

## The Oregonian

### Multnomah County to pay Portland \$3.6 million for Sellwood Bridge work

*By Tony Hernandez*  
08/05/2015

Multnomah County's \$307.5 million Sellwood Bridge project isn't just about cars crossing the Willamette River.

County officials are planning to send millions of dollars to Portland's coffers for project-related work that impacts 15,000 water customers and hundreds others who use a trail near Willamette Moorage Park on the west side of the river north of the bridge.

Multnomah County plans to reimburse the city \$3.6 million for work that city employees did on the project. Multnomah County commissioners are scheduled Thursday to vote on an agreement authorizing the payment.

Mike Pullen, county spokesman, said the \$3.6 million does not increase the project's budget.

The agreement pays for non-bridge related work including a new section of a regional trail on the west side of the river and other connections for bikes and foot traffic, he said. Crews also relocated a 36-inch waterline and made improvements to the collection and treatment of storm water from Southeast Tacoma Street between Southeast Sixth Avenue and the bridge.

Portland Water Bureau staff reviewed plans to move a 36-inch waterline on the west side of the river to make room for new vehicular entryways onto the bridge. That line provides water for 15,000 customers in southwest Portland.

"The water bureau had to construct tie-ins to the relocated waterline and do large shutdowns and related operational changes as part of the relocation of the line," Pullen said.

Before the project started, a study predicted 7,760 bicyclists and 3,730 pedestrians would cross the bridge by 2035. About 440 bicyclists and 90 pedestrians currently cross the bridge on weekdays with increased numbers on the weekend.

About half of those folks are estimated to use trails on the west side of the river each day, Pullen said. He said when the bridge opens next year, the use of the trail should increase three to four times.

"The county estimates that number will increase to more than a thousand a day when the bridge opens and 3,000 to 5,000 a day 20 years after the project is completed."

## More tax breaks, more affordable housing in Portland?

*By Brad Schmidt*  
08/05/2015

Portland officials plan to triple to \$3 million the tax breaks available annually to developers who include affordable units in apartment projects.

Commissioner Dan Saltzman, in charge of the Portland Housing Bureau, said expanding tax exemptions may prompt construction of 200 affordable units a year in trendy neighborhoods where the real estate boom is kindling new apartments.

"We want to have people living in affordable units in every part of the city, not just east Portland or North Portland," Saltzman said Tuesday. "We want people to have access to the same amenities everyone has access to."

The City Council will vote Wednesday on revisions to Portland's tax-exemption program, in place since July 2012 under its current structure. But officials say tweaks are now necessary because some developers have been reluctant to use it.

The program is only available in select parts of Portland: the central city, key neighborhood centers, along busy transit corridors and within a quarter-mile radius of light-rail stops. Officials plan to expand it to within a half-mile of light-rail stations.

The program works by temporarily increasing Portland's stock of affordable housing in exchange for waiving property taxes.

In a given project, at least 20 percent of apartments must be considered affordable – with rent and utilities attainable to individuals or families who earn up to 60 percent of the regional median, or 80 percent in more expensive areas, meaning a one-bedroom would run \$827 to \$1,103 a month.

In exchange for maintaining cheap rents in select units for a decade, the developer receives a 10-year property tax exemption on all units, plus associated parking.

While Saltzman said the program has been "very popular," he stressed that it hasn't met its potential. The Housing Bureau began with a \$1 million annual cap and has awarded tax exemptions through a competitive process.

Since 2012, estimated annual exemptions have averaged about \$583,000, although officials approached the \$1 million mark once. New apartments are rising in the Pearl District, North Williams Avenue and Gateway, among other places.

The most notable project: a 21-story tower rising along east Burnside Street, which will include 57 affordable units and 227 market-rate units.

Still, city officials said some developers are not willing to spend months competing for an incentive they might not actually receive.

Portland's competitive process all but "killed" the attractiveness of the program, said John Miller, executive director for the Oregon Opportunity Network, a statewide association of affordable-housing providers.

"Anything that encourages the private sector to help with the problem, we fully support," said Miller, adding that he hopes officials can devise options to ensure affordability requirements extend beyond 10 years.

Increasing the annual amount of tax exemptions to \$3 million – money that otherwise would go to Portland, Multnomah County and local schools – while eliminating the competitive process should draw more developers willing to include affordable units, officials say.

