

The Portland Tribune

City misses deadline for credit card security reporter

By Dan Tilkin/KOIN 6 News

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Portland officials have missed a deadline to prove that the city meets security standards required by Visa, Mastercard and the credit card industry.

People use their credit cards to feed parking meters, take care of utility bills and pay for things like the Arts Tax more than 9 million times every year. But the city recently missed its own deadline to prove it keeps credit card information secure from hackers or thieves.

“We’re waiting just like you are,” said Director of Audit Services Drummond Kahn.

Kahn and the city auditor’s office expected to see reports by an outside security auditor by now. Their findings will shed light on whether or not the city meets basic credit card security standards, known as PCI compliance. According to city documents, Portland officials set a Dec. 31 deadline to become PCI compliant, and “work must be completed three months before the deadline so auditors will have time to audit the system.”

That would have been last September. The city auditor released a report in November 2014 showing the city was failing in all three credit payment security standard categories.

Kahn says it’s now fair to ask where these reports are. “At the same time, the folks we’ve spoken to who are experts in the payment card industry are telling us it sometimes takes merchants time to comply,” he said. “But we know that for the last 6 years the city didn’t... we understand big steps have been taken, the question is what will that report show once it’s available?”

Mayor Charlie Hales says the city is “fine” when it comes to payment security.

Christopher Paidhrin was brought in nine months ago to guide Portland’s quest for PCI compliance. Since his arrival, the city transferred the system that processes credit cards to an outside company. That means the city no longer stores customers’ credit card information, making it vulnerable to hacking attempts.

Despite the missed deadline, Paidhrin insists the city is PCI compliant. He says the deadline was simply a technicality. “The bank is aware of it, the city leadership is aware of it and our city auditors are aware of it,” Paidhrin said. “We don’t have the paperwork that says ‘yes we are’ but we have the workflow that demonstrates we’ve done all the work.”

Where does Portland stand on payment security now? Paidhrin said it is “in an excellent position.”

The city now says the outside auditor’s report won’t be available until March or April. It will then be given to the city auditor to determine whether or not it is safe to use credit cards when doing business with the city.

If Portland passes, it will join 97 percent of similar merchants which already comply with PCI standards.

City adopts River View management plan; mountain bike access still on table

By Jennifer Anderson

January 15, 2016

Mountain biking still isn't allowed at River View Natural Area, but could be in the future.

That much was made clear Thursday as the Portland City Council voted 4-0 to adopt of a management plan for the site after nearly three hours of testimony.

River View is a 146-acre undeveloped, forested parcel in Southwest Portland that's been a flashpoint for much controversy in past year.

The city last March issued a temporary ban on mountain bike access to River View — an action supporters protested, the Northwest Trail Alliance fought in court, and that's otherwise caused a wave of distrust of City Hall by many in the cycling community.

Council leaders used Wednesday's session to make amends, repeatedly telling the mountain bike advocates in attendance that they are a legitimate recreational user group.

"I'm really sorry ... that there's some mistrust in this room," Mayor Charlie Hales told the crowd.

"I'm sorry there's been either a real or perceived exclusion of legitimate interest from a Portland process when we make policy. Because we always try to have all the legitimate interests at the table. ... That perception that was felt by some of you in this process, I hope you'll forgive and give some credit and good hop to these people" (pointing to his colleagues).

The nonprofit Northwest Trail Alliance had rallied people to attend the session and ask to delay the plan adoption until after the citywide Off-Road Cycling Master Plan process wraps up, this fall.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz launched the master plan process this summer to look at mountain biking at a system-wide level.

Advocates worried that approval of the management plan for River View — which states that mountain biking is prohibited for the time being — would shut the door on mountain bike access there before the master plan was developed.

But Commissioner Steve Novick introduced an amendment, which the council adopted, that said that would not be the case.

It said that the outcome of the master plan process would supercede the management plan's temporary prohibition.

Novick and Hales said they were at first hesitant to approve the management plan, but felt better after adding the amendment.

The River View management plan sets a vision for the site, which is to protect its unique ecology and wildlife.

The new plan includes a no-dogs policy, seasonal trail closures and no recreational users within the 300-foot interior.

Construction at the site to implement the plan is estimated at \$5 million, and includes soft-surface trail construction, trail decommission, portable toilets, overlooks, signage, kiosks, trail bridges, parking, and an optional pedestrian crossing at an additional cost of \$3.5 million at Oregon Highway 43.

"We're protecting something in nature that is irreplaceable," Commissioner Nick Fish said, calling the 2011 acquisition of the site one of his biggest accomplishments as parks commissioner.

Hales urged Parks Director Mike Abatte to keep a broad view of the city's recreational needs.

"The parks system ought to have big shoulders," Hales said. "Every recreational use should be accommodated.

Abatte agreed that it's the parks bureau's responsibility to do so.

Fish, however, said from the Bureau of Environmental Services perspective, he uses a different "filter" when considering the numerous requests by various groups to use the city's natural areas for uses like camping or events.

If mountain biking comes back to the table, he said, "we are going to err in our analysis on the side of protecting natural resources."

In trying to balance preservation with recreation, Fish said, "the challenge is in harmonizing these values. I do not see them as inconsistent. At River View ... it's a unique challenge of how we can harmonize it."

Hales also spoke about striking the right balance, but his comments showed that he's been in touch with the cycling community for much of the past year.

"In a city with 200 parks, one of them 5,000 acres, there should be ample places to ride a bike without burning a quart of gasoline to do that," Hales said. "We're going to get there. ... We need to accommodate this legitimate recreational use, and River View may be one place to do that."

For more: portlandoregon.gov/parks/62001.

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River View Natural Area's ecological significance

- The site includes seven streams, 130 plant species, 31 mammal species and 74 avian species that have been documented.
- It comprises about half of the forest canopy in the 350-acre River View Sub watershed of the Lower Willamette Watershed.
- Under private ownership until 2011, the site was logged in the 1800s and 1950s and fell to neglect until the city, Metro and Trust for Public Land acquired it in 2011. It's one of the largest single natural area acquisitions in the city's history.

The Portland Mercury

Should Drivers Who Use Studded Tires Be Taxed? Commissioner Novick Thinks So.

By Dirk VanderHart

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ON JANUARY 6, Commissioner Steve Novick had just heard a glowing recommendation for one new source of money for Portland streets when he let fly with another idea.

The 10-cent gas tax Novick wants to put before voters in May, cheered on by the City Club of Portland at the meeting, would be a small step toward solving Portland's ever-growing road maintenance backlog—reportedly \$64 million over four years, though estimates suggest the city should spend more than seven times that much.

So Novick unveiled another concept he's been shopping around recently: a new sales tax on the metal-studded tires some drivers slap on at the first sign of frost.

"Studded tires impose inordinate wear and tear on the roads," Novick said at the hearing, noting he'd spoken to the heads of Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas Counties about the idea. "All of them expressed interest in that."

That's maybe an overstatement. Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury, for instance, vaguely remembered Novick mentioning something about the tax, spokesperson Dave Austin told me, but "recalls no detailed discussion."

But Novick's convinced it can work. His idea, still short on specifics, hinges on all three counties in the Portland region passing the tax at once, since he says "people would cross county lines" to buy cheaper tires.

Whether or not it comes to pass, the idea makes sense. Damage from studded tires costs Oregonians roughly \$8.5 million a year according to the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)—a figure that doesn't account for damage to city roads. People should be willing to pay for the privilege of issuing that punishment to our streets.