

## The Oregonian

### Working on the Labor Day weekend? A look back at Portland's top earners (database)

*By Andrew Theen*

*September 5, 2015*

Thousands of Oregonians will clock in for work over the Labor Day holiday, while most of the city of Portland's more than 6,600 employees will not.

Of course, the federal holiday means a well-earned day off for non-government workers, too.

Earlier this year, The Oregonian/OregonLive published a database of salaries for all city of Portland workers during fiscal 2014, which ended on June 30.

In case you missed it, here's what we said about that database at the time.

The Oregonian/OregonLive analyzed the city salary information and organized it according to the median salaries and overtime received by each city bureau. See those figures below.

Here are a few more takeaways from the database, plus thoughts from The Oregonian's analysis, as we gear up for Labor Day weekend.

- 1) **Lawyers earn the most money:** The Office of the City Attorney and its staff of 68 took home the highest median base salary (\$90,976) and the overall top median salary (\$95,279) of 30 offices and bureaus analyzed.
- 2) **Overtime:** No surprise here, the Fire and Police Bureaus led the way in the median overtime pay per city employee. The Fire Bureau's 729 employees' median overtime pay is \$11,341 per year. For police officers, the median overtime is \$3,024 a year.
- 3) **More overtime:** Question: Six out of the top 10 overtime earners in the city of Portland in fiscal 2014 came from which bureau? Obvious answer: Fire? Correct answer: the Bureau of Environmental Services. The top three overtime earners all came from the sewer bureau, with workers clocking anywhere from \$57,608 in overtime to \$72,966, nearly double the workers' base salary. Sewer officials said those employees provide support services to the Columbia Boulevard and Tryon Creek wastewater plants as well as 99 pump stations throughout the city. "It's cheaper to have employees do those jobs – overtime included – than to hire contractors to do the same work. We also get more reliable quality," bureau spokesman Linc Mann said in an email.

Check out this sorted version of the database that includes median figures for each bureau and City Council office.

Bureau	Base pay	OT	Premium	Payouts	All pay
City Attorney	\$90,976	\$141	\$96	\$8,483	\$95,280
City Auditor	\$64,471	\$122	\$148	\$6,319	\$64,593
City Budget Office	\$70,126	\$91	\$343	\$6,690	\$70,126
Commissioner Fish	\$45,411	\$75		\$671	\$45,411
Commissioner Fritz	\$55,742	\$215		\$362	\$55,742
Commissioner Novick	\$55,258				\$55,258
Commissioner Saltzman	\$62,427	\$57			\$62,427
Development Services	\$66,312	\$705	\$51	\$2,121	\$67,530
Emergency Communications	\$67,710	\$2,905	\$821	\$756	\$70,177
Emergency Management	\$69,524			\$956	\$69,524
Environmental Services	\$67,532	\$872	\$1,155	\$538	\$72,181
Equity & Human Rights Office	\$73,117	\$154		\$22,106	\$74,856
Fire & Police Disability & Retirement	\$66,017				\$66,017
Fire and Rescue	\$76,312	\$11,342	\$3,802	\$277	\$91,177
Government Relations	\$72,372			\$2,016	\$72,372

Bureau	Base pay	OT	Premium	Payouts	All pay
Housing	\$74,716	\$96		\$658	\$74,716
Mayor Hales	\$48,706	\$463	\$676	\$2,261	\$48,706
Neighborhood Involvement	\$46,900	\$442	\$7	\$337	\$46,900
OMF-Bureau of Revenue & Financial Services	\$65,059	\$618	\$385	\$56	\$65,526
OMF-Chief Administrative Officer	\$68,272	\$115	\$2	\$15,694	\$68,272
OMF-Financial Services	\$16,928			\$1,031	\$23,904
OMF-Human Resources	\$79,140	\$509		\$4,698	\$79,140
OMF-Purchases	\$60,314	\$693	\$1,511	\$279	\$62,524
OMF-Revenue	\$3,645	\$121	\$64	\$2,115	\$3,645
OMF-Technology Services	\$82,798	\$312	\$3,944	\$2,472	\$86,003
Parks	\$7,590	\$302	\$266	\$782	\$7,590
Planning and Sustainability	\$66,578	\$230	\$2	\$2,877	\$66,659
Police	\$76,832	\$3,026	\$4,489	\$1,913	\$85,470
Transportation	\$54,097	\$1,770	\$373	\$502	\$58,792
Water	\$59,649	\$1,231	\$300	\$823	\$63,745

## The Portland Tribune

# City may devote more urban renewal money to affordable housing

*By Steve Law*

*September 8, 2015*

Housing advocates' proposal to dedicate half the city's urban renewal funds to affordable housing — enough to house 830 more low-income families — is getting serious attention from city officials.

