

The Oregonian

Portland falls far behind on housing goals in North, Northeast

By Andrew Theen

September 30, 2015

Portland is at least 800 units short of meeting affordable-housing goals for swaths of gentrifying North and Northeast Portland, where thousands of people of color have been displaced since 2000.

That finding is included in a new housing report to be reviewed Wednesday by the City Council.

"It's absolutely a concern," said Maxine Fitzpatrick, executive director of the nonprofit housing provider Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives.

In 2002, the city set a goal for North and Northeast of protecting 1,400 subsidized units and adding – along with the housing authority and local nonprofits – 2,000 more by 2020. The units would be targeted to those making no more than 60 percent of the area's median family income.

But according to the most recent estimates, Portland is roughly 850 units short of that goal, with five years to go. To hit it, housing providers would need to build units at a rate unseen in recent history.

The numbers offer a detailed look at the staggering shortfall in the district, an area city leaders pledged in 2000 to protect from displacement and gentrification.

Brendan Finn, Commissioner Dan Saltzman's chief of staff, said his boss is aware of the shortfall and trying to make a difference. "There are a bunch of things that we're pushing through in the next couple weeks that we're doing to create more units," he said. Saltzman oversees the Housing Bureau.

Fifteen years ago, city officials said urban renewal programs would "primarily benefit existing residents and businesses" with a special emphasis on "providing timely benefits to groups most at risk of displacement."

The Portland City Council in 2000 approved a new urban renewal district to help pay for light rail along Interstate Avenue and housing and other projects. Since then, Portland has added 80,000 residents.

But according to an analysis of U.S. Census results by The Oregonian/OregonLive, approximately 10,000 people of color left the central city from 2000 to 2010. The vast majority, some 8,400, left inner North and Northeast Portland.

Pauline Bradford, a longtime resident of the Eliot neighborhood who participated in setting the 2002 goal, has seen displacement all around her Northeast First Avenue home. "I don't see a lot of [affordable] housing going up on Williams and Vancouver," said Bradford, 87.

Joyce Harris, a longtime Northeast Portland resident and community engagement manager at Education Northwest, said she recalls housing was a top priority when the Interstate plan was approved. She said what's happened since seems intentional and is "just painful."

"I saw gentrification happen house by house, block by block," she said.

According to the State of Housing in Portland report by the city's Housing Bureau, the Interstate and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard/Alberta neighborhoods are the only areas in Portland that saw double-digit percentage declines in minority population from 2000 to 2013.

Today, the 3,990-acre urban renewal area that stretches from the Rose Quarter up the Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard corridor and west to include parts of St. Johns is "the focal point of the city's displacement issues," the report said.

Finn said Saltzman supports increasing the financial set-aside for affordable housing projects in the Interstate Corridor to 50 percent. The current benchmark is 30 percent.

The city is also dedicating an additional \$20 million in tax-increment funds in the Interstate Corridor to affordable housing, a political move that came after the Trader Joe's saga in 2014.

Portland and nonprofit partners still have five years to address the shortfall, but took from 2000 to 2011 to add 770 units.

Bradford, who owns her home, said she was hopeful in the early 2000s that more people of color would buy homes and stay in their apartments.

The displacement of minorities in inner-city America isn't new, Bradford added. "It's kind of the normal range of things, and we try to do things sometimes to improve it and change it, but that's a difficult task."

In 2000, Saltzman expressed concerns about gentrification forcing African Americans from their historic neighborhoods.

"I think it's important we not lose sight that this is in large part a very important part of town to the African American community," he said before approving the urban renewal area. "It's truly my hope as result of the development that will occur here the African American community still remains there 25 years down the road."

The Housing Bureau is leading the plan to spend an additional \$20 million over the next five years. The plan includes a preference policy aimed at giving those with historic connections to the neighborhood a first shot at affordable housing units and city homeownership programs.

Fitzpatrick said no matter how the shortage is sliced, the figure represents more than 800 families denied a chance live in the neighborhood. Median home prices in the area also nearly tripled since 2000.

But Fitzpatrick said that city's new housing program and others show city officials are more concerned about the neighborhood than they used to be.

