

The Portland Tribune

Hales denies ordering homeless sweep for sake of annual race

By Jim Redden

July 28, 2016

Mayor Charlie Hales is denying accusations from homeless activists that he originally ordered campers off the Springwater Corridor Trail on Aug. 1 to accommodate the 35th annual Hood to Coast Run.

Hales pushed the cleanup back to Sept. 1 on Wednesday, saying social service providers told him they need more time to accommodate the approximately 500 people estimated to be displaced.

The run begins at Timberline Lodge on Aug. 26. The route includes the entire 21-mile length of the trail, from Portland's inner east side to Boring.

Hales spokeswoman Sara Hottman says the mayor did not know when the run was scheduled or the route when he announced the cleanup two weeks ago. Instead, she says Hales was responding to increasing problems created by the increasingly visible campers along the corridor.

"The mayor wasn't aware of the Hood to Coast dates until a reporter brought it up in an interview. The cleanup is being conducted because of the urgent public safety issues caused by camping in the corridor, as well as the environmental impacts," Hottman says.

Jamie Partridge, a longtime Portland activist affiliated with Portland Tenants United, isn't buying that explanation.

"So, what is the 'tipping point,' Mayor Hales? Public safety and environmental concerns, or 10,000 runners who want to use the trail for one day in pristine condition?" Partridge asks. "These people have nowhere to go. They include people in wheelchairs, on crutches, whole families who will be forced to camp in the very neighborhoods that now complain about their presence on city land."

Portland Tenants United hosted a gathering of homeless campers along the corridor on Sunday, where many agreed with Partridge. James Jones and Valerie Kellar said they plan to stay, hoping others will understand they have nowhere else to go.

"I'm 69, I'm half blind, I have a bad heart. Go ahead, taze me, officer, please," said Jones, a Vietnam War veteran.

But neighbors and business owners along the corridor have been protesting the increasingly visible campers for months, saying they are causing livability and health problems. One nearby homeowner, who asked not to be identified, said she stepped on a needle someone threw onto her porch just that morning.

"All these advocates are here for the homeless, but there is no one here for us. I hate my life. I hate my house. I don't want to live here anymore," she said.

Hales announced the pending cleanup July 15. Since then, outreach workers have been contacting them. Hales says he believes many, if not most, of the homeless will end up camping in other parts of town, but that the corridor will be off-limits to camping in the future.

Alternative homeless campsite has contaminated soil

By Jim Redden

July 28, 2016

Portland is preparing to offer homeless campers along the Springwater Corridor an alternative campsite that includes soil contaminated with arsenic, lead and potentially harmful chemicals.

The so-called Kalbrener Property is a five acre parcel owned by the Bureau of Environmental Service near Southeast 105th Avenue and Reedway Street. As first reported by the Portland Mercury on June 8, it has been used for years as a dumping ground for soil remove from around Johnson Creek. Public records show that some of the soil is contaminated.

The city authorized a study of using the property for a homeless camp June 2. It was authorized in a Memorandum of Understand between BES and the Office of Management and Finance, which has been helping to manage some homeless camps in the city. The MOU says Mayor Charlie Hales had requested the property be used to temporarily shelter homeless people, and acknowledges it “has potential enviornmental and human health risks due to contaminated soil placed on the Property by unknown parties, and neighboring property owners have expressed concerns about he current presence of unauthorized individuals trespassing on and near the property.”

Among other things, the MOU directs BES and OMF to identify site hazards and measure necessary to protect potential users of the property.

You can read the June 2 MOU [here](#).

Although only a little more than a month has passed since the MOU was signed, a new agreement related to the coming homeless sweep of the Springwater Corridor says the city shall “prepare” the property, presumably for homeless camping. That agreement is a new MOU between the city of the Oregon Law Center, which represents a number of homeless campers living in the corridor. The new MOU also says the city will not force campers to move until Sept. 1, and will take specific steps to identify, collect and preserve their personal possessions.

Hales had originally said the campers must move by Aug. 1 but announced he was delaying the date a month after the new MOU was signed on July 27. When he made the announcement, Hales said he is concerned there are not nearly enough available shelter beds for the homeless who will be displaced, and that many if not most of them will end up camping in other parts of the city.

