

## The Oregonian

# Portland City Council must learn to say 'no' to noncompetitive grants: Editorial Agenda 2016

*By The Oregonian Editorial Board  
January 26, 2016*

In an ideal world – one where government leaders exercise financial discipline, for instance – Portland City Commissioner Nick Fish would withdraw his request to give Portland State University a nearly \$52,000 grant to help make Portland more "age-friendly." After all, city commissioners had their knuckles rapped just last week by a city audit that detailed the Council's cavalier culture of giving away millions in non-competitive grants to organizations for purposes that may or may not coincide with city priorities. The proposal Fish is bringing to the Council on Wednesday has some of the same red flags that auditors criticized in their review.

That ideal world, however, is not our Portland. So city commissioners should choose the next best option and reject, or at the very least postpone, a vote on the PSU proposal for failing to meet the most basic test of city spending: Is this a priority for the public to fund?

This is no indictment of PSU or of the goals that the grant would seek to achieve. The funds, if approved, would help pay for staffing an age-friendly housing committee that would identify ways to improve housing accessibility for aging residents. Funds would also go toward developing a PSU course on age-friendly housing. And the proposed grant amount of \$51,766 hardly qualifies as extravagant in the grand scheme of the city's budget.

But those add up – City Council has approved from \$9 million to as much as \$17 million worth of noncompetitive grants in each of the past five years to arts nonprofits, social service groups and education organizations who knew the wisdom of appealing directly to the Council. Not only is that unfair to other groups, but it's a backwards, inefficient, inconsistent and nontransparent way of appropriating taxpayer dollars, as the audit lays out. Not to mention, the grants may have little to do with the core responsibilities that the city should be focused on, such as, for example, street maintenance, homelessness and affordable housing.

"Council has the discretion to determine budget priorities, and there may be projects that don't fit within the City's normal budget process but are worthy of Council support," the audit states. "But these grants should be exceptions, not standard practice."

The City Council, the audit notes, should define its goals and objectives for its grants program and select organizations after conducting a competitive process – not the other way around, where groups directly appeal to a commissioner, who then puts the issue before the rest of the Council to consider.

Consider, for instance, that the city council gave \$200,000 to All Hands Raised, the foundation for Portland Public Schools, in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015. Or the \$250,000 that the Council gave the Regional Arts and Culture Council that same year specifically for its project grants program. Or the \$150,000 the Council approved in December for the Oregon Rail

Heritage Foundation to operate its railway museum, just a few months after declaring an emergency ... in housing. Are those better uses of city funds than, for instance, rent assistance to low-income tenants, traffic signals in East Portland or expanding services for homeless families?

This is not to say that any of the groups receiving grants aren't worthy of support. But with no real process to issue such grants, and limited oversight afterwards, auditors said the city isn't much different than a homeowner who donates to whoever happens to ring the doorbell asking for help funding a band trip, Girl Scout troop or other such group.

Such random direct funding of outside groups also becomes questionable considering that Mayor Charlie Hales has asked city bureaus to prepare budgets with 5 percent cuts in order to devote city resources to address homelessness and affordable housing, notes City Auditor Mary Hull Caballero.

It also goes to credibility. If the city wants to ask taxpayers to back a gas tax, then it needs to show how disciplined it is with the money already entrusted to it, she noted. Noncompetitive grants to hand-picked organizations with little monitoring don't engender trust.

Back to the PSU grant. Sonia Schmanski, Fish's chief of staff, contends that the grant is different than the type mentioned in the city audit. She wrote in an email that it "traces directly back to a transparent policy decision the Council made when it adopted the Age-Friendly Portland plan and engaged Portland State as our partner in its implementation."

But the city never appropriated funds for that, leaving it in the hands of PSU's Institute on Aging, which, unlike any of the city's bureaus, is more qualified to spearhead such initiatives. Not surprisingly, none of the bureaus have been tasked with managing the proposed grant. If it passes, responsibility for oversight will stay with Fish's office.

## **The Portland Tribune**

### **Housing affordability [sic] big issue at first growth plan session**

*By Jim Redden  
January 26, 2016*

Housing affordability emerged as a major issue Tuesday during the City Council's first work session on the comprehensive land-use plan update that will guide Portland's growth during the next 20 years.

The council also admitted it will take longer to approve the update than expected last week. The final vote probably won't take place until May — at the earliest.

During a Jan. 26 meeting, Mayor Charlie Hales and all of the commissioners expressed concern about rising housing costs that are pricing both low-income renters and middle-income home buyers out of the city.

Commissioner Dan Saltzman, who is in charge of the Portland Housing Bureau, was adamant that the final version of the Comp Plan — as the city's long-range land-use plan is commonly called — must include incentives for building a range of affordable housing, from rent-controlled apartments to lower cost single-family homes.