"I think they're operating with a different sense of urgency and a better understanding of what the housing conditions are."

Gas tax proposal jump-starts Portland street discussion: Editorial Agenda 2015

*By The Oregonian Editorial Board
September 29, 2015*

After too many detours to count, Portland Mayor Charlie Hales appears to have lined up behind a street funding idea that has potential – a 10-cent-a-gallon gasoline tax. The proposal from Commissioner Steve Novick is not without flaws and would not ensure that the city exercise fiscal discipline, but it meets some important tests of fairness. It would be broad-based and, coming at a time when gasoline prices are down, would not hit consumers as hard as the misguided income tax that was under discussion this time a year ago.

Before discussing what the city should do next, here's a quick review of how we got to this point. For nearly three decades, the city of Portland made road maintenance a low priority, redirecting money intended for transportation to support an array of politically popular programs. Portland City Council spent much of 2014 contemplating various incarnations of a street fee, with pitched debates over how much tax businesses would have to pay relative to residents and how the residential tax burden would be distributed among various income groups. Hales and Novick, who oversees the Transportation Bureau, eventually decided to hold an advisory vote on options. Then, state leaders persuaded them that was a bad idea.

The search for a road-funding solution seems to have regained some urgency in recent weeks – in part because the need is still there and in part because a City Club report and Hales opponent for mayor, Ted Wheeler, have helped shine attention on the issue by backing a gas tax. However we arrived at this point, a serious discussion about a gas tax is a worthwhile endeavor. But that does not mean that the current proposal, projected to raise \$58 million over four years, will solve the problem or is fully enough developed to earn voters' support. It's simply a starting point. Here's what needs to happen for a gas tax to, at the least, become a key component of Portland's transportation-funding matrix.

First and foremost, city leaders must convince voters that road maintenance really is a priority. That means dedicating a portion of existing one-time and general-fund revenue to street improvement, rather than simply relying on the proposed new tax and any other new revenue streams that City Council by devise. It also means using street money first and foremost for maintenance. More than half, preferably at least 75 percent, of tax revenue should go toward repairing existing streets.

Few city responsibilities have been ignored as long as road maintenance, and the lack of attention comes at a cost. Preventive maintenance on roads in good to fair condition cost 10 times as much to maintenance of roads in very good condition. The cost continues to increase exponentially as the condition declines.

Still, there always will be other transportation needs, and some – such as sidewalks in East Portland – deserve attention soon. That presents the Council with another task. To earn support for a gas tax, the city will need to present a convincing plan for how to address non-

maintenance transportation problems. That plan should include funding mechanisms that would reach residents who don't drive gasoline-powered vehicles.

Key constituencies, including the City Club and the Portland Business Alliance, have sent an important message about a gas tax: They think it can be part of the solution, but they also want the city to commit a portion of its existing budget to maintenance and they want to know how other needs will be met. If the Council members are up to that challenge, they can put the road-funding debate back on the right track.

The Portland Tribune

Portland and Multnomah County Promise to Send \$30 Million to Housing Emergency

Mayor Charlie Hales and County Chair Deborah Kafoury want to increase shelter beds, build more affordable units.

*By Aaron Mesh
September 30, 2015*

Last week, Portland Mayor Charlie Hales called for a citywide housing emergency, a sudden declaration made in response to growing outcry over homelessness and rent hikes.

This morning, he put his money where his emergency is.

Hales and Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury announced they're dedicating \$30 million in public money over the next budget cycle to increasing shelter space, enforcing renter protections and building affordable housing.

The \$30 million allocation will in part fund Hales' pledge to create a shelter bed for every homeless woman and child in the city.

Street Roots newspaper, which called last week for \$20 million to be dedicated to housing and homelessness, first reported the details of the plan.

City Commissioner Dan Saltzman, who oversees housing, told assembled reporters that the city and county also plan to dedicate an additional \$60 million—mostly urban-renewal dollars—to building new affordable housing units.

That new construction is badly needed. As WW reported in this morning's edition, low vacancies have sent a wave of rent hikes eastward, disproportionately hitting the poorest neighborhoods in the city.