You can read the July 27 MOU [here](#).

It is unclear whether the Kalbrener Property will be ready for city-sanctioned camping by Sept. 1.

The City Council is also scheduled to discuss using a large vacant warehouse at Terminal 1 for a homeless shelter on Aug. 8. You can read the most recent Portland Tribune on that issue at pamplinmedia.com/pt/9-news/316485-195717-opposition-surfaces-to-idea-of-using-terminal-1-for-homeless-shelter.

Hales postpones Springwater Corridor sweep until Sept. 1

By Jim Redden

July 27, 2016

Mayor Charlie Hales said late Wednesday afternoon that he was postponing the homeless sweep of the Springwater Corridor until Sept. 1.

Hales said he delayed a sweep of the 21-mile corridor between Portland and Boring for a month because social service providers have told him they cannot accommodate the 500 homeless people estimated to be displaced from it.

"I said before that we resisted moving campers from the area because we don't yet have good options for all the people living there. That continues to be true. Recognizing that, I want to ensure this cleanup is humane and compassionate as possible. Adjusting to social service providers' requests is part of that," Hales said in a July 27 press release.

Hales ordered the sweep on June 15, saying it is necessary to solve livability and health problems caused by the campers. "I know neighbors to the Springwater are dealing with very real problems, and I hope that initial steps now and a major cleanup in one month will balance our need to treat people humanely, with our need to restore the Springwater to a public asset," Hales said.

The release also said the delay was negotiated with the Oregon Law Center, a law firm representing the homeless. According to the release, recognizing that urgent public safety issues and environmental damage are occurring, the Portland Police Bureau will increase patrols along the corridor. The city will provide biohazard cleanup, will begin placing dumpsters along the corridor, and work with advocates on some garbage cleanup prior to Sept. 1.

"I said before that we resisted moving campers from the area because we don't yet have good options for all the people living there," Hales said. "That continues to be true. Recognizing that, I want to ensure this cleanup is humane and compassionate as possible. Adjusting to social service providers' requests is part of that."

The delay pushes the cleanup past the annual Hood to Coast Run, which is scheduled to send more than 10,000 runners along the corridor on Aug. 26. Some homeless advocates had accused Hales of timing the sweep to accommodate the run, an accusation his office denied.

Some homeless advocates have urged civil disobedience against the sweep, including refusing to leave and moving into the upscale Eastmoreland neighborhood where Hales lives.

The delay will give the City Council time to debate opening a large homeless shelter in a former warehouse at Terminal 1. That hearing is scheduled for Aug. 10. Commissioner Dan Saltzman has made the proposal, which is opposed by Commissioner Nick Fish, who oversees the Bureau of Environmental Services, which owns Terminal 1. It is for sale and bid are scheduled to be received by Aug. 15.

See a related story: portlandtribune.com/pt/9-news/316485-195717-opposition-surfaces-to-idea-of-using-terminal-1-for-homeless-shelter.

Willamette Week

Threat of Lawsuit Forces Mayor Charlie Hales to Delay Springwater Corridor Homeless Sweep

By Rachel Monahan

July 27, 2016

Reversing his plans because of a legal threat from homeless advocates, Mayor Charlie Hales has agreed to delay sweeping homeless camps from East Portland's Springwater Corridor bike trail for another month, until Sept. 1.

The mayor's spokeswoman says the delay was forced by the threat of a lawsuit by homeless legal advocates the Oregon Law Center.

As part of a formal agreement signed with the Oregon Law Center, the mayor is giving social service providers more time to reach homeless people, particularly those with disabilities.

The city also agreed not to enforce the camping ban on the corridor until then.

A sweep of the Springwater Corridor, where as many as 500 people are living in one of the largest homeless encampments in the nation, was previously scheduled for Monday, Aug. 1.

"The agreement identifies an extension to Sept. 1 in order to avoid suit," the mayor's spokeswoman Sara Hottman acknowledges.

Hottman declined to provide a copy of the agreement, referring the reporter to the city's public records system.

"I know neighbors to the Springwater are dealing with very real problems, and I hope that initial steps now and a major cleanup in one month will balance our need to treat people humanely, with our need to restore the Springwater to a public asset," says Hales in a statement.

