

## The Oregonian

### Portland Development Commission's director stepping down

*Brad Schmidt*

*February 8, 2016*

Patrick Quinton, the director of Portland's urban renewal agency, announced Monday that he's calling it quits so he can pursue other opportunities.

Quinton, 50, plans to step down this spring after more than [five years leading the Portland Development Commission](#), one of the city's most prominent and influential bureaus. His final day will be in May or June.

"Five years, in my head, has always seemed like the right amount of time in this job," said Quinton, who joined the city's redevelopment arm in 2008 after 16 years in the financial sector.

Quinton's looming departure comes as the development commission moves forward on one of its highest-profile projects, [acquisition of the Pearl District post office campus](#), and at an odd time politically with the 2016 election cycle looming. Quinton said he realized there would never be an ideal moment to step down but decided he was ready, and wanted to announce his decision before looking for a new job.

"He's leaving at the top of his game, with an agency that's been reformed on his watch, that's doing great things," said Mayor Charlie Hales, who oversees the development commission.

Although Hales leaves office at year's end, Hales said he plans to conduct a search and hire Quinton's replacement rather than wait for a mayoral successor to be crowned. "My inclination would be to proceed," Hales said.

Quinton took control of the agency in February 2011 under former Mayor Sam Adams, who made economic development a top priority amid the crippling recession. When Hales became mayor in 2013, he pushed the agency [back toward its "place-making" role](#).

The straight-talking Quinton managed to navigate City Hall politics amid those and other shifting strategies, most notably [new attention to Old Town Chinatown](#), [revisions to several urban renewal districts](#) and fallout over [gentrification](#) and [affordable housing](#). Quinton also directed [two painful rounds of layoffs](#) at the agency.

Under Quinton's watch, the development commission jumpstarted redevelopment of the Central Eastside's [Burnside Bridgehead](#), including subsidies to renovate an old office building and selling land for a massive apartment tower that altered Portland's skyline.

The agency also created an economic development strategy, focused on helping startups and entrepreneurs, and launched small-scale urban renewal districts for struggling east Portland neighborhoods.

Along the way, the development commission kicked in money to help [keep marquee employer Iberdrola Renewables in town](#) and bought property in the Lents urban renewal district for what would become the [popular Portland Mercado](#) – something Quinton considers "one of the best real estate projects we did."

Quinton also carried out Hales' desire to revamp several urban renewal districts and bowed to the City Council's recent decision to [steer more urban renewal money to affordable housing](#). By the time Quinton leaves, he expects to have finally secured Portland's long-term vision of buying the Pearl District post office for redevelopment.

"He's accomplished a lot," Hales said.

But Quinton's tenure hasn't been without hiccups.

The agency got publicly hammered in 2013 and 2014 because of plans to subsidize a Trader Joe's grocery store in gentrifying Northeast Portland. It later tried to move forward on a deal to subsidize South Waterfront redevelopment without setting requirements for affordable housing.

The commission also has [spent millions of dollars on derelict Centennial Mills](#) without crafting a workable plan to redevelop the riverfront property. And Quinton hasn't finalized plans for the agency's financial future despite deep-rooted worries that urban renewal funds will eventually dry up.

"I wish I had made more progress on that in my time here," he said.

Tom Kelly, Quinton's boss and Hales' pick as chairman of the development commission's appointed board, praised Quinton's leadership and communication style.

Kelly pointed to a flap last September when developer John Russell, a Hales ally who used to chair the development commission, publicly complained that the agency lacked managers with ["the talent and the experience to make visions realities."](#)

Quinton fired back days later with his own op-ed piece, defending his staff, calling out several female project managers by name, and saying Russell's vision of a strong development commission is ["a bunch of white dudes single-handedly building this city brick by brick."](#)

"It's those kind of things that can separate a person, and make them special," Kelly said of Quinton's response.

Quinton, Hales and Kelly all say the decision to step down was Quinton's alone. In an October evaluation, Kelly scored Quinton as being "fully successful," two rungs below the ["outstanding" score that Quinton earned from the old chairman, Scott Andrews, in 2014.](#)

Quinton earns \$171,000 annually and would have received severance of six months pay if he'd been fired before June 2017.

