

## The Portland Tribune

### Open reservoirs go offline

*By Jim Redden*

*December 24, 2015*

The three reservoirs in Mount Tabor are no longer supplying water to Portland customers.

One has been completely disconnected from the water distribution system. The other two are off line and will be disconnected by Dec. 31.

The disconnection work fulfills a promise by the City Council to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to stop supplying open reservoir water to customers by the end of the year. It is being done to comply with an EPA rule intended to prevent the spread of water-borne diseases that can enter open water supplies.

“All of the reservoirs will be disconnected by the end of the year,” Water Bureau Chief Engineer Teresa Elliott said during a recent tour of the reservoirs, formally known as reservoirs 1, 5 and 6.

The decision is controversial and was fought by activists and nearby residents for years. But the work has proceeded quietly, despite protests threatened over the summer. That is largely because the Water Bureau and the Mt. Tabor Neighborhood Association reached an agreement for the city to maintain the historic appearance of the reservoirs and restore them to their original conditions.

The council approved the agreement in July. Among other things, it commits the council to allocating at least \$4 million over the next four years to restore and maintain the three reservoirs.

According to Elliott, the bureau will ask the council for \$750,000 in next year’s budget to retain a historic preservation consultant to develop a plan for the restoration and maintenance work. Elliott says the request will not say whether the money should come from water ratepayers, the general fund, or some other source.

“That will be up to the council,” Elliott says.

As part of the transition from the open reservoirs in Mount Tabor and at Washington Park, the council has approved building a new underground storage tanks at Powell Butte. It went online in September 2014. A second new one is in the works at Washington Park. The open reservoir there must be disconnected by December 2020.

#### **Restoration, preservation**

The Water Bureau and Mt. Tabor Neighborhood Association won a 2015 Spirit of Portland Award for their work on the agreement that governs the future of the reservoirs in Mount Tabor.

Until the agreement was reached, it was unclear what would happen to the reservoirs after they were disconnected. Although they are historic landmarks, proposals had surfaced over the years to fill one or more of them in.

Now they will be restored and preserved in their historic appearances, which includes being filled with water most of the year. Although reservoirs 1 and 5 are now empty as part of the disconnection work, 6 is full again after being drained for many months.

“People are thrilled to see water back in Reservoir 6,” says Stephanie Stewart, a longtime association member who helped craft the agreement.

But that doesn’t mean the association totally trusts the bureau to complete the work to its satisfaction. The agreement calls for the council to fund preservation and maintenance work identified in a “Mount Tabor Reservoirs Historic Structures Report” completed in May 2009. It details numerous projects required at each reservoir, including work needed to restore the large stone gatehouses and other structures.

The cost estimate at the time was \$11.5 million — more than twice what the council has pledged. Because of that, the association has the work but does not yet know whether the bureau agrees with the decisions.

“We’re guardedly optimistic,” Stewart says.

An early test of the bureau’s commitment to abide by the association’s wishes is coming. Most of the disconnection work has been relatively discrete so far, with little disruption to the surrounding neighborhood. But the bureau will soon begin installing a large and lengthy conduit for water to bypass the reservoirs and connect to the distribution system below them.

The alignment calls for the conduit to be installed in a wide trench next to homes and the Mt. Tabor Community Garden plots at Southeast 64th Avenue and Lincoln Street. How that work goes could strain the relationship between the bureau and association.

## **Willamette Week**

### **Steve Novick Reverses Course on Transportation Funding for Downtown Marketing**

*By Beth Slovic  
December 23, 2015*

Last year, City Commissioner Steve Novick picked a fight over the Portland Bureau of Transportation's longtime funding of a downtown marketing campaign, eliminating a pet project of the Portland Business Alliance.

This year, Novick is holding hands and singing carols with the PBA.

In October, Novick authorized transferring \$500,000 from PBOT's contingency fund to the PBA for the campaign.

The downtown marketing effort, designed to draw shoppers to the central city, launched under former Mayor Tom Potter. But when Potter's successor raised downtown parking-meter rates in 2009 from \$1.25 to \$1.60 an hour, he struck a deal with PBA. Former Mayor Sam Adams promised a portion of the meter revenue would fund the initiative.

After Novick took over responsibility for the Transportation Bureau in 2013, he backed out of the deal. The approved budgets for 2014-15 didn't include any transportation money for downtown marketing, although the City Council later voted to fork over \$170,000 for the initiative. The council again eliminated the program from its approved budget for 2015-16.

The PBA has threatened to oppose new parking-meter rate increases unless the city funds the marketing initiative.

Now, the city is poised to increase rates from \$1.60 to \$2 an hour in January, and the PBA approves.

Chris Warner, Novick's chief of staff, says the city is giving the campaign "a lot less" than the nearly \$1 million a year the city previously allocated to the program.