The mayor's press release fails to mention the lawsuit but mentions an agreement with the Oregon Law Center.

Update at 5:55 pm: Here is the full memorandum of understanding between the mayor's office and the Oregon Law Center.

The memorandum shows that the city agreed to delay the sweep until Sept. 1 after a July 22 demand notice filed by the Oregon Law Center, threatening the possibility of a lawsuit.

The Law Center filed the demand letter in Multnomah County Circuit Court on behalf of 11 people living along the Springwater Corridor.

The memorandum also requires Hales' office to post notice of the Sept. 1 sweep on Aug. 1, and to begin preparing a city-sanctioned homeless camp at Southeast 104th Avenue and Reedway. That property, known as the Kalbrener site, was discussed last month in *The Portland Mercury*.

The city is allowed to start picking up unclaimed garbage now, and can increase police patrols of the bike trail to crack down on crimes.

Here is the mayor's full statement.

Mayor Charlie Hales today announced that the major cleanup planned for the Springwater Corridor will be postponed until Thursday, Sept. 1, in response to social service provider, advocate, and disabled individuals' requests for more time to relocate.

Mayor Hales on July 15 announced that homeless campers would be cleared from the Springwater Corridor, in response to urgent public safety issues and environmental damage in the area. The City-County Joint Office of Homeless Services planned for two weeks of intensive outreach — budgeting for additional outreach resources on the corridor — prior to the Aug. 1 cleanup.

During regular check-ins, social service providers have informed the Mayor's Office that they needed more time to reach more vulnerable people on the corridor. Advocates met with Mayor Hales and, while many of their requests were already being addressed, they also asked to allow people more time to find someplace else to go. The Oregon Law Center told the mayor that their clients — people who are homeless and with disabilities — could not reasonably pack their belongings and relocate in just two weeks.

"Cascadia's Housing Outreach Team has been working closely with the Mayor's office and many other community partners to provide intensive outreach to the folks along the Springwater Corridor over the past two weeks. Although there has been significant outreach made, addressing mental health, addictions and housing needs for these individuals while appropriately connecting people with services is crucial and not something that is accomplished overnight," said Derald Walker, president and CEO of Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare. "The extension to allow for more outreach will be invaluable for the health and safety of our clients, and all Portlanders."

Through negotiations with clients represented by Oregon Law Center, Mayor Hales has pushed the major Springwater cleanup date out one month. The City and Oregon Law Center clients signed a formal agreement in which City agrees not to enforce the ban on camping and structures until Sept. 1. The agreement also formalizes the date that the clients will leave the corridor.

Recognizing that urgent public safety issues and environmental damage are occurring, the Portland Police Bureau will increase patrols along the corridor. The City will provide biohazard cleanup, will begin placing dumpsters along the corridor, and work with advocates on some garbage cleanup prior to Sept. 1.

"I said before that we resisted moving campers from the area because we don't yet have good options for all the people living there," Mayor Hales said. "That continues to be true. Recognizing that, I want to ensure this cleanup is humane and compassionate as possible. Adjusting to social service providers' requests is part of that.

"I know neighbors to the Springwater are dealing with very real problems, and I hope that initial steps now and a major cleanup in one month will balance our need to treat people humanely, with our need to restore the Springwater to a public asset."

During August, service providers and advocates will continue outreach, and will work to ensure campers are aware that they must leave before Sept. 1. Signage will be posted informing people of the date, and Portland Police and park rangers will also help spread the word.

“As a community partner working to address concerns regarding the Springwater Corridor, we are deeply concerned about the well-being of our community’s most vulnerable citizens who are living outdoors in these areas, particularly youth and young adults under 25 for who we may be able to provide immediate safety services,” said Dennis Lundberg, Director of Homeless Youth Services at Janus Youth Programs. “We are equally sensitive to the needs and concerns of the residents of these areas, as well as the broader community that utilizes these public spaces.

“We are concerned that there is evidence of very vulnerable and highly traumatized young people embedded in these camps with much older adults. The additional time the Mayor has proposed will allow our street outreach teams to explore these areas more closely, in an effort to identify potential youth and, most importantly, build the trusting relationships necessary to meaningfully connect these young people to resources and more viable long term communities of support.