Kelly echoed Hales' views on hiring Quinton's replacement rather than waiting for Portland's next mayor to weigh in. "It's our job to keep the agency going in the best way possible, as opposed for waiting for the next politician to come along," he said.

Married with three kids in junior and senior high, Quinton said he plans to stay in Portland and is looking forward to whatever comes next.

"I'm not concerned about being unemployed," he said, "for any period of time."

## **This is Charlie Hales' plan for homeless camping in Portland**

*Brad Schmidt*

*February 8, 2016*

Mayor Charlie Hales today will unveil a four-pronged strategy to address homelessness in Portland, including new plans for legalized outdoor camps and overnight tent camping in certain locations.

The strategy focuses only on short-term fixes that can be evaluated for six months. It's not a broader effort to build more affordable housing or add permanent shelter space.

Hales can unilaterally implement the plan and doesn't need formal City Council, said Josh Alpert, the mayor's top aide. Hales will roll out details during a 3 p.m. public meeting.

"All experimental," Alpert emphasized. "We're gonna try this for six months. We will continue to tinker with it daily."

Here's what Hales' is planning:

### **1) Tents**

Overnight sleeping on city sidewalks will be allowed, provided that homeless Portlanders use only a sleeping bag and tarp, do not block the sidewalk and do not exceed six sleepers in one location. Tents are not allowed on sidewalks.

But tents will be allowed between the hours of 9 p.m. and 7 a.m. in certain locations, such as city-owned property that is not a sidewalk. The city plans to release examples of property where overnight-only camping would be allowed.

The rules wouldn't explicitly apply to parks, although the Portland Parks Bureau has generally allowed overnight tent camping.

"No one should have a tent up in this city all day," Alpert said.

### **2) Organized camping system**

Alpert hopes to establish several -- perhaps 10 -- city-sanctioned campsites that must be linked to a nonprofit service provider.

Campers wouldn't sleep in tents. Instead, the city would order a "couple hundred" disaster-relief pods that could later be reused in a wide-scale disaster.

The location of such campsites would be established with the help of neighborhood associations.

"It'll be temporary," Alpert said of the campsites.

### **3) Organized car/RV system**

Similar to the camping system, the city would designate property where homeless Portlanders can legally camp in cars or RVs. Church parking lots are an obvious choice, Alpert said.

Any site would require city approval and would need to be affiliated with a nonprofit service provider.

### **4) More temporary shelter space**

Alpert said the city is looking at three or four locations in the hopes of securing more temporary shelter space. He wasn't ready to speculate how many beds could be added to the system or when they'd be ready.

Alpert said the city's old strategy of conducting 15 to 20 daily sweeps hasn't been effective. By offering four options for homeless Portlanders to sleep each night, Alpert said, police should be able to conduct more targeted enforcement.

If the strategies prove effective, Alpert said, Hales may ask the City Council to formally adopt them sometime this summer or fall.

Alpert said no one believes that camping is a better policy solution than long-term housing. But given that nearly 1,900 people sleep are estimated to sleep on the streets each night, he said, "there is an understanding that we have to try stuff."

"We're not in a policy world right now," he said. "We're in reality."

## **Could downtown Portland's food carts be a thing of the past?**

*Samantha Bakall*

*February 8, 2016*

A massive new development deal planned for downtown Portland is expected to reshape the city's skyline.

On the street level, an equally momentous change could take place: the end of downtown Portland's food carts as we know them.

[As first reported by The Oregonian](#), the Goodman family hopes to build as many as 11 new buildings, a grocery store and \$1.5 billion in investment in between local landmarks like Voodoo Doughnut and the Portland Saturday Market.

The recently unveiled proposal, called the "Ankeny Blocks," would rise on a handful of City Center Parking lots that nearly [70 food carts](#) currently call home -- the pods at Southwest Fifth Avenue and Stark Street, Southwest Third and Washington and Southwest Second and Stark. If the development goes through, it would wipe half of downtown's food cart scene off the map.

The lot at Southwest Fifth and Stark was Portland's first pod, a model for gathering a number of food carts in one place that has been replicated in cities across the country.

No plans or blueprints are in motion for the large-scale project yet, though the Goodmans say they are eager to get started. The family is in conversations with potential tenants but declined to reveal names.

