herrington said at the hearing. "We have ongoing displacement of communities of color, and the threat of mass displacement of other communities in coming years. To us, it's a no-brainer."

The city's fixed the holes in the policy. Housing Commissioner Dan Saltzman introduced amendments stipulating the city will vet all excess land as a potential site for affordable housing, and requiring the Portland Housing Bureau to formally weigh in on each unwanted parcel—even if it's not interested.

That's especially important at a time when federal investment in housing has waned, and the city doesn't have a great deal of money to snap up lots for future projects. (City council had \$49 million in surplus cash to play with in this year's budget, but much of that money ended up going to roads.)

"Everybody here has acknowledged that we can't solve the problem without more homes," Commissioner Nick Fish said at a recent city council hearing. "Are we doing enough to land bank, and are we doing enough to build?"

The city currently has more than 50 properties listed as "surplus," and doesn't even track the number of those that city bureaus consider "excess"—an earlier designation on the path to selling a piece of land. But while the extraneous fallow fields and dingy lots that belong to many bureaus will get a close look from the Portland Housing Bureau, the new policy doesn't apply to the PDC, the city appendage charged with stimulating growth in Portland's rundown neighborhoods.

The PDC's failure to put housing first resulted in an uproar in early 2014, when it announced it was selling—at a steeply reduced price—a plot of land at NE Alberta and MLK so developers could build a new Trader Joe's. There was immediate backlash from longtime neighbors, who'd watched for years as black Portlanders were priced out of the neighborhood.

In the end, Trader Joe's pulled out. The PDC now plans to include affordable housing on the site.

Despite the current rapid expansion of market-rate apartments and condos, the outlook for new affordable units—typically considered accessible to people earning between 60 and 80 percent, or less, of the area's median family income—is actually very modest. According to data obtained by the Mercury, the Portland Housing Bureau expects the completion of something like 527 new affordable units between now and the end of 2016. That's far less than the average of 663 a year built between 2000 and 2011—a period of time that contained the worst recession in decades.

Out in East Portland, near the former car lot, the PDC is just beginning to see the commercial interest it has worked to attract for years. The commission is preparing to sell three of its properties near the Lents Town Center area at SE Foster and 92nd, with two of those projects proposing dozens of affordable units.

With that momentum under way, and with the city pledging to consider housing on plots it doesn't want, it's time to begin fixing a problem that's been unsolved for too long.

"If we don't have the dollars, we have the land," Herrington, of Living Cully, told city commissioners July 1. "So let's hang onto it."

## In Other News

*By Mercury Staff  
July 15, 2015*

**IT LOOKS LIKE** \$15 an hour is about to become a reality for some of the city's worst-paid employees—despite the city's best efforts.

Portland officials are in the midst of hashing out an agreement with the union Laborers' Local 483 that will bestow increased wages and benefits on some of the temporary and seasonal workers Portland Parks and Recreation relies on to operate. Details of the agreement are still being worked out, but it's expected more than 80 formerly unrepresented workers will be brought under the union's contract with the city, with potentially more to come.

The city and Local 483 have been hashing out terms since May, when the union secured a binding opinion that the parks bureau needed to stop giving seasonal workers tasks that were supposed to be handled by union members. The union says the ruling should apply to as many as 300 workers, and that it will work to bring more people under its contract with the city.

The initial move is expected to cost the city more than \$2 million a year—money that wasn't specifically included in this year's budget. DIRK VANDERHART

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**DID THE** Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) score millions from this year's legislative session after all? State number crunchers seem to think so.

Oregon lawmakers couldn't agree on a gas tax increase that might have kicked new funding to Portland's troubled streets. But lawmakers did okay House Bill 2621, which gives Portland permission to set up speed cameras on its "high-crash corridors"—10 roads that account for more than half of the city's pedestrian deaths.

According to estimates produced by the state's Legislative Revenue Office, those 20 cameras could result in hundreds of thousands of new speeding tickets once the system's up and running, resulting in more than \$23 million in new revenue a year. Almost \$7 million of that money would come back to the city, and would have to be used to run the camera system and improve traffic safety. Officials expect Portland's system will cost less than \$1 million a year to run.

In other words, PBOT could be in for a windfall—not that its staffers buy the state's forecast. Gabe Graff, the bureau's operations and safety manager, thinks drivers will simply stop speeding once the cameras go up (which is the goal, of course).

"My sense is that most Portlanders will adjust their behavior," Graff says. DVH

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**UBER AND LYFT** wasted no time establishing dominance within Portland city limits.

The transportation network companies (TNCs) were granted formal permission to operate in the city in late April. By the end of May, they'd snatched up nearly half of a market formerly dominated by taxis, according to a report released by the Portland Bureau of Transportation on July 10.