“We know that if we are not trauma-informed in our methodology, we will absolutely lose these youth in the process of cleaning the Springwater Corridor and we could unintentionally drive them into less safe situations far beyond the reach of supportive, caring professional adults.”

The Portland Mercury

Mayor Charlie Hales is Pushing Back His Springwater Corridor Sweep

*By Dirk VanderHart
July 27, 2016*

In the face of bitter outcry and imminent litigation, and with advocates around the country watching, Mayor Charlie Hales this afternoon pulled back on a promise to sweep hundreds of homeless campers from the Springwater Corridor beginning August 1.

In a statement issued shortly before 5 pm, the mayor's office announced the cleanup will now begin on September 1, a timeline which the mayor says will give more time for people to prepare.

"I think it's both the right thing to do tactically and the right thing to do in humane terms," Hales tells the Mercury.

The move comes as homeless campers and advocates planned to set up an "economic refugee camp" for displaced campers, or stand their ground in the face of cleanup crews and police. The mayor and his staff had met with advocates and homeless residents on Monday about the planned sweep, but just yesterday said the effort would still continue as planned.

A final straw in Hales' decision, then, seems to be a meeting Tuesday with representatives of the Oregon Law Center, which has repeatedly sued on behalf of homeless campers. Those representatives said they planned to file for an injunction if the mayor moved forward with the suit. They'd sent a demand letter to the city on July 22.

Hales' office acknowledged the OLC's role in the decision in his statement, saying the center "told the mayor that their clients — people who are homeless and with disabilities — could not reasonably pack their belongings and relocate in just two weeks." It made no mention of the threatened injunction. Instead, the statement leans heavily on word from social services groups that more time was needed "to reach more vulnerable people on the corridor."

Hales says it was all of the above. He says homeless people he met with on Monday "were good people trying to make a difference out there," but acknowledged the threat of legal action was "persuasive."

Monica Goracke, managing attorney at the Oregon Law Center, confirms she met with the mayor's office Tuesday prepared to file a lawsuit against the city on behalf of 11 disabled homeless residents—among them an Iraq War vet who was injured by an improvised explosive device, and a person who lost toes to frostbite after a camp sweep last year. The lawsuit was already written out, waiting only to be filed.

"Our clients are really happy that the mayor agreed to postpone the sweep until September 1," Goracke says. "They are vulnerable and do not have anywhere to go. We requested reasonable accommodation on their behalf to obtain more time to move and to have a clearer understanding of the plans to make sure they didn't lose critical survival belongings."

If the mayor didn't budge, Goracke says, she was prepared to ask a judge extend the effort into a class-action suit, representing hundreds of people with disabilities camping along the Springwater.

But that didn't prove necessary. Goracke secured a memorandum of understanding [PDF] with the city, certifying that no cleanup would occur before September 1 in exchange for the OLC agreeing not to file "the proposed legal action." The arrangement still allows the city to post notice about an impending cleanup, and to "remove garbage and debris which do not constitute the personal belongings of disabled homeless persons..."

And the agreement makes clear that the city's still interested in a piece of Bureau of Environmental Services property not far from the Springwater as a potential site for a homeless encampment. As the Mercury reported last month, this plot, known as the Kalbrenner Property, is plagued by mounds of contaminated waste. The MOU says the city reserves the right to "prepare 'Kalbrenner site' near 104th Avenue and Reedway..."

The decision to pull back eliminates a bunch of pressing issues for the mayor's office (though it won't likely find many fans among Lents residents who've been frantically protesting the camping along the Springwater). Not only does it take a lawsuit off the table, it potentially delays planned confrontations, and might well quiet threats to move homeless campers onto a median in Eastmoreland. The move is apparently not enough to stop a "Stop the Sweeps Rally" planned at City Hall tomorrow afternoon. Activists planning the rally are saying on a Facebook page for the event it will carry on.

Hales said this evening he still plans to bolster police patrols and "biohazard" cleanup along the trail, and that the city will place more dumpsters. And he blasted rumors—voiced repeatedly in recent days—that his planned August 1 cleanup was aimed solely at making the trail more passable for the Hood To Coast relay scheduled on August 26 and 27.