Food Carts Portland, a [local cart blog](#), took the announcement as a sign that downtown Portland's food carts could soon be a thing of the past, calling on cart owners to "get in front of City Council" and lobby for the city to amend the "no business in the right of way" law enforced by Portland Bureau of Transportation. The law precludes trucks from moving about the city, temporarily parking and serving for a set amount of time, like carts in Los Angeles, Boston and Seattle.

In a [Medium article](#), meanwhile, [Green Lane Project](#) staff writer Michael Andersen called the announcement "a big classified ad dressed up as a news story," noting that the project would cost \$1.5 billion that has yet to be acquired.

There's no word yet on when these plans will eventually come to fruition, but as the city has already seen, food cart pods are often used as placeholders for future development. Over the past year, a number of cart pods, including [Good Food Here](#), D-Street Noshery and [North Station](#) have shuttered due to impending construction plans.

More to come.

## The Portland Tribune

### Study digs into region's housing affordability

*Jim Redden*

*February 9, 2016*

Rising home costs and stagnating wages have created a housing crisis across the region, not just in the trendy Portland neighborhoods where few can afford to live.

The situation is worst for renters, whose incomes have not kept up with rent increases.

According to figures released by Metro, the elected regional government, rents have increased 63 percent since 2006. The increases have ranged from 18 percent in the Happy Valley to 34 percent in Hillsboro-Forest Grove area and 71 percent in North Portland.

But the income of renters has increased only 39 percent over the past nine years. As a result, poorer renters are being forced to move away from employment centers, increasing their commuting times and transportation costs.

The situation is better for home buyers, whose incomes have increased 22 percent over the past nine years, while the price of a single-family house has increased only 16 percent. But they are a shrinking percentage of current residents and the 400,000 more people Metro expects to live here by 2035.

“The fundamental problem is, we are growing as a region. We’ve had a lot success maintaining our quality of life and we have a strong economy. But not everyone is doing well. Especially for low-income people and minorities, it’s harder to get by than 10 years ago,” says Metro Councilor Sam Chase.

Chase is leading Metro’s first look at housing affordability in the region. Called the Equitable Housing Initiative, it has pulled together income and housing information from Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington and Clark counties. It has also looked at programs that have created large numbers of affordable housing in other metropolitan areas.

The information, released in a report titled “Opportunities and challenges for equitable housing,” was discussed at the first regional summit on equitable housing last Monday in Portland. It drew elected officials from all four counties. They included the entire Metro Council, Multnomah County commissioners Jules Bailey and Loretta Smith, Washington County Commissioner Dick Schouten, Beaverton Mayor Denny Doyle, Wilsonville Mayor Tim Knapp, Forest Grove Mayor Pete Truax, Lake Oswego Councilor Jeff Gordon and Sherwood Councilor Jennifer Harris.

Also present were representatives of nonprofit agencies from throughout the region that build affordable housing and others interested in addressing the housing crisis.

“No way can Portland meet this challenge by itself. Everyone has to be involved,” Chase says.

### **What Seattle has done**

Those at the summit heard from experts who explained there is no “one size fits all” approach to creating more affordable housing. Instead, each community must come up with its own plan, informed by the experiences of cities around the country.

Joining them was Seattle Mayor Ed Murray, who spoke on the history of his city’s efforts to build more affordable housing.

A recurring theme was the need for money to build more affordable housing. The federal government was faulted for cutting its affordable housing in half over the years.

“We are not going to be able to solve this problem unless the federal government returns to its historic role,” Murray says.

Unlike Portland or any other city in the region, Seattle voters have approved one bond measure and four property tax levies to fund affordable housing since 1981. The spending has created more than 12,000 units. Murray is preparing a bond request to double that number. Local affordable housing advocates have been talking about state, county or city bonds for affordable housing, but no specific proposal has emerged to date.

Incentives for developers to create more affordable housing were also discussed. They ranged from tax exemptions to additional height allowances. Each city would need to tailor a program to meet its needs.

Zoning code changes to encourage more affordable housing were also discussed. One idea was to increase density in urban centers and along transit lines. Another was to revive the so-called “missing middle” of housing — duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes in residential neighborhoods.