Saltzman also discussed the possibility of additional taxes on operators of Airbnb and other short-term rentals. As WW reported this spring, those rentals operate with little regulation, draining the city's housing stock.

Amanda Fritz Explains Her Decision to Overrule Mayor Charlie Hales on Nike

"I did the right thing," she says.

*By Beth Slovic
September 30, 2015*

It could still end badly for Portland City Commissioner Amanda Fritz. But for the moment, she's managed to pull off a pretty audacious feat.

On Monday, as *The Oregonian* reported, Fritz overruled Mayor Charlie Hales on a matter of great importance to one of Hales' potential campaign contributors, Nike.

At stake is the future of Southwest Portland's Duniway Park, where in the 1990s Nike renovated the track with recycled shoe soles. A sponsorship agreement the city inked in 1996 (when Hales was a city commissioner in charge of parks) gave Nike the right to plant its swoosh on a Duniway scoreboard. The deal expired in 2000. The swoosh stayed put anyway. And Nike continues to claim an affinity to the park.

Enter Under Armour.

The Baltimore-based rival is moving into the old YMCA building next door to Duniway Park soon and offered to donate millions to the city to upgrade Duniway and a second park in the Lents neighborhood.

This is where Nike got upset, as *WW* reported back in July. On Monday, *The Oregonian* updated the story.

Hales on Sept. 18 asked Fritz to back off her plan to accept Under Armour's nearly \$5.5 million donation under her authority as the commissioner in charge of parks, saying the city risked undermining its long-time relationship with Nike.

He wanted the matter to go to the full council for a vote. It's not clear what outcome he expected.

She refused.

WW talked with Fritz on Tuesday about her decision.

WW: When Portland announced a tentative agreement with Under Armour in July to upgrade Duniway and Lents parks, the memorandum of understanding contained a clause allowing Under Armour to display its logo in the parks. That's no longer the case. How did you get them to agree to give up branding rights?

Fritz: It wasn't difficult. Under Armour has been delightful to work with.

Is the swoosh going away, too?

Yes. I think the plan is to have a new scoreboard.

Nike was clearly peeved that Hales appeared to have forgotten Nike's contributions to Duniway Park in the 1990s. Why did Hales want you to put the Under Armour deal up for a City Council vote?

Nike says that they have a special affinity with Duniway. It was the first track that they did with recycled shoes and they've long considered it a special place. That was not something I was aware of, but obviously I am now.

Was that a persuasive argument?

Not for me, but some on the council wanted to consider other options.

What outcome did the mayor hope to achieve with a council vote?

I don't know, and it's not their decision. It's not even my decision. It's an administrative decision within parks. It would set a very dangerous precedent to have it before council. ... Allowing Under Armour to do the donation as they had been asking to all along was the right thing to do. By authorizing my director to sign it, I made sure that the right thing happened.

What was the mayor's response when you said no to his request?

He accepted my decision gracefully.

Were you afraid Hales would snatch the parks bureau from you?

That was always a possibility.

Why weren't you worried?

I did the right thing, in my opinion, and if there were consequences to that then there were consequences. But at least I would have gotten to do the right thing, in my opinion.

Your roots are in voter-owned elections. What role did that play in your decision?

Well, I certainly didn't have to worry about who would be giving me campaign donations, because I've never accepted corporate donations or PAC money or union money and I never well. I did feel grateful that I didn't have to worry about that.

The Portland Mercury

What's Portland's Housing Emergency Worth? \$30 Million for Now.

By Dirk VanderHart

September 30, 2015

Mayor Charlie Hales says Portland's in a housing emergency, but funding solutions to that crisis will mostly have to wait 'til July.

A week after Hales' abrupt announcement he'll ask his colleagues to formally declare a state of emergency, we've got a pledge of millions to fight the scourge. The mayor, Chair Deborah

Kafoury, commissioners Dan Saltzman and Nick Fish, and a bunch of other Portland housing honchos announced this morning \$30 million will be spent on new shelter space for hundreds of homeless and more than 1,000 units of affordable housing. That amounts to \$10 million from the county and \$20 million from the city.