"I still don't know which day the Hood 2 Coast day is," Hales said. "When is it?"

News of the delayed cleanup reached social services providers around the city shortly before it was released to the public. That message, sent by a staffer named Lucas Hillier who works on the mayor's Housing/Homelessness Initiative Team, led with the sentence "It is my distinct pleasure to send this to all of you..."

Here is Hales' full statement.

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During regular check-ins, social service providers have informed the Mayor's Office that they needed more time to reach more vulnerable people on the corridor. Advocates met with Mayor Hales and, while many of their requests were already being addressed, they also asked to allow people more time to find someplace else to go. The Oregon Law Center told the mayor that their clients — people who are homeless and with disabilities — could not reasonably pack their belongings and relocate in just two weeks.

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Portland's Planned Springwater Sweep Has National Advocates Talking—And Not in A Good Way

*By Dirk VanderHart
July 27, 2016*

Eric Tars is a senior attorney with the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty. When we spoke this morning, Tars was at a conference focused on ending homelessness in Washington, DC, and less than an hour out from addressing a room full of attendees. His subject: "How to Offer Alternatives to Criminalization of Homelessness."

In the past week or so, the substance of that presentation has changed a bit. Tars, who last visited Portland in June, had planned on spotlighting Mayor Charlie Hales' controversial "safe-sleep policy" during the talk.

"We were really interested in this policy and wanted to see if it was what it said it was," Tars said of a visit to Portland last month. "We were all excited, because the mayor's office said, 'There were some hiccups in the rollout and we could have done some things better, but in general we're happy with how these things are working.' The advocates were saying the same thing."

But Tars said he's had to tone down his planned praise for Portland's approach. Hales has since voiced doubts about the policy, and is coordinating a massive sweep of hundreds of homeless people living along the Springwater Corridor.

That decision, Tars says, goes against precisely what made the mayor's policy exciting in the first place: An acknowledgment that it doesn't make sense to push people around when you've got no better options for them. Hales has said the Springwater has become too unsafe—or at least too unsafe-seeming—to allow the camping there to continue.

As we point out in this week's paper, it's not as though there are substantial new resources that will help the homeless along the Springwater stay off the street, once pushed elsewhere. That's got advocates plotting ways to fight back against the sweep—from a planned "refugee camp" on an as-yet unannounced plot of land, to staying put in protest, to potentially posting up in one of the city's posher neighborhoods.

The Springwater Corridor was never meant to explicitly be part of the safe-sleep policy. When the policy took effect in February, camping along the trail was already too dense for the plan to make much sense (it allows small groups of six people or less to camp overnight, as long as they take their tents down by 7 am). Tars says that doesn't matter.

"It would seem that even if the policy itself didn't exactly apply, that the logic that the city had come to—that it really doesn't make sense to push people around like this without a place to put them—that it should equally apply here," Tars says.

That notion, he points out, was laid out explicitly in a law that the city of Indianapolis enacted earlier this year. The ordinance required the city and county to identify a place to house or shelter homeless campers before they could be swept.

It makes sense Tars is pushing that policy. His organization closely tracks laws that criminalize and sweep homelessness, arguing they are frequently far more detrimental than helpful. Lately, they've been joined in that sentiment by the federal government. The US Department of Justice filed a much-discussed brief last year that argued against anti-camping laws in places where there are no other options. That brief didn't result in an actual ruling, but it's become a powerful rhetorical device.

So how was Tars planning to talk about Portland in his talk?

"I think I will be still sharing the best elements of it, but saying that whereas we would have given Portland a very ringing endorsement before...now we have to say that we're watching the situation much more closely to see how it develops," he says. "If people want to try a policy like this, it does take goodwill to get it working. That goodwill can absolutely be undermined if you go back on your stated position."

The Portland Business Journal

Hales delays Springwater Corridor homeless sweep to Sept. 1

*By Andy Giegerich
July 28, 2016*

Portland's mayor said Wednesday he'll delay a planned sweep of homeless people along the Springwater Corridor.

Charlie Hales made the decision, which pushes out the sweep to Sept. 1, after social services providers, advocates and disabled individuals asked for more time to relocate.