Metro's figures showed the construction of residential properties with two to four units has plunged over the years.

Many at the summit also hoped the 2016 Oregon Legislature would repeal the state ban on allowing cities to require developers to include a certain number of affordable units in their projects.

"There are a wide range of tools already available and we hope the Legislature will give us more. But there's really a lot you can do now," Chase says.

### **Portland responds**

Close-in Portland neighborhoods have seen the highest rent increases in the region, according to the Metro figures. Between 2006 and 2015, rents increased 34 percent in Southwest Portland — equalled outside the city only by the Hillsboro-Forest Grove area. Rents increased 40 percent during that time in both downtown and East Portland. And they increased 71 percent in North Portland.

As a result, average monthly rents are now \$1,828 in Southwest Portland, \$1,172 downtown, \$1,762 in East Portland and \$1,811 in North Portland. That's according to Johnson Economics, which contributed to the Metro report. Other research shows that lower income people and families cannot afford these rents and have been locating out of the city.

"About 2,300 private (multifamily) units have been built over the last three years and less than 3 percent of them are affordable by any stretch of the imagination. Most are luxury apartments," Commissioner Nick Fish said during a recent City Council work session on the Comprehensive Plan update that is intended to govern how Portland grows over the next 20 years.

The council became alarmed about the effects of gentrification in North and Northeast Portland after community protests in February 2014. At Mayor Charlie Hales' urging, the council approved an additional \$20 million in urban renewal funds to help longtime residents stay in their homes and build more affordable housing. But ground is only now ready to be broken on the first affordable housing project funded with the money, the 81-unit Grant Warehouse at 3368 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Later, after declaring a housing state of emergency last October, the council agreed to spend another \$20 million next year to create more homeless shelters, transition programs and affordable housing projects. Multnomah County Commissioner Deborah Kafoury promised a \$10 million match, with the money to be prioritized by the A Home for Everyone partnership that includes the city, county, Gresham and Home Forward, formerly known as the Portland Housing Authority.

But finding the additional \$20 million may be tough. Hales has directed all general fund bureaus to recommend 5 percent cuts in next year's budgets to help free up the funds. The cuts submitted by the Portland Police Bureau, Portland Fire & Rescue, and Portland Parks & Recreation all eliminate popular or essential programs. It is unclear how many of the potential cuts Hales will include in his proposed budget or whether a majority of the council will support them.

The council is also talking about including incentives for developers to add affordable housing units to their projects in the Comprehensive Plan update. But progress is slow. For example, during the recent work session, the council spent a half-hour discussing whether to allow developers to build taller buildings in exchange for adding affordable units. But then the council members realized the units they were discussing would not be affordable to the poor. They would instead be considered affordable by those earning 80 percent or more of the median family income in the region.

“The crisis is for those earning zero to 30 percent. Eighty percent is not where the need is,” said an exasperated Commissioner Amanda Fritz.

At the same work session, Commissioner Steve Novick said he wants to encourage more “middle housing” in the Comp Plan, as it is commonly called. It was unclear whether the necessary zoning changes could be identified before the council takes a final vote in April or May, however.

And the council is promising to engage the entire community in discussions about requiring new private residential development to include a certain percentage of affordable units if the 2016 Oregon Legislature lifts the ban on so-called inclusionary zoning. Commissioner Dan Saltzman, who is in charge of the Portland Housing Bureau, has introduced a resolution requiring the appointment of a panel including developers and affordable housing advocates to advise the council on how to implement such requirements. It could be approved this week.

“We will engage the entire community,” Saltzman says.

### **What is Equitable Housing?**

For the purpose of the Equitable Housing Initiative, Metro uses the working definition of equitable housing as: diverse, quality, physically accessible, affordable housing choices with access to opportunities, services and amenities.

For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/gpv69m8>.

## **Attorney General Lynch’s community tour swings through Portland**

*Pamplin Media Group*

*February 8, 2016*

Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch will travel to Portland in the next few months as part of her national Community Policing Tour.

Lynch will visit Portland, Miami, Indianapolis, Fayetteville, N.C., Phoenix and Los Angeles to focus on key parts of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing report. Her national tour kicks off Feb. 11 and 12 in Miami. Her stop in Portland will highlight community policing and crime reduction. Dates for the Portland visit have not been announced.

