

## The Oregonian

### Portland gets call from EPA to review lead-prevention efforts

*By Brad Schmidt*

*March 11, 2016*

With a renewed sense of vigilance in the wake of the water crisis in Flint, Michigan, federal regulators are reaching out to water providers nationwide – including in Portland – to review safeguards to prevent lead poisoning.

On Monday, Portland Commissioner Nick Fish received a phone call from Dennis McLerran, the EPA's regional administrator. On Tuesday, Michael Stuhr, director of the Portland Water Bureau, participated in a conference call with federal regulators.

The purpose of the call: Portland told regulators about its efforts to monitor lead as the bureau embarks on major changes within its water-delivery system, Stuhr said in an interview Thursday.

Stuhr stressed that Portland is in compliance with federal regulations for lead and copper. Stuhr said the city hasn't received any official written notice from regulators and there's no reason for concern locally.

"We are absolutely compliant," he said. "Flint prompted the call. There's heightened concern everywhere about lead and copper."

Fish, who oversees the Water Bureau, was unavailable for comment Thursday. He's expected to be free Friday morning and this post will be updated.

The regional office of the EPA has not responded to questions this week from The Oregonian/OregonLive about its contact with Portland.

Portland's water-delivery system does not include lead pipes, and city officials in recent weeks have gone on a public-relations blitz to insist Portland isn't like Flint. But officials have noted that some plumbing for homes built between 1970 and 1985 have lead solder that is susceptible to corrosion.

Officials test for lead twice a year at a sampling of at least 100 homes. Since the spring of 2007, officials have reported just one instance – fall of 2013 – when results exceeded the 15 parts per billion standard for more public outreach. Results of that testing were released in February 2014.

Stuhr said city officials told regulators about their efforts to monitor lead as the Water Bureau makes major changes to its system. Last year, officials shut down open-air reservoirs at Mt. Tabor and this year they'll disconnect open-air reservoirs at Washington Park. The Water Bureau also has a new intake system at the Bull Run watershed that may impact water temperature.

As a result of those changes, officials may need to control the acidity of water by tweaking the amount of sodium hydroxide that's injected.

Portland contracted with an outside consultant in 2014 to study the system and make recommendations. Work was supposed to wrap up at the end of 2015 but, Stuhr said, it's not complete and a report won't be available until this summer.

Stuhr said Portland will invite regulators to review findings. A letter should go out within two weeks.

Together, he said, they'll decide if next steps are needed.

"What do we need to do, if we need to do anything more?" he said. "Or can we do less?"

## The Portland Tribune

### Plotting a more perfect Portland

*By Steve Law*

*March 10, 2016*

*You'd think Portland's central city would be pretty much built up by now — 165 years after the city was incorporated.*

*Nonetheless, one-third of the land in the inner city is still vacant or underdeveloped, not counting roads and other rights of way. It's those areas — including lands around the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, Lloyd District, Goose Hollow and the Morrison and Hawthorne bridgeheads — that figure to get transformed in the next 20 years, and city planners hope to guide that growth with the release of a new Central City 2035 plan.*

#### **Third in a series**

Portland vaulted onto the world map for urban planning in 1972 with its renowned Downtown Plan, which envisioned a transit mall along Southwest Fifth and Sixth avenues, a big public gathering place that morphed into Pioneer Courthouse Square, and replacing Harbor Drive with a pedestrian and bike promenade along the Willamette River.

In 1988, the city expanded its horizons beyond downtown with a Central City Plan. That called for expanding the transit mall to the north, adding an esplanade on the east side of the river, creating an industrial sanctuary in the inner eastside, and starting to bring residents to an old railyard area that came to be known as the Pearl District.

Central City 2035, more than five years in the making, is Round Three in Portland's efforts to reshape its downtown, and it's out now in draft form, awaiting public reaction.

The draft plan — more than 900 pages — is the most ambitious and “holistic” one yet, says Paddy Tillett, a prominent urban designer with Portland's ZGF Architects LLP.