"We need to focus like a laser on affordable housing. I need to know where it's going to be [in the Comp Plan]," Saltzman said during the discussion with staff from the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, which drafted the update recommended to the council by the Planning and Sustainability Commission last year.

### **Walkable neighborhoods**

By coincidence, the discussion took place the day after a report was released showing Portland had the nation's highest one-year home price increase in November. Portland prices rose 11.1 percent, compared to just 5.8 percent for 20 cities included in the Standard & Poor's/Case-Shiller home price index.

The report was the latest in a series of real estate reports showing that Portland housing price increases are among the highest in the nation. The situation caused the council and the Multnomah County Commission to declare housing states of emergencies last year and promise more funds for homeless shelters, transitional programs and affordable housing.

The affordability concern prompted the council to set housing as the only subject for the next Comp Plan work session, scheduled for next Tuesday. The Feb. 2 agenda has originally included both housing and policies governing employment lands.

The new agenda will include both housing costs and residential density increases, a hot topic during the five public hearings before the council that preceded the work sessions. Commissioner Steve Novick said housing densities must increase in Portland to accommodate the 250,000 additional people projected to live here by 2035. Novick said that will largely be good for the city because it will result in the creation of more "walkable neighborhoods" where housing, jobs, shopping and recreational opportunities are close together.

But Novick acknowledged that many residents are worried that residential infill projects are already destroying the character of their neighborhoods. He said the additional housing does not have to be the large apartment buildings that are springing up along major streets, but could be such "middle housing" as duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes and lower apartment buildings with courtyards.

"We need to encourage a wide range of housing," Novick said.

### **Employment sites**

Portland's update is required by state land-use planning laws, which says all cities must have comprehensive land-use plans that will accommodate 20 years of population and employment growth inside their urban growth boundaries.

During Portland's discussions, Commission Amanda Fritz sought to assure neighborhood associations that they were still an important part of the public involvement process required by the state as part of the update. Some neighborhood leaders complained that the

associations are being pushed aside by newer community organizations encouraged by the city that are comprised of minority and underrepresented Portlanders.

"Neighborhood associations are still the foundation of our citizen involvement process, along with other community organizations," said Fritz.

And the council appeared willing to increase projected employment increases related to the Portland Harbor from the low- to the medium-range forecast. The low-range forecast in the recommended update was based on city staff estimates at the time. Since the Port of Portland has provided more information on investments in its facilities that are expected to increase employment during the next 20 years.

The council was assured the increase would not require the redevelopment of West Hayden Island as a marine terminal by the port, however. Environmentalists and nearby resident are lobbying to preserve it as a natural area, and the council seemed relieved they did not need to deal with it.

Even before the discussions began, the council agreed the update will probably not be approved by the end of April, as last estimated. Work sessions are now set for Feb. 2, Feb. 23 and March 1, with a public hearing on the amended update tentatively set for March 14. Hales said additional hearings are likely, however, and city staff it could take a month of more to prepare the final version for a vote after the last amendment is adopted.

## **Daily Journal of Commerce**

### **City Council paves way for Portland Building project bidding**

*By Garrett Andrews*

*January 25, 2016*

The Portland City Council on Wednesday approved two more resolutions relating to the planned renovation of the Portland Building. One authorized the city to finalize a \$5.6 million contract for Day CPM Services to serve as the owner's representative for the project. The other exempted the project from a requirement to use the typical low-bid method.

Three months ago, City Council passed three resolutions to move the process along, including one calling for project participants to commit to a 2020 deadline and a maximum cost of \$195 million.

The city's team favors a "progressive" design-build-relocate process, meaning only one contract will be used for the project's design, construction and relocation aspects. " 'Progressive' means that we have a collaborative team from the start," said Kristin Wells, a construction project manager. "It's something that is picking up in the construction industry."

The method should save costs and time, Wells said. "Relocation" was added to the contract because the potential exists to reduce lease costs, and make other savings.

During construction, some city services will be relocated in an effort to trim approximately \$5 million from the project cost.

A request for proposals will go out in 30-45 days. Staff members will return before City Council with updates in spring and summer.

About 5 percent of the project's cost (\$10.5 million) will be covered by a cash contribution from the city; the remainder will come from debt financing. In October, City Council resolved to raise rents across city departments to help pay for the renovation. Money raised will make up about 40 percent of the cash contribution.

The contract with Day CPM Services includes a stipulation for 20 percent participation by minority- or women-owned businesses or emerging small businesses. The firm has already selected a public outreach consultant and a financial officer for the project.

The 33-year-old Portland Building houses more than 1,300 city employees. It was designed by architect Michael Graves and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. But it has suffered mechanical and structural problems, and drawn complaints about its aesthetics. A thorough renovation/seismic upgrade is expected to bring it in line with current building codes, but leave the exterior intact.