“One of my top priorities as attorney general is strengthening relationships between law enforcement officers and the communities we serve and protect,” Lynch said. “During the second phase of my community policing tour, I will be highlighting some of the innovative efforts underway around the country to build trust, foster cooperation and enhance public safety.”

## **Hales: Portlanders should tolerate more homeless camping**

*Jim Redden*

*February 8, 2016*

Mayor Charlie Hales says more homeless people will be sleeping on sidewalks, unpaved streets, unused city properties and private parking lots in the future.

The increased camping will happen as Portland and its partners work to fund more shelters, transitional programs and affordable housing projects that are intended to reduce the number of homeless in coming years. The increase may include 20 to 25 semi-permanent camp sites throughout town.

"We want to live in a beautiful, livable city with a high quality of life, but we have a lot of people that are on the streets and need help," Hales said at the end of a City Council work session Monday afternoon primarily on new homeless camping policies.

No public testimony was allowed at the work session, which was taken up mostly by a presentation by Hales' chief of staff, Josh Alpert, on the new camping policies.

Some neighborhood association leaders have expressed alarm in recent months over the apparent increase in the number of homeless campers on city properties, especially in North Portland where two city-sanctioned camps have sprung up in the Overlook Neighborhood. Residents near the Springwater Trail in Southeast Portland also expressed concern at a Thursday community meeting about the increase in homeless camping along the popular commuting and recreation corridor.

Alpert admitted the city has not done enough outreach to neighbors and promise that would improve in the future. Regardless of the response, however, he said most routine homeless sweeps have stopped and outlined the following four locations where small groups of campers are now being allowed between 9 p.m. and 7 a.m.:

- City sidewalks, except for those marked for high pedestrian traffic, provides the campers do not pitch tents or fully block them.
- Unused city rights of way and other "remnant" properties, where tents can be pitched.
- Parking lots owned by churches and other nonprofit organizations that agree to allow people to sleep in vehicles.

In addition, Alpert said the city is working on finalizing a process for allowing "structured organized camping" on properties overseen by nonprofit organizations with experience serving the homeless. Such camps must follow guidelines that include codes of conduct and noise

restrictions. Structures may eventually including small "pods" designed to survive catastrophes, such as the large earthquake expected to strike the Portland area in coming years.

Alpert said neighborhood associations are being asked to help identify locations where such camps can be established. The city would provide water, sanitation, garbage and storage services to help reduce conflicts with surrounding residents, Alpert said.

Although it was not explored in detail during the work session, an example of such a "structured" camp is the Right 2 Dream Too homeless camp in Old Town, which is operated by a nonprofit organization. The council is scheduled to consider relocating the camp from its current location at Northwest 4th Avenue and Burnside Street to a city-owned parcel at Southeast Third Avenue and Harrison Street on Feb. 18.

Alpert was joined at various parts of his presentation by staff members from other public agencies and nonprofit organizations that supported the homeless camping properties. No neighborhood representatives or any other members of the public were invited to speak.

A few hours before the work session, the Overlook Neighborhood Association (OKNA) released a statement saying the chairs of the boards of other neighborhood associations in North Portland protested the city's handling of its decision to allow two homeless camps along North Greeley and North interstate. The statement said the chairs criticized the city for the lack of public process on the apparent homeless camping policy changes.

"Residents of the Overlook Neighborhood appreciate the support of our fellow North Portlanders," OKNA's Chair Dannielle Herman said. "Portland faces a homelessness crisis. All neighborhoods must demand a serious strategy from the City that has been lacking so far."

You can read the statement [here](#).

The council is scheduled to receive a presentation on other efforts to address the homeless and housing affordable at 9:30 a.m. next Tuesday. The Feb. 16 work session will include an update by the Portland Housing Bureau on the plan developed by the city, Gresham, Multnomah County and Home Forward (the former Housing Authority of Portland) to create more shelters, transitional programs and affordable housing projects.

Hales has pledged to include \$20 million towards the effort in the next city budget, and Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury has promised to find \$10 more.