“It's altogether a bigger vision,” Tillett says. “It looks at how inner neighborhoods and outer ones work together and complement each other.”

Unlike flowery plans that often gather dust, this one has teeth: hundreds of pages of proposed zoning and urban design changes for a vast swath of pricey Portland real estate. Prime

examples include surface parking lots owned by Portland's Goodman family, some of which are being rezoned to promote downtown towers.

### **Next big ideas**

Central City 2035, like the two plans preceding it, has its share of what planners are calling "big ideas." One is the "Green Loop," a six-mile promenade for pedestrians, joggers and bicyclists. Those people could meander along a vibrant shop-lined boulevard, running north along the Park Blocks to the Broadway Bridge, down through the inner eastside and back downtown over the Tilikum Crossing.

Another big idea is the Innovation Quadrant. Planners hope to lure 21st-century health and tech jobs spun off from the Oregon Health & Science University, its emerging Knight Cancer Research Center and Portland State University, on lands just across the river near OMSI. Industrial zoning there is being expanded to allow a broader mix of employers.

The plan also calls for new ways to link downtown to the Willamette River, by, for example, allowing coffee shops, boat-rental kiosks or other retail uses at Gov. Tom McCall Waterfront Park.

An overriding theme is accommodating a surge of new residents. Planners expect the central city will accommodate 30 percent of Portland's population growth over the next 20 years, on a land mass that's only 3 percent of the city.

"We really expect the number of residential units in the central city to double," says Joe Zehnder, the city's chief planner. "And we're going to use this to create complete neighborhoods."

Most development will be handled by the private sector, Zehnder says, but Central City 2035 helps provide the "bones" to work from. "We make very important investments in the bones," he says.

Here are some of the key features:

- **Protect the river while recognizing it as jewel of the central city**

The plans calls for doubling the setback — a strip of land where active development can't take place — from 25 feet to 50 feet. A new environmental overlay zone would bring added natural resource protections. Property owners who preserve open space would get the right to build taller buildings elsewhere.

Strict 1972-era building-height limits at the Morrison and Hawthorne bridgeheads would be loosened. The idea is to link downtown and the inner eastside to the river more with clusters of high-rises at the bridgeheads.

Those might include a relocated Multnomah County Courthouse, the James Beard Public Market project and buildings planned by the Goodmans.

"It will expand the lively core of downtown right down to the river," Tillett says. Short buildings don't bring enough people to support a vibrant retail environment, he says.

Planners hope to improve public swimming access along the river and lure new river-oriented developments, such as near OMSI.

- **More residents, better neighborhoods**

Creating a “complete neighborhood” means bringing another dog park to the central city and a public school to the South Waterfront. Old Town/Chinatown would get middle-income residents. Goose Hollow will become a “full-on mixed-use neighborhood,” Zehnder says.

New housing would be encouraged along Naito Parkway and the South Park Blocks, along with Grand Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard on the eastside, along the latest streetcar line.

- **Changing the character of streets**

Southwest Jefferson Street would be recast through zoning and streetscape improvements as the “main street” of the Goose Hollow neighborhood, to enable mixed-use and high-density residential with ground-floor shops, says Rachael Hoy, a senior planner on the Central City team.

Salmon Street would be reshaped as a “signature” east-west street connecting residential areas to the west all the way to the river. That area lacks a “main street,” says Mindy Brooks, a city planner. “In the plan we’re thinking it’s Salmon.”

- **Affordable housing**

By accommodating so many new residents, the central city will take growth pressures off more residential neighborhoods, Zehnder says. Adding to the housing supply, it’s hoped, makes housing less scarce and less expensive.

The Central City 2035 Plan will include a new “density bonus” system, enabling developers to add a few stories to their buildings if they add some affordable housing units, or put money into a fund to support them. A series of other density bonuses will be scrapped, to put more attention on affordable housing.