Tax exemptions would be awarded on an ongoing, first-come, first-served basis.

"It's a bit of a chicken or an egg thing," said Andrea Matthiessen, a program manager for the Housing Bureau. "Do you start with changing the program and seeing where it leads the demand, or do you increase the cap simultaneously and hope the two work in tandem together?"

The Housing Bureau has also beefed up equity goals, requiring developers to consult with city employees about hiring minority contractors and ensuring leasing practices that improve diversity.

City officials also want to eliminate regulations that previously capped a developer's rate of return at 10 percent. The new plan would penalize a developer who earns a tax break but backs out of affordable requirement before 10 years.

"The more restrictive you make the requirements," Saltzman said, "the less likely they're going to take advantage of a program we want them to take advantage of."

## **Willamette Week**

### **Three Etsy Pieces**

City Hall wanted \$100 from these online artists to use the "Portland Oregon" sign. Here's what they said.

*By Betsy Slovic*  
08/05/2015

The city of Portland's shopping spree on Etsy was short-lived.

Three months ago, city attorneys were convinced they had the right to demand payments from artists who use the "Portland Oregon" sign in their work.

They were so certain, they trolled Etsy looking for crafts with the iconic sign's twinkling lights and leaping white stag. They then demanded that the crafters remove the items from Etsy or pay an annual license fee that starts at \$100.

Deputy city attorney Kalei Taylor even created a tool of public shaming—a "PDX sign violations" list on Etsy.

Outraged crafters shot back. "If you have nothing better to do with your time than to surf Etsy," wrote Teresa Chipperfield, a photographer, on May 14, "then perhaps the city of Portland has a few too many deputy city attorneys on their payroll."

Now, after one of the Etsy vendors, Jeff Kunkle, brought a June 25 lawsuit against the city, alleging the sign's trademark is invalid, Portland is rethinking its stance. Jen Clodius, a spokeswoman for the Portland Office of Management and Finance, says the city is re-evaluating its licensing policy after learning from

outside counsel it may not be able to enforce the sign's trademark against people who create artistic renderings of the sign.

Through a public records request, WW obtained copies of the city's correspondence with Etsy artists—painters, silk screeners and Christmas ornament makers. We then asked the artists what they made of the city's attempts to collect on their crafts.

James Dunbar, painter

Dunbar, co-owner of Dunbar's Fine Art & Design, calls himself a "painter of colorful memories." His collection includes one 16-by-20-inch landscape of the Portland skyline from the east bank of the Willamette River that includes a small rendering of the "Portland Oregon" sign. That's what caught city officials' eyes. Dunbar, who sells on Etsy and at Portland Saturday Market, says he was willing to pay a licensing fee, though he opposed the idea on principle. "Van Gogh and Monet," he says, "when they painted Paris, did they have to pay money?" He adds: "The people who own the sign should be proud because we basically promote Portland."

Samantha Barsky, maker of handmade note cards, gift tags and Christmas ornaments with city themes

Barsky, who sells tote bags, dish towels, cards and ornaments with an image of the Burnside Bridge and the "Portland Oregon" sign, also was willing to pay the fee. But after she approached the city with questions about how to comply, officials mysteriously stopped responding to her. She applauds Kunkle for pursuing a lawsuit but questioned the city's legal strategy. "They've obviously set a precedent," she says, "and it's not in their favor."

Amanda Siska, owner and artist at Bread and Badger

Siska also never heard back from the city after Portland officials asked her to seek a license for selling shot glasses with an image of the sign's white stag sandblasted on them. "I respect other people's claims of ownership for their creative work, but it does seem like a historic public landmark may not fit into a neat category in regards to copyright," she writes in an email to WW. "When I first created my version of the stag design for sandblasting, I asked my lawyer if it was a protected symbol. He thought that my art was different enough from the original 'Portland Oregon' sign, that it wasn't considered a problem anyway, so I wasn't expecting to ever need a license."

## **Uber Lobbyist Mark Wiener is Also City Officials' Campaign Consultant**

Mark Wiener advises Mayor Charlie Hales and the ride-sharing giant.

*By Beth Slovic  
08/05/2015*

The latest city of Portland lobbying reports contain an interesting disclosure: Mark Wiener, political consultant to Mayor Charlie Hales and Commissioners Dan Saltzman and Steve Novick, also has been acting as a paid lobbyist for Uber, the ride-hailing app that crashed into Portland last year after initially hitting road bumps at City Hall.