## Willamette Week

### Portland's Oldest Food Cart Pod May Soon Be Replaced by Giant Apartment Building: The pod at 5<sup>th</sup> and Stark, with other food cart pods, planned for development

*Matthew Korfhage*

*February 8, 2016*

Three of Portland's most central food cart pods—including its oldest—may soon be gone.

The bustling pods at Southwest 5th Avenue and Stark Street, Southwest 2nd Avenue and Stark Street and Southwest 3rd Avenue and Oak Street are on the list of properties announced for future development by Greg Goodman, co-president of the [Downtown Development Group](#) and scion to one of Portland's most powerful property-owning families.

Goodman's \$1.5 billion "Ankeny Blocks" plan to stake up 11 skyscrapers in downtown, changing Portland's skyline dramatically and adding massive amounts of both residential and commercial space, was [announced by \*The Oregonian\* this week](#).

The buildings would go up where parking lots currently exist. "Surface parking lots should go away," PSU professor Ethan Seltzer said in that piece.

Three of those parking lots, however, also house food cart pods—a hallmark of Portland food culture for over 30 years, since the first one opened on Southwest 5th and Stark.

Chris Schenk, at Steaks Fifth Avenue, has been at 5th and Stark for 19 of those years.

"One of my employees called me about it last night," said Schenk, while prepping meat for the day's business.

He says he's heard nothing from his landlord, [City Center Parking](#), but says he's renting month-to-month.

"They haven't always been the best at communicating," says Schenk. "I can't say I'm surprised. When I came in, rent was \$350. Now it's \$800."

City Center confirmed they would require only a 30-day-notice to the food carts if a development deal went through, but has not commented on any potential future developments.

On the Ankeny Blocks plan, the 5th and Stark pod is slated to become one of the tallest buildings in Portland, a 460-foot residential and commercial space.

Goodman says that the Ankeny Blocks plan is a vision designed to lure businesses here—but that he expects development to move slowly. Design review alone would take more than a year, he says. He also says he plans to give food cart operators ample notice.

"You're not going to wake up one day and see the parking lots all gone at the same time," says Goodman.

He says that if his company displaces a pod, he plans to upgrade the electrical capacity on another westside lot to start a new pod, along with expanding restaurant capacity within the developments.

"We have a lot of lots that aren't on the Ankeny Blocks," says Goodman. "We own 30 pieces of dirt downtown. If I control a property we'll spend \$45,000 and do the upgrade."

Brett Burmeister at [Food Carts Portland](#) was the first to take note of the three pods amid the planned developments.

Burmeister also issued a call to action for food cart owners.

"Food cart owners need to come together and get in front of City Council and let them know that Portland street food scene is part of the city fabric," he wrote. "Every city has it, so as we develop, we need to find a way to keep it."

"We understand the significance of the food carts," says Goodman. "We don't take it lightly."

He says that he'll be judicious about the tenants he allows to come into any new developments.

"We buy into the Portland vision," Goodman says. "You look at the West End, Tasty N Alder is there. I had a bank that wanted to be there. We said no to the bank. Where Blue Star is, we had a national Quizno's wanting to move in. We said no."

Schenk, at Steaks Fifth Avenue, is less sanguine. He says he's already having issues with parking lot management—that repeated requests to accommodate vehicle parking for him and other food cart owners have gone unheeded, and that they haven't been offered protections against overnight break-ins to the carts.

But he worries most about his chances of finding a new place to do business—especially if many other cart owners are also forced to move.

"Obviously, it would suck if something came in here," he says, then pauses. "I should have gone with my gut years ago and gotten an interior space."

## **Portland and Multnomah County Squeeze Money from Online Travel Companies**

*Beth Slovic*

*February 8, 2016*

Portland officials on Monday announced a settlement with online travel companies such as Expedia and Orbitz that nets the city and Multnomah County \$3.6 million in unpaid hotel taxes.

The deal springs from a [2011 City Council decision to join other cities](#) in suing online travel companies for not handing over the correct amount of transient lodging taxes. And it adds to an already rosy picture for Portland's financial forecast.

Portland's city economist reported in December that "year-over-year growth in the local lodging industry has pushed transient lodging taxes to record levels and spurred construction plans for several new hotels near downtown." Tax collections, the report continued, have nearly doubled in five years as occupancy levels and room rates have risen sharply.