The Portland Development Commission will discuss the plan Wednesday and the City Council is slated to make a final decision in October.

Urban renewal funds can be used only in urban renewal areas — less than 15 percent of the city — but that's been the city's biggest pot of money available for affordable housing in recent years. The Oregon Legislature, bowing to pressure from the home building industry, bars Oregon cities from adopting affordable housing strategies used elsewhere, such as rent control, inclusionary zoning and fees on real estate sales.

In 2006, the Portland City Council agreed to "set aside" at least 30 percent of urban renewal funds for affordable housing. With Portland facing a growing affordable housing crisis, the Portland Housing Advisory Commission voted unanimously last month to urge the city to bump that up to 50 percent.

PDC Executive Director Patrick Quinton told the housing commission last week that would mean spending an additional \$82.7 million over the next decade on affordable housing, a 62 percent bump. Quinton said it might mean sidelining some of the PDC's other priorities for redevelopment, including projects supported by city councilors. However, Quinton and new Portland Housing Bureau Director Kurt Creager vowed to present a unified recommendation on the idea to the City Council. Quinton said he'll present potential ideas to the PDC this week about reallocating spending.

Historically, the PDC has been far more keen to spend money on redevelopment that boosts jobs and property tax collections than on affordable housing. But PDC Chairman Tom Kelly said affordable housing is a high priority for the urban renewal agency.

"I don't think we have a member of the commission who's not interested in this subject in a very deep way," Kelly told members of the Portland Housing Advisory Commission last week.

City Commissioner Dan Saltzman, who oversees the Portland Housing Bureau, called the 50 percent set-aside idea "very thought-provoking." Saltzman said he likes the idea "in the abstract," but it would detract from some other City Council priorities for economic development or public infrastructure.

Saltzman said in some of the city's urban renewal areas, boosting spending on affordable housing to 50 percent doesn't make sense. But it does make sense in the Interstate and Lents urban renewal areas, he said.

Interstate covers nearly 4,000 acres in North and Northeast Portland, the area hit hardest by gentrification and displacement of the African-American community the past two decades. Lents includes 2,800 acres in East Portland, an area exhibiting early signs of gentrification.

While Saltzman suggested housing advocates might not get the full amount they requested, he didn't see the overall dollar amount as being unrealistic.

"Eighty two million dollars doesn't seem to be an unreasonable amount to shift into the housing ledger," he said.

Tuesday's Portland Housing Advisory Commission meeting attracted an unusual standing-room-only crowd, mobilized by the Metropolitan Alliance for the Common Good, which includes leaders in the faith community and other groups.

"The heart of the city is changing. Let's make sure Portland's heart stays true," alliance member LaVeta Gilmore Jones testified at the meeting.

Jeff Riddle, a father of six who works as a housing case manager for a local nonprofit, testified that now his own family is facing a no-cause eviction.

Leah Greenwood, a former PDC housing staffer who helped write the 2006 housing set-aside policy, said she scoured PDC budgets and found \$55 million designated for contingencies five years from now.

"These contingency funds are unprogrammed money," Greenwood said, so that means the money can be redirected without gutting any of the agency's already-budgeted projects.

Greenwood also identified five PDC-held properties that could be made available for affordable housing developments. "I know of sites sitting vacant they've owned over eight years," she said.

Quinton noted the PDC's main source of funding, known as tax-increment financing, is slated to dry up in several years, as the city winds down activity in its existing urban renewal areas. He encouraged housing advocates to press for continued resources to the agency as a way to keep money flowing to affordable housing. That would mean creation of new urban renewal districts.