The city's data shows that cab companies gave 130,000 rides in May (though that doesn't count people flagging down cabs on the street or at the airport). TNCs gave 100,000 rides, and offered shorter waits on average.

It gets worse for cabbies, though. The report suggests Uber and Lyft might well have overtaken the market at this point.

"TNC companies saw many more trips toward the end of the month, suggesting that they may have greater overall ridership in coming months," the report says. DVH

## Hall Monitor

### When a Plan Comes Together

*By Dirk VanderHart  
July 15, 2015*

THE BLUEPRINT for how to keep a city-sanctioned homeless camp out of your neighborhood was drawn up early last year.

That's when Pearl District developers pleaded and cajoled and, eventually, paid almost \$900,000 to convince city leaders not to plop the well-respected, self-managed homeless rest area Right 2 Dream Too under the Broadway Bridge.

The plan takes dedication and resources, but it's a cinch for most organized neighborhoods to pull off. Just take outspoken and respected business types, mix in the anxious misgivings of neighbors, and haggle over the meaning of Portland's restrictive zoning policies.

All the while—and this is important—insist you support Right 2 Dream Too and its honorable work "110 percent." You're just concerned a place in your neighborhood isn't the best fit. Offer to help find a place in another, more suitable part of the city.

Wait for city hall to reconsider its options.

Breathe easy when it does.

The strategy's got plenty of potential, but its true efficacy is about to be put to the test.

Ever since Mayor Charlie Hales and City Commissioner Amanda Fritz announced in late April they'd found a new home for R2DToo at SE 3rd and Harrison (just east of Tilikum Crossing), the Central Eastside's been quietly positioning itself to replicate the Pearl's tactics.

First, the business interests: The influential Central Eastside Industrial Council (CEIC) has said it was given too little notice about the proposed move, and has voiced concern that outdoor camping is already too prevalent in the neighborhood. The CEIC also has a detailed argument that allowing a homeless encampment in an industrial zone is a "contrived" and perverse use of city code.

Next, the neighbors: On July 6, a powerful coalition of Southeast and Northeast Portland neighborhood associations formally voted to ask the city to pump the brakes on the proposed move. That coalition, Southeast Uplift, says it's not R2DToo that has it worried; it's just that the time-honored neighborhood process that Portland's built on has been circumvented.

What's more, group chair Robert McCullough tells me the proposed site might be too polluted for human habitation. "Our agenda turns out not to be very NIMBY-like, interestingly enough," McCullough says.

Now, the test. On Wednesday, July 15, Portland City Council will consider whether to spend \$254,044 to buy the proposed encampment site from the Oregon Department of Transportation.

It's a necessary and meaningful step toward a move that needs to happen by October 2016, but Hales' tone has slackened a bit since April, when he told me he'd like to set up R2DToo-like sites around the city once the encampment moves across the river.

"The 3rd and Harrison site could be a good home for Right 2 Dream, which has proven to be a part of the solution for Portland's homeless population," Hales said in a statement last week. "But even if the site doesn't work for that purpose, it may still be a good site for the city to own."

For what other purpose? The mayor's office has no clue. But Hales is creating plenty of rhetorical space to change his position, should the blueprint drawn up by Pearl District developers last year prove architecturally sound.

## **The Portland Observer**

### **City Adopts Racial Equity Goals**

**Aim is to end disparities in services, employment**

*By Dante James  
July 14, 2015*

The Portland City Council has adopted three new racial equity goals along with six strategies aimed to achieve them. The action was taken last Wednesday in an attempt to end racial disparities within city government and to insure fairness in hiring and contracting.

The plan strengthens outreach, public engagement, and access to services for communities of color while also supporting and changing existing services using racial equity as a guiding principle.

Collaborating with communities and institutions of color to eliminate racial inequality in everything from housing to transportation to mental health services are other priorities adopted by the plan.

The Office of Equity and Human Rights, led by director Dante James, also saw its proposal approved for a new database to track demographics within each city bureau.

Every branch of government in the city will be required to present a five-year equity roadmap by the end of 2015, to include specific and measurable goals about diversity in hiring and how to achieve those goals.

"Achieving these goals will help provide benefits for everyone as they receive benefits from the city," James said.

Even commissioner Dan Saltzman, who was originally skeptical of the Office of Equity and Human Affairs back in 2011, commended James' work and got behind the new goals.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz urged the City Council to immediately start reviewing policy decisions through the guiding principles of racial equality. Mayor Charlie Hales released a statement on the plans.

"We are a very diverse city," Hales said. "And racial equity means understanding both that diversity today and the institutional racism and historical wrongs that underlie that diversity, even now. When we do our budget and we have our director of the Office of Equity and Human Rights at the table, questioning bureaus, that's normal. We should be thinking about how we spend money in terms of equity."