The city's deal with the online companies isn't quite as wonderful as city officials expected, however.

Back in 2011, a win was expected to bring \$5 million to \$8 million in past due taxes to the city's general fund, minus a 30 percent fee for the lawyers, *The Oregonian* reported.

## The Portland Mercury

### Homeless Portlanders will be Allowed to Camp on City Land Under Proposals Being Unveiled this Afternoon

*Dirk Vanderhart*  
*February 8, 2016*

This afternoon, Mayor Charlie Hales' office will reveal a set of policies that upend Portland's past strategies for dealing with homelessness.

In a City Council work session at 3 pm, Hales plans to lay out an experimental plan that would set rules under which the **city's nearly 2,000 unsheltered homeless** can sleep on sidewalks and "remnant" city property without fear of being unceremoniously roused. The mayor also will create policy allowing people to sleep in their cars or recreational vehicles, and allow organized encampments stocked with city-provided pods.

The moves, which Hales' office says won't require formal council approval, are a newly sensitive approach for an administration that, at the outset of Hales' tenure, readily enforced the city's ban on camping and erecting structures in blanket fashion—a timeworn fallback for mayors grappling with public angst over homelessness. They also come at a notable time: As Hales winds down his tenure on City Hall's third floor, and makes way for a successor.

For homeless advocates I've spoken with, the proposals represent a more nuanced and empathetic view of the city's homeless crisis than has previously existed. According to Josh Alpert, Hales' chief of staff and the architect of the policy tweaks, they are designed to ease the strain on people stuck outside as officials work toward significantly reducing their numbers **with new shelter, housing, and services in coming years**. But they also create a set of expectations through which police and city bureaus can identify problematic camps unwilling or uninterested in working with the city, Alpert contends.

"The vast majority of people out there are legitimately looking for a place to get through the night," Alpert said in an interview this morning. He said Portland's traditional way of combating problematic or unsightly homelessness—through a dozen or more camp sweeps a day— has

"resulted in this constant trauma that we've been creating. People sleeping with one eye open, being forced into unsafe places."

Alpert says he's not hoping to eradicate homelessness with the new ideas—that's being tackled by groups like [A Home For Everyone](#), which is attempting to leverage \$30 million in city and county funding to meaningfully improve Portland's homeless crisis. Instead, the question the mayor's office wants to address, he says, is what happens today. "What do we do to allow as many people as possible to wait patiently, comfortably, and safely while we build to tomorrow?"

The basics, laid out in a document [\[pdf\]](#) Alpert and others will flesh out for city commissioners this afternoon:

- **Homeless people can sleep on city sidewalks, and erect tents on some city land.** Alpert says no tents or structures of any kind will be allowed on Portland sidewalks, but that people with nowhere else to go can use tarps and sleeping bags to shelter on the roadside, provided they're not blocking foot traffic, and are in groups of six people or less. This isn't meaningfully different from the city's practice of allowing people to sleep in doorways downtown, but would crack down on large clusters of tents and structures that have cropped up in Northwest Portland and the Central Eastside, Alpert says.

More significantly, Hales is proposing **letting people erect tents on "remnant" city-owned properties** around the city. Alpert used grassy patches situated near the bike and pedestrian ramps at the east end of the Hawthorne Bridge as an example. In such remnants, campers will be allowed to set up tents between 9 pm and 7 am, with an expectation that they stay in groups of six or less, pack up promptly in the morning, and keep things tidy. Alpert said campers shouldn't "get hung up on 'is this the right land?' The critical part is be responsible and pick up after yourself."

He also says this provision will help the city more meaningfully deal with sprawling and problematic camps that have cropped up along the Springwater Corridor and Central Eastside, among other places.

- **Organized camps are going to increase—and use city-bought pods.** We've reported a great deal here about [Hazelnut Grove](#) and [Forgotten Realms](#), two organized encampments on public land that are on the verge of inking formal land use deals with the city. Hales' proposal would increase those kinds of encampments on city land (none is currently identified, Alpert says), with a couple significant changes.