Quinton said it would be unwise to dedicate 50 percent of urban renewal funding to affordable housing in each of the city's urban renewal areas. The North Macadam Urban Renewal Area, which includes the Zidell development in the South Waterfront, needs private development to occur to generate the necessary tax-increment funding to pay for affordable housing and other projects, Quinton pointed out. The Central Eastside Urban Renewal Area has been the city's chief growth area for jobs, he said, and needs to retain that as a priority.

Urban renewal areas take property off the tax rolls, diverting incremental property taxes to the PDC. But that means local governments and schools forego some of their property taxes until urban renewal areas are discontinued. Mayor Charlie Hales recently reduced the amount of land tied up in urban renewal areas so that local governments can collect more property taxes.

## **City, county kick off 100-day effort to end veteran homelessness**

*By Jennifer Anderson*

*September 8, 2015*

Can Portland end veteran homelessness by the end of this year?

It's a lofty goal, but other cities have done it: namely New Orleans, Houston, Phoenix and Salt Lake City, according to Multnomah County leaders.

Tuesday at noon, city and county officials will gather together with local housing leaders to talk about their efforts, successes and challenges, and their final 100-day push to end veteran homelessness.

They'll meet at noon at the Erickson Fritz Apartments, a mixed-income building in Old Town, and discuss their initiatives to ensure there are no veterans sleeping on the streets, and that any veteran who becomes homeless has access to permanent housing.

The effort coincides with a national push started in 2009 by the White House to end veteran homelessness by the end of 2015.

Local leaders on Tuesday will honor groups that have been critical to the effort, including Home Forward, Income Property Management, BedMart, Princeton Property Management, Cascade Management and Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives.

The event precedes an event on Friday called Veteran Stand Down, a venue for veterans to connect to critical services such as housing, employment, medical, haircuts, clothing and more.

That event is set for 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Veterans Memorial Coliseum.

For more: <http://www.pdxstanddown.com>.

## **Wall Street moves in on affordable housing**

*By Lee Van Der, Investigate West*

*September 8, 2015*

When Portland's public housing advocates cooked up a plan to demolish and rebuild Columbia Villa — the low-income housing complex in North Portland that began as lodging for wartime shipbuilders — theirs was a vision of inclusion.

The idea was to foster true socio-economic diversity by creating a community where people of different financial means could live side by side. Front porches were turned to the street.

Nonprofit partners signed on. And by the time they were done, 622 crisp new rental apartments were set aside for seniors and low-income earners and nearly half of 226 houses were built by nonprofit groups that subsidized the cost. The rest were fair game for anybody.

Even Wall Street.

So it was that in 2014, the national real estate firm American Homes 4 Rent took hold of two homes in New Columbia, rolling them into a new and potentially risky financial instrument. The scenario illustrates how American Homes 4 Rent, a publicly traded company, has taken hold of more than 200 Portland-area homes, making Wall Street interests the landlord for working- and middle-class renters. It also illustrates how that trend is changing neighborhoods.

On a Tuesday in August in New Columbia, you would never know. No sign of NASDAQ traders. No investment analysts roaming the streets. Instead, a few police officers stand in McCoy Park, showing off their motorcycles to a group of curious kids. A handful of boys play soccer on the new turf field. Down the road, the only whiff of Wall Street is an innocuous lawn sign outside a home on North Fessenden Street, advertising the three-bedroom, two-and-a-half bath house for rent by American Homes 4 Rent. The rent was set at about a dollar per square foot, or \$1,925 a month.

It seems, save for the sign, a very ordinary house. Built by Legend Homes, it was sold to a private homeowner in 2006, who sold it to American Homes 4 Rent seven years later for \$235,000. Only afterward did the house become part of a burgeoning financial trend in real estate, acquiring a new owner — Wall Street stockholders — when it became one of 4,487 single-family homes the company used as collateral in a bid to raise \$513 million from investors via Goldman Sachs.

Since then, stockholders own this house, and American Homes 4 Rent returns steady payments to them on that \$513 million loan. It's the same story around the block — another American Homes 4 Rent house owned by Wall Street stockholders. There are six other houses in Multnomah County that were used to back that particular bond sale, three of them in Portland, the other three in Troutdale and Fairview.