## **GoLocalPDX**

### **Independent Report Issues 30+ Recommendations to Portland Police Bureau**

*By GoLocalPDX News Team  
January 26, 2016*

California-based OIR Group, an outside consulting firm, published their fourth report on the Portland Police Bureau and officer-involved shooting and deaths in police custody. In the report, OIR makes more than 30 individual recommendations to the Police Bureau, including that police commanders should not be quick to conclude deadly force is "inevitable."

OIR reviewed the Portland police internal reviews of 11 police shootings that occurred between January 2011 and March 2013.

During their review, OIR noted that there were still areas for the Police Bureau to improve, but praised the Police Bureau for being cooperative and superior to most law enforcement agencies.

"While we criticize some parts of the process and find some inconsistencies with individual reviews, one thing has been consistently noteworthy: the level of cooperation we have received from the Police Bureau's executive team," OIR wrote in the report. "In addition to providing assistance as we gathered all relevant documents, training, policies, and practices, Bureau representatives have been uniformly generous with their time, candid and helpful in answering our questions and responding to our concerns. That degree of receptivity to our work is not

universal among the agencies with whom we have worked, and we thank the Bureau for its consistent willingness to engage. "

The 133-page report will be presented to the City Council at 2 p.m. Thursday.

In a letter paired with the report, Police Chief Larry O’Dea told the council that he and the Police Bureau agree with most of the recommendations in the report. He also said the bureau has taken measures to help officers better respond to people in crisis since the shootings.

“I am pleased to report that the Bureau agrees with the vast majority of the recommendations and the Bureau has already implemented many of the changes that are cited,” O’Dea wrote in part.

“Many of the shootings reviewed occurred under very challenging circumstances and include one where officers were ambushed. During these rapidly unfolding events, officers performed commendably and relied on their training. We continue to make additional enhancements as we work with the DOJ on action items in the agreement as well as developing and implementing policing best practices. The Police Bureau is committed to continually evaluating, learning and making changes that improve the organization.”

The consultants pointed out concerns, including that seven of the 11 shootings, included some evidence that the person shot had intended to be killed by police. In some cases, the police bureau was "too quick to assume" that the person "forced" officers to fire, the report said.

"In these reviews, the Bureau was less open to evaluating the possibility of alternative approaches to the scenario that might have afforded officers a better opportunity to influence the outcome," the consultants wrote.

"We caution the Bureau against adopting the language, culture, and mentality that suggests the death of a suicidal individual who appears intent on provoking a confrontation with police is always inevitable."

## **Is Charlie Hales Missing the Mark on Emissions Reduction?**

*By Brendan Murray*

*January 27, 2016*

After announcing that his tenure as Portland’s Mayor would end in 2016 after just one term in office, Charlie Hales has seemed to focus his efforts on stymying climate change in the Portland area. While Hales’ efforts to reduce the city’s emissions are noble, he may be going about it the wrong way.

In October, in advance of his trip to Paris, France for the United Nations Climate Change Conference, Hales attended a meeting of Mayors devoted to combating the effects of climate change in their city, dubbed the “#ClimateMayors.” At the meeting, Hales outlined bold goals for the City’s carbon emissions in the coming years.

He called for a “40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by 2030” and a “80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by 2050.” As of 2013, the City of Portland had achieved a 14 percent reduction in greenhouse gases from 1990 levels.

In the “#ClimateMayors” report, Hales said the City would reach those goals by doubling the numbers of solar panels installed by 2020, meeting 100% of City electricity needs from renewable power, adding to the city’s fleet of electric vehicles and proposing a policy addressing fossil fuel export facilities in the City Council.

Meanwhile, according to data from the EPA, Hales could meet his own goals simply by shutting down Portland’s the three largest emitters of greenhouse gases in the city, which emitted a combined 257,741 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e. Doing so would eliminate percent of the city’s carbon emissions when compared to those 1990 levels.

### **Reducing Emissions**

Portland has a total of six facilities registered with the EPA’s greenhouse emissions reporting program. The program, begun in 2011, forces 85% of the nation’s top emitters to report on how much GHG they have emitted.

According to the most recent EPA data, Evraz Oregon Steel, the St. John Landfill and the Northwest Natural—Oregon facility are the biggest emitters of greenhouse gases in portland, collectively emitting 323,832 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2014.

Evraz Oregon Steel, a metal plant on Rivergate Boulevard, emitted 113,756 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2014, the most in the city. The St. John Landfill, located on North Columbia boulevard and the Northwest Natural—Oregon facility, a petroleum and natural gas system plant, are next on the list emitting 84,755 metric tons and 59,113 metric tons, respectively

In 1990, Portland emitted 8,599,508 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e. In order to hit the climate plan goals, the City of Portland must reduce their emissions by 3,439,803 metric tons by 2030 and 6,879,606 by 2050.

Eliminating those three leading emitters would eliminate 257,741 metric tons per year, a reduction of nearly 30 percent of 1990 levels every year, enabling the City of Portland to easily hit its climate goals ahead of schedule.