

The Portland Tribune

City: No general homeless camping testimony at R2DToo Hearing

By Jim Redden

February 16, 2016

The public will not be allowed to testify on Mayor Charlie Hales' new homeless camping policies when the City Council considers relocating the Right 2 Dream Too homeless camp on Thursday, Feb. 18.

Instead, the public will only be allowed to testify on the three agenda items directly related to the proposed move of the camp from Northwest 4th Avenue and Burnside Street to a city-owned parcel at Southeast 3rd Avenue and Harrison Street — a "street vacation" ordinance to increase the size of the parcel and two resolutions authorizing the relocation.

"The Council meeting regarding Right 2 Dream Too is expected to attract a large number of concerned stakeholders who want to testify on the specific issue. The Right 2 Dream Too relocation has gone through more than three years of public process, and people will want to have their say on the final proposed actions. As such, the mayor will limit testimony to the topic of the meeting," says Sara Hottman, Hales' communications director.

The Portland Tribune published an editorial Thursday calling for the public to be allowed to comment on Hales' new policies to allow more homeless camping at the Feb. 18 hearing. There has been no public council hearing on the new policies, which are supported by homeless advocates and opposed by some neighborhood associations.

Hottman says that people who want to comment on the new homeless camping policies may sign up for to speak under the "communications" item at the beginning of Wednesday council agendas. Such requests must be made in advance to the Council Clerk, however, and all five slots are already taken for next Wednesday's meeting.

Hottman also says the public can contact the mayor and commissioners via e-mail, phone calls, and social media.

A previous story about Hales' new homeless camping policies can be read at portlandtribune.com/pt/9-news/292500-169753-hales-portlanders-should-tolerate-more-homeless-camping.

Portland area home prices continue to spike

By Jim Redden

February 12, 2016

Home prices continued to increase in the Portland area in January, even though the supply of homes for sale also increased over December's record low level.

According to the Regional Multiple Listing Service, the median home price in January 2016 was \$310,000, an increase of 8.1 percent over the previous January.

Prices continued increasing, even though the supply of available homes increased from 1.2 months in December to 1.8 months in January.

Prices varied throughout the region, with the highest being \$440,000 in West Portland and the lowest being \$216,000 in Central Vancouver.

The report can be read at www.rmlsweb.com/v2/public2/loadfile.asp?id=8716

The Portland Business Journal

Portland seeks feedback on higher height limits, other planning Central City Strategies

By Andy Giegerich

February 11, 2016

Portland's major central planning initiative is about to receive its fullest hearing yet.

[The newest Central City 2035 plan](#) version, to which 8,000-plus people contributed and which offers planning steerage in 10 districts, hit the streets Thursday. The plan could guide land use and other strategies in such districts as the West End, the Lloyd District, South Waterfront, and the Central Eastside, along with downtown.

Portland planners are making the Central City 2035 Plan Discussion Draft available for community comments.

The draft includes five volumes, and provides such suggestions as:

- An "Innovation Quadrant" between South Waterfront and the Central Eastside.
- A "new transportation infrastructure" in the area.
- [New rules on floor area and building height limits.](#)
- A new affordable housing fund.
- The city is also examining allowing greater heights for buildings around bridgeheads "to increase development potential and activate the waterfront."
- The city is putting the plan on display between Feb. 22 and Feb. 26 at 1900 S.W. Fourth Ave. and between Feb. 29 and March 4 at the Olympic Mills Building, 107 S.E. Washington St..

The Skanner

City Council Adopts North/Northeast Housing Strategy

By Donovan M. Smith

February 11, 2016

Distribution of government dollars often makes for a contentious debate. But the [pledge of \\$20 million in Portland Development Commission funds for affordable housing](#) was one of the more talked about issues in 2014.

That move -- a response to concerns about affordable housing in the area -- led to the adoption of the [North/Northeast Housing Strategy](#) and an accompanying oversight committee charged with creating a plan of action for the funds.

Though the Portland City Council voted unanimously [Jan. 28](#) to adopt the plan, which details how the dollars will be used in the next five years, members gave an official presentation of the document at city hall this past Wednesday.

Committee chair Bishop Steven Holt called the council's adoption of the plan "a significant moment" in the history of Portland.

The plan works across four areas of concern in the Interstate Urban Renewal Area: preventing displacement, creating new homeowners, creating rental homes and land acquisition.

Some of these dollars have already been put to work in the form of home repairs throughout North and Northeast Portland, with the bulk of the grants being awarded to African American-owned households.

The biggest portion of the monies, \$4.5 million, has been set aside for redeveloping land owned by Portland Housing Bureau between Northeast Martin Luther King Boulevard and Cook Street and Ivy for "family-friendly" affordable housing.

The number of homes created, and households assisted, is expected to total around 450.

To ensure that families most directly affected by gentrification get first dibs on these new developments, the committee has included a "[preference policy](#)" that would track award dollars based on the amount of urban renewal activity that occurred where they lived.

"For example, if you are a family member, grandparent or parent or yourself, who appears on the list of homes that were taken by eminent domain or condemned by the city in order to do urban renewal actions in the past, that would be in a priority ranking," committee member and PSU Professor Lisa Bates said on Wednesday.

The plan notes North and Northeast Portland were, just two decades ago, home to the highest concentration of African Americans in the city and state, but does not address race outright.

Fritz called the preference policy "groundbreaking," but expressed concern over how families will be chosen. She noted the high number of people who have been displaced in the urban renewal area, which stretches from around the Lloyd Center area to the St. John's neighborhood.

Bates agreed with Fritz, saying these funds were insufficient to return all families to the neighborhood, but that officials had yet to determine a system to regulate how families would be chosen. Fritz suggested a lottery as a possible solution.

Virgie Ruiz, who attended schools throughout Northeast Portland and now works at Self Enhancement Inc., said she hopes that in returning families back to the area, they'll be able to enjoy its new amenities, like improved schools. She also cites the recent historic turnarounds in graduation rates at Jefferson and Roosevelt High Schools as an example.

"I'm hoping by people returning to this inner city area, they'll be able to do better and go to college, and get skills needed to be successful," Ruiz said.

The committee is also in the early stages of creating a plan that would help introduce people into the neighborhoods given the drastic growth and changes they've seen over the year.

Also on the group's agenda is developing a set of "best practices" that utilizes its TIF dollars to support economic growth among the returning populations. Though details on the partnership were scant at the Feb. 3 meeting, Holt spoke of leveraging excess funds borrowing against future growth in property taxes in urban renewal districts to spur many more developments in the area. Raising property values in a process known as Tax Increment Financing is a part of the strategy that will occur over the next five years.