It's not clear how many of the 204 houses American Homes 4 Rent holds around Portland are truly owned by Wall Street because the company runs its operations through more than 85 subsidiaries.

But for the publicly traded landlord, one thing is clear: Its investors expect to see a profit from renters. As American Homes 4 Rent continues to acquire homes, the company reported revenues nearly tripled between 2013 and 2014.

"It sounds like a situation that's just adding to the problem of affordability and market pressures around these kinds of agreements that force families out. It makes it all the much harder for us to serve people who really desperately need housing or affordable opportunities," said Diane Linn, executive director of the nonprofit real estate brokerage Proud Ground, which uses land trust dollars to make houses permanently affordable and expand homeownership opportunities to lower-income people in Portland.

Efforts to reach American Homes 4 Rent for comment were unsuccessful.

Locally, American Homes 4 Rent was among 26 companies and individual investors who purchased more than 10 homes each for cash in Multnomah County between 2006 to 2014, according to an InvestigateWest analysis. That analysis showed those cash buyers were

competing directly with traditionally financed homeowners for real estate, a phenomenon that contributed to rising costs.

Such Wall Street investment is normal in the multifamily market — investors own gobs of apartment buildings in major cities through rental-backed securities. But bond sales backed by rents on single-family homes are a new and unregulated financial tool. They were invented by The Blackstone Group, the global capital investment firm, after the company spied opportunity in the financial crisis and purchased tens of thousands of distressed homes, then sold the first such bonds in 2012.

Before then, the single-family rental business was run by private or individual investors in local markets — your typical Joe Landlord or rental company. Now, thanks to bond sales like the one backed by the homes in New Columbia and elsewhere, companies like American Homes 4 Rent have more than a foothold in the industry. As of June 30, American Homes 4 Rent owned 37,491 houses in 22 states. The company typically rents to families, targeting homes with three or more bedrooms constructed after 1990, according to public statements by corporate officials and filings with financial regulators at the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. There are other companies like it, all raising capital through bond sales.

American Homes 4 Rent made three such offerings just last year, and in financial filings makes clear it plans more. In those same filings, the company cautions it is “employing a new and untested business model with no proven track record.”

Next: A tenant’s wail

InvestigateWest is a newsroom covering the Pacific Northwest from offices in Seattle and Portland. For more information go to: [invw.org](http://invw.org)

## **Wheeler close to deciding whether to run for Portland mayor**

*By Jim Redden*

*September 4, 2015*

State Treasurer Ted Wheeler will announce whether he will run for Portland mayor shortly after Labor Day.

In response to a question about his political future, Wheeler had the following statement sent to the Portland Tribune on Friday:

"Portland is facing many challenges and Ted is talking to a leaders from across our city about how he can help make the city work again and work for everyone. He will announce his plans soon after Labor Day."

Mayor Charlie Hales has already announced he is running for reelection in 2016. He has raised over \$109,000 so far this year. Recent contributions include \$5,000 from Texas commercial real estate developer John Fainter.

Wheeler has not reported any major contributions this year and his campaign currently owes \$50,000 in outstanding loans. However, Wheeler is personally wealthy and could probably finance much of his own campaign.

Wheeler was elected Multnomah County Chair in 2006 before being appointed State Treasurer on March 11, 2010, to fill the unexpired term of Ben Westlund, who died in office. He was elected to the remainder of the term on Nov. 2, 2010, then elected to a full four-year term in 2012. He cannot run for the office again because of term limits in the Oregon Constitution.

## **Portland Business Journal**

### **Portland City Council looks at Pioneer Courthouse Square, parks updates**

*By Andy Giegerich*

*September 8, 2015*

Portland's City Council will hit the meeting room today with a relatively light agenda.

The highlights on Wednesday include the consideration of an \$875,150 contract with SRG Partnership Inc. "to provide planning, design, and construction administration services for renovations and improvements to Pioneer Courthouse Square."

Commissioners will also weigh in on whether to continue authorizing the Student Transit Pass Project that offers public transportation for Portland Public Schools high school students. The program would cost \$966,666.

On Wednesday at 2 p.m., the Council will pore through potential updates to the city's parks facilities as they relate to the Americans With Disabilities Act.