First, new self-organized camps would need to partner with a nonprofit agency that has a history of providing shelter. Those nonprofits would then be paid by the city as drop-in "camp hosts" that can keep a eye on things and offer help. Second, the city's investigating a wide array of **"disaster relief pods" that it might purchase and provide to such encampments**—an alternative to the patchwork of tiny houses that have sprung up at Hazelnut Grove.

Under the proposal, public money would purchase the pods, portable toilets, and nonprofit services, Alpert says. "We are closer to building an entire system," Alpert says.

As we've reported various Portland **neighborhood groups have taken different tacks** in response to Hales' increasing willingness to accept camps. Leaders of the city's seven neighborhood coalitions are mulling helping the city identify land for camps, while groups like the Overlook Neighborhood Association (OKNA) are rebuking Hales. Earlier today, in fact, the OKNA announced eight North Portland neighborhood association had signed onto its call for—among other things—a public roster of the names of any homeless people staying at city-sanctioned camps. Others disagree with that sentiment.

- Sleeping in RVs and cars will be sanctioned under some conditions.** Alpert calls this the "least developed" aspect of the plan, but says there will be a push to make it easier for people to sleep in their vehicles—whether on city land or in church parking lots. These lots, too, would be served by a city-provided "camp host." Historically, the city's **not taken all that kindly to vehicle camping**.

- A new model for homeless shelters.** Since declaring a housing emergency late last year, the city's **added meaningfully to its inadequate shelter space**. But Hales and Alpert—after a trip to San Francisco in January—say the shelter model itself is inadequate. They're preaching a gospel brought to town last year by San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee, who's been talking to anyone who will listen about his city's **Navigation Center**, an invite-only shelter where the homeless are given access to extensive services and don't have to leave until they find housing. Hales and Alpert—along with Portland Housing Commissioner Dan Saltzman and Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury—toured the center in late January. Alpert says Hales would like to explore similar offerings.

Alpert is very up front about the fact this is all an experiment. He says the city will try these things for six months or so, and determine what works and what doesn't. He also plans to go before city council in coming weeks to request roughly \$5 million in general fund money that hasn't been allocated for other purposes, he says, to help get the effort off the ground.

One thing that will be interesting: Watching which bureaus buy into the system. Hales, after all, doesn't control many of the bureaus that sweep most often, such as parks, transportation, water, and environmental services. Alpert made clear that the commissioners at the helm of those departments can decide for themselves if they want to participate.

In particular, Commissioner Nick Fish—who oversees the Portland Water Bureau and Bureau of Environmental Services—has appeared skeptical about the mayor's approach in recent weeks. A former housing commissioner, Fish said recently Hales hasn't communicated any new, overarching policy around homelessness as camps spring up around town. Fish has since met with Alpert about the new proposals, but declined to comment ahead of this afternoon's meeting.

## The Portland Business Journal

### PDC's executive director stepping down

*Jon Bell*

*February 8, 2016*

Five years after he took on the executive director title at the [Portland Development Commission](#), [Patrick Quinton](#) is on his way out.

Quinton and PDC apparently shared the news with [the Oregonian](#) for a story this morning. In it, Quinton noted that he will step down in May or June to pursue "other opportunities."

Quinton rose through the PDC's ranks, having served as [a senior central city manager](#) before taking the group's helm in 2011. Under his watch, Portland's Central Eastside [became the home of several desirable sites](#) as older-line industries moved out and more creative services groups and restaurants moved in. [Portland's startup scene also bustled](#) along the way as PDC launched a bevy of funding initiatives and a program aimed at enhancing Portland's entrepreneurial diversity.

In his five years leading the agency, Quinton also helped spur the redevelopment of the Burnside Bridgehead and orchestrate [PDC's \\$88 million purchase of the U.S. Post Office's facility](#) in the Pearl District. Under Quinton, PDC has also worked to jumpstart new development in Old Town Chinatown, [Lents](#) and the South Waterfront.

But the agency also suffered setbacks along the way. [A proposed Oregon Sustainability Center](#) championed by Mayor [Sam Adams](#) didn't materialize despite strong business support. [A drive to redevelop Centennial Mills stalled](#) and the agency continued to grapple with a drastically reduced workforce.

Specifically, PDC had 213 employees in 2010 and was [down to 95 people a year ago](#).

According to the Oregonian, Quinton does not have another job lined up at the moment.