Oregon Law Center representatives told Hales their clients, many of whom are homeless and disabled, couldn't pack and relocate in two weeks. Hales had issued the sweep decree July 15.

"Cascadia's Housing Outreach Team has been working closely with the Mayor's office and many other community partners to provide intensive outreach to the folks along the Springwater Corridor over the past two weeks," said Derald Walker, president and CEO of Cascade Behavioral Healthcare, in a release.

".Although there has been significant outreach made, addressing mental health, addictions and housing needs for these individuals while appropriately connecting people with services is crucial and not something that is accomplished overnight. The extension to allow for more outreach will be invaluable for the health and safety of our clients, and all Portlanders."

Added Hales, "I know neighbors to the Springwater are dealing with very real problems, and I hope that initial steps now and a major cleanup in one month will balance our need to treat people humanely, with our need to restore the Springwater to a public asset."

KGW, a PBJ news partner, broke the story on Wednesday. Their report is above.

Portland's new chief: 'We need your business skills'

By Mike Marshman

July 27, 2016

Imagine if your business has a major leadership change, and several employees have and continue to retire. You are competing for the same pool of candidates as other companies and you face critical staffing challenges.

In addition, some policies and training are not aligned with national best practices and need to be addressed. Finally, you need to build trust within your community as violence across the country has raised an emotional dialogue.

Welcome to the Portland Police Bureau.

We may not be a business, but we face all of the above. Recent events, external and internal, have left the organization reeling. When I was sworn in as chief, I pledged immediate action to make positive changes to stabilize the organization.

First, staffing needs to be addressed. A freeze on hiring years ago, combined with retirements, has left the Bureau facing a shortage of about 100 officers this fall. By 2020, 385 people could retire. Keep in mind, the Bureau currently only has 880 sworn members (authorized 948).

We continue to hire, but not at rates that affect this shortage. It takes about nine months to recruit, test and guide candidates through the selection process until they are ready to be hired. Another 18 months are spent training on and off the street until they complete probation. As we hire, we need to build a diverse Police Bureau that looks like the community we serve. The staffing issue is a huge hurdle, as calls for service and response times are on the upswing.

The city's settlement agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice is also a priority. Prior to becoming chief, I was involved in the early implementation stages of the Bureau's compliance

with the DOJ. I am extremely familiar with the work that needs to be completed and am 100 percent vested in the process.

We have worked hard and it shows:

R Out of 380,738 calls for service last year, less than 1 percent resulted in any kind of force. Even in regard to arrests, only 2.8 percent resulted in force.

R Last year we had six officer-involved shootings (3 were non-fatal) and in 2014, we had three. The public's perception is that there are more. We are also committed to transparency; we release as much information following an incident as we can without jeopardizing the investigation or subsequent review process. Once the process is complete, the investigation is published on our website.

R Our Behavioral Health Unit and our ECIT officers deescalate situations daily where a person is in mental health crisis and is threatening to hurt themselves or others. They are proactive, focused and well-connected with our partners.

Recent officer-involved shootings across the country have raised the national dialogue regarding people's mistrust of police. These emotions are real and police must acknowledge the fear and anger.

The tragic violence directed at officers in Dallas and Baton Rouge should be a driving force to talk and listen to our local community. I've told officers to increase their community engagement efforts. This is a time when each conversation matters. Officers may have hundreds of encounters each month, but most people have a small amount of exposure to police. The officer might not remember that brief dialogue, but the community member will.

This is a time when we need our community, including businesses. We need you to continue to fund and support the Community Academy, which exposes people to what it's like to be an officer. We ask businesses to help us with our outreach efforts, too. A recent example was businesses volunteering with the Bureau's youth camp when it became difficult for officers to do so.

While we understand the business community's frustration with the city's growing homelessness issue, we need your help to advocate for appropriate services and steer the effort to look for ways to provide shelter.

This is a time when we need your business skills. We need people to serve on our advisory boards, review boards and hiring panels. We need people to help us flesh out innovative ideas and provide much-needed feedback.

We will continue to post opportunities on our website and on social media. Please look for them, advocate for us and keep supporting the Bureau during this challenging time.