The arrangement suggests Wiener—who aided a deal between Hales and Uber in his dining room in December—has represented both buyer and seller as Uber has worked with the city to craft rules allowing ride-hailing companies to operate long-term in Portland.

Len Bergstein, a long-time City Hall lobbyist who now represents EcoCab, says the setup is unusual. "I think it's profoundly disturbing," he says, "that the public business was done in secret by someone who was getting paid by two adverse parties."

Wiener says he did nothing wrong, because he wasn't being simultaneously paid by the parties.

Mark Sturbois, legislative chairman with Communication Workers of America Local 7901, which represents drivers for Union Cab, points out that Hales, Saltzman and Novick were the three officials who voted to legalize Uber (and other ride-hailing services such as Lyft) in April.

"It doesn't pass the sniff test," he says.

A spokesman for the mayor, Dana Haynes, said he couldn't answer questions that concerned the mayoral campaign. He said he'd pass a request for comment to the mayor after business hours.

Hales, so far, has not responded.

## **The Daily Journal of Commerce**

### **OP-ED: \$192M for a city building doesn't add up**

*By Christian Steinbrecher*  
08/04/2015

The city of Portland recently announced a proposal to rebuild its administrative headquarters and has budgeted approximately \$192 million for the project. With approximately 1,300 employees in the building, that averages out to \$167,000 per employee if you include the \$25 million cost of the original building.

While there may be a need to make some changes to the existing building, the question as to where \$192 million should be directed should be open to a broad public discussion.

Put another way, there are recent reports that there are approximately 3,000 homeless people on the streets of Portland every night. Divide \$192 million among those 3,000, and you end up with an average of \$64,000 per person. There are probably numerous social service agencies in this city that would be more than happy to help the homeless for \$64,000 a head.

The current situation of the city's infrastructure and its lack of funding drive the conversation in myriad directions. How many miles of water or wastewater pipeline could be replaced for \$192 million? How many miles of sidewalks to support a "safe paths to school" program could be built? How many miles of unpaved roadway in Portland could be paved? How many parks could be built or improved?

If a developer like David Gold or Joe Weston were asked to provide new office space for the city, how much money would they spend per employee? Has Portland become so wealthy that it can afford to spend almost eight times more to remodel a building than what that structure cost when it originally was built just 30 years ago?

That the \$192 million will be spent is not the question. The purpose of government is to collect taxes and to provide for the common good the infrastructure and the social needs of our society. Edifices to posterity are for private companies like Nike, Williams and Dame, or TMT Development. The Portland City Council continually grapples with how to best deliver services and what projects to support. This decision will showcase the Council's priorities.

Those projects which most directly benefit all citizens throughout the city should receive the highest priority, projects such as ensuring that all streets have sidewalks, that our bicycle routes are a safe complete network, that school crossings allow our children to be able to walk safely to school, that the traffic signals all work, that signs can be read, that sewers don't overflow, that the Portland Streetcar runs, that the Willamette River is clean, and that our parks are maintained.

The city of Portland has become a desirable place to live. Our infrastructure is used by all city residents and deserves to be first class. But the economics of spending such a large amount of money on a building which has apparently become functionally obsolete is a difficult sell to Portlanders outside the narrow boundaries of the downtown core.

There are acute needs in the outer southeast and north Portland areas. The money which the city proposes to use for its administrative headquarters building should instead be spread throughout its boundaries, not focused on a small downtown lot.

## **The Portland Business Journal**

### **What should be built on downtown Portland's most intriguing site?**

*By Andy Giegerich*  
08/04/2015

The downtown U.S. Post Office site, near the Broadway Bridge and Union Station, was once pushed as a home for a Major League Baseball stadium.

While that proved to be a bit ambitious — Portland had sought to attract the relocating Montreal Expos in the early 2000s but lost out to Washington, D.C. — the site remained the object of planners' desire because of its locale and size.

And as the Post Office prepares to move its headquarters to a site near Portland International Airport, the city is examining five options for development in the area, which sits on the cusp of the Pearl District.

The Oregonian has a look at five options for what the Portland Development Commission is calling The Broadway Corridor.

The city had spent \$64 million to buy the Post Office site in 2010.

The options, according to the Oregonian, include a skyscraper as well as a concept called "Station" that would target growth in Portland's Makers community.