It's a big mound of cash, and it's impressive so much has been agreed upon so soon, considering the mayor only cursorily informed his colleagues (and the county) he'd be making the emergency announcement last week. But it looks like the money's going to come on a timeline few would associate with an "emergency."

Though Hales talked this morning about problems we can solve "tonight" and "this week" and "this month," the vast majority of the \$30 million likely won't come into play until next year's budget kicks in. The city's fiscal year begins July 1.

"We wanna set a goal of cutting homelessness by half" Hales said. "That's a goal I think this coalition and this partnership can reach together."

You might imagine the details around the money are sketchy at this point. You'd be right.

What we know: The \$30 million will go to A Home for Everyone (HFE), a coalition formed last year to form up plans for solving homelessness in the city. Earlier this year, the group unveiled a series of actions plans it says could slash homelessness in half. It's also been working to get all the county's nearly 700 homeless veterans off the street, something officials say will be complete by Christmas.

Even with those plans and success, HFE says Oregon's homeless problem is growing at an alarming rate as the housing market heats up. Until recently, the group "didn't know... the depth of the crisis in our housing market and that it would disrupt so many people's lives so quickly," said Mark Jolin, the coalition's director. Jolin said this morning that he estimates "thousands of new people" are becoming homeless in the Portland area this year—even as local shelters are taking in more people than ever, and upwards of 3,500 homeless people found housing last year.

"Even being able to house more psopla that we have ever housied in this community, we know form the data... that if we don't take dramatic action wi will not be able to reduce the number of people suffering,

Here's what he says HFE can do with the \$30 million, along with Hales' proposal that the city waive zoning rules with a formal state of emergency:

- 650 additional units of shelter space.
- Help at least 1,000 people avoid losing their housing
- Create a "tenant protection team to make sure tenants rights are being enforced."
- More permanent housing—enough for "1,300 women, children, and people with disabilities."

"We have to be able to implement our strategies... right now," Jolin said. "That is what the state of emergency and this \$30 million will allow us to do."

The City Can't Fine Pot Dispensaries For Midnight Openings, After All

By Dirk VanderHart

September 29, 2015

It turns out the City of Portland can't legally rain on midnight pot parties after all.

Yesterday, we reported the city's Office of Neighborhood Involvement was considering levying fines on Portland dispensaries that opened at 12:01 am on Thursday, the very first minute people 21 and up can buy recreational pot. Marijuana Program Specialist Victor Salinas said at the time that dispensaries will be subject to hour limitations of 7 am to 9 pm. Portland City Council appears ready to enact that rule Wednesday.

"They would be in violation of city ordinance," Salinas said

Problem is, the language of the law ensures Portland won't have any say in how dispensaries operate for months. The licensing regulations the city's cooked up say: "Licensee must maintain hours of operation no earlier than 7 a.m. and no later than 9 p.m." But the city doesn't plan to begin accepting applications for licenses until December, meaning none of the 98 Portland dispensaries that plan to sell recreational weed Thursday will be "licensees."

The city acknowledged as much this morning. Theresa Marchetti, ONI's livability programs manager, said instead the city hopes dispensaries will voluntarily comply with the hour rules.

"I would caution the industry against engaging in any kind of behavior that could be viewed by the community as out of spirit with this process," Marchetti says.

Dispensary owners the Mercury spoke with today were universally confused about the city's plans for regulations, but many of them had decided to push back plans for a midnight opening—except one.

Brad Zusman, co-owner of Canna-Daddy's Wellness Center on SE Division, says he's been advertising a midnight opening for weeks now, and doesn't want to disappoint potential customers.

"We're gonna go through and open up at midnight for the first night," Zusman says. "There's not really much that the city's going to be able to do to enforce curfew on the first day."

Zusman says he'll happily comply with the city's proposed hours beginning on Friday.

"The problem is, everybody did all this advertising weeks in advance, then last week all the sudden the city came up with this new law," he says. "What's done is done."

In fact, the city's proposed guidelines have been around for more than a week. City council's already sent them back for revision twice, after outcry from the dispensary community.

Zusman says he'll attend tomorrow morning's city council meeting, and speak with commissioners about his plan.