- **Green Loop**

While still in the discussion phase, planners figure the Green Loop will provide a safe route for casual bicyclists, separated from joggers and pedestrians, to meander along an “urban promenade.”

The eastside route is envisioned somewhere between Sixth and Ninth avenues. Planners are thinking big, hoping the Green Loop becomes a signature tourist destination.

- **Expanding retail district**

Through zoning changes and other features, the plan calls for extending the downtown retail core to the north and east toward the river. One provision would require that at least 60 percent of new shop storefronts be glass, up from the current 25 percent, Hoy says.

Central City 2035 incorporates elements from three “quadrant” plans adopted earlier for the westside, inner Northeast and inner Southeast. There also are a host of transportation improvements being considered along with the planning, zoning and urban design changes.

Central City 2035 is a key part of the revised Comprehensive Plan the City Council is expected to approve this year. Approval of the Central City 2035 plan will come slightly later, as the first amendment to the new Comp Plan.

City planners set a high bar with the original Downtown Plan, and hope this is a worthy successor. "This is building on something that was revered nationwide and worldwide," says Eden Dabbs, spokeswoman for the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. "I think it's going to make it a great place not just to work and visit, but a great place to live."

## **Council to consider suing Monsanto over PCB pollution in Superfund area**

*By Jim Redden*  
*March 10, 2016*

The City Council will consider suing the Monsanto Company over PCB pollution in the Willamette River and Columbia Slough next Wednesday.

The potential suit will be discussed as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is preparing to release its Portland Harbor Superfund cleanup plan. The city is potentially liable for some if not much of the cost because the EPA has declared it contributed to the pollution.

The resolution prepared by the City Attorney's Office says Monsanto is the only company that produced PCBs, formally known as polychlorinated biphenyls. PCBs are man-made toxic chemicals that are a known carcinogen, and were banned in the United States in 1979, but they remain in the environment for an extended period of time.

The resolution can be read [here](#).

According to the resolution, PCBs have been found in sediments in the Superfund area, and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality is requiring the city to increase its efforts to identify the sources and reduce the discharges of PCBs into the city stormwater drainage system.

The city is currently conducting an online survey of how Portlanders feel it should respond to the plan. A Portland Tribune story on the survey can be read at [portlandtribune.com/pt/9-news/296738-174026-city-wants-to-gauge-public-views-on-superfund-cleanup-priorities](http://portlandtribune.com/pt/9-news/296738-174026-city-wants-to-gauge-public-views-on-superfund-cleanup-priorities)

## **The Portland Business Journal**

### **Portland readies plans to (legally) pounce on Monsanto**

*By James Cronin*  
*March 10, 2016*

Portland's attorney is hoping to hit multinational pesticide and weedkiller maker Monsanto Co. with a lawsuit.

City Attorney Tracy Reeve on Thursday said she wants to sue the controversial chemical company over pollution in the Columbia Slough and Willamette River. In particular, she's hoping to recover whatever public dollars "have been, and will be" spent to address

polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, manufactured by Monsanto. The known carcinogens have been found in both waterways, according to an email from Reeve's office.

Before she can file such a lawsuit, she needs authorization from the city council, which will hear the resolution on on March 16.

St. Louis-based Monsanto did not immediately respond to a request for comment Thursday.

PCBs are toxic, made by humans and are found worldwide in oceans and rivers. The chemicals were banned in the U.S. in 1979, but remain in the environment for years.

"Monsanto was the only manufacturer of PCBs in the United States from the 1930s until they were banned," according to Reeve's office.

"Court documents show that Monsanto continued to manufacture and distribute PCBs long after it knew of the dangers they presented to the natural environment and to human health," the statement continued. "Monsanto concealed those dangers in order to continue to profit from the sale of PCBs. The City of Portland has expended significant public funds investigating and responding to the presence of PCBs in its rivers and sloughs, and will continue to do so to protect the health of Portlanders and the environment."

The statement noted the city's drinking water comes from the Bull Run Watershed, "and is clean and safe to drink."

The council resolution will be heard on March 16.