

The Oregonian

Kimberly Branam picked to lead Portland Development Commission

By Brad Schmidt
08/03/2016

A national search for Portland's next redevelopment director has ended with the unofficial selection of a familiar face: Kimberly Branam.

The Portland Development Commission's board has offered its top job to Branam, who, for the past five years, was second-in-command under former executive director Patrick Quinton.

Branam, 37, would become the city of Portland's youngest bureau director overseeing an agency trying to reinvent itself by becoming more entrepreneurial. Before joining the development commission, Branam, who earned a master's from Harvard, worked as former Mayor Sam Adams' economic development director.

Appointed members of the development commission's five-person board interviewed candidates in July and met Monday in a private meeting to discuss options. Board chairman Tom Kelly accelerated the announcement because word of Branam's selection began leaking out among staff.

Branam beat out two other finalists for the job, Odis Jones who, until recently, headed Detroit's public lighting authority, and Elissa Gertler of regional government Metro.

"I was impressed with the quality of the candidates, and I'm glad we've reached this point in a timely fashion," Kelly said in an email Wednesday to employees. "Finally, and most importantly I firmly believe that Kimberly has the vision, commitment and skills to lead PDC into the future."

During Monday's meeting, the board directed staff to begin negotiating with Branam. The board will meet again next Monday in private to discuss contract terms and, if acceptable, officials will convene a public meeting to formalize an agreement.

Branam will inherit an agency in need of long-term financial stability. With the prospect of cash-rich urban renewal districts drying up, officials have been working on new endeavors, such as owning parking garages or potentially becoming a developer on a portion of the Pearl District post office site they'll soon acquire.

People who know and work with Branam describe her as thoughtful, strategic, collaborative, smart, prepared and composed under pressure.

In fact, one of Branam's biggest supporters was Quinton, who plucked her away from Adams' office in 2011 with a big raise. During his departure, Quinton openly said he believed Branam should succeed him as executive director.

Lawsuit dropped against Portland mayor over homeless camping

By Emily E. Smith

08/03/2016

A list of plaintiffs known as Safe & Livable Portland won't pursue a lawsuit against Mayor Charlie Hales after he decided to end a policy that allowed homeless people to camp overnight on public property.

Hales discontinued his controversial "safe sleep guidelines" Tuesday after a review of the six-month pilot project that began in February.

The guidelines permitted people in groups of up to six between the hours of 9 p.m. and 7 a.m. to set up tents in some public spaces or sleep on sidewalks. But the policy caused confusion, Hales said, leading some to believe that camping was legal in Portland.

The plaintiffs' lawsuit, filed in April, called Hales' plan "impractical" and "irrational," with no chance of solving the city's homelessness crisis.

The plaintiffs included the Portland Business Alliance, the Building Owners and Managers Association of Oregon, Central Eastside Industrial Council, the Overlook Neighborhood Association, the Pearl District Neighborhood Association and Cartlandia, a food-cart pod located along the Springwater Corridor.

"Telling people to sleep on the streets is not humane," their complaint read. "In fact, it is the opposite of humane; as recent events have shown, the Mayor's Camping Policy has resulted in violence, unhealthy conditions, and pain and suffering for our most vulnerable residents."

A Multnomah County judge dismissed the lawsuit last month, but gave the plaintiffs the option of filing an amended complaint with specific examples making clear how the policy affected them.

Attorneys for the plaintiffs told The Oregonian/OregonLive on Monday they planned to re-file on Wednesday. The plaintiffs' group issued a statement Tuesday night saying it will not pursue the case further.

Read the group's statement in full:

"The goal of the Safe & Livable Portland coalition has always been to put an end to Mayor Hales' unlawful camping policy that contributed to the health and safety crisis in the City. Mayor Hales' decision to end his failed camping policy is a step in the right direction. To that end, the coalition will not file its amended complaint against the City.

"However, today's decision does not change the fact that every night, 1,800 Portlanders are still sleeping on the streets.

"Mayor Hales' policy failed, in part, because he ignored the voices of the affected Portland residents, neighborhood communities and businesses. We look forward to a renewed focus from

the City to include the community in finding effective ways to offer safe, long-term housing and support for those experiencing homelessness."

Charlie Hales ends 'safe sleep' policy allowing homeless camping

By Emily E. Smith

08/02/2016

Portland Mayor Charlie Hales reversed course Tuesday on his controversial homeless policy that allowed tent camping and sidewalk sleeping.

Police now have his blessing to crack down on disruptive tent enclaves that spring up on city-owned land and draw a lot of complaints, he said.

But he told The Oregonian/OregonLive he does not want a citywide sweep of homeless camps, and campers who cause few problems for neighbors and need a place to sleep will likely be left in peace.

"What was true last night is also true tonight," Hales said. "We do not have enough shelter beds. Some people are going to sleep outside. Some people are going to put tents up."

Hales said he lifted his blanket "safe sleep guidelines" because some people mistook them for new law.

The policy, enacted in February, was meant to ensure homeless people could sleep through the night without being awoken for violating the city's camping ordinance.

Guidelines permitted tent camping and sidewalk sleeping in groups of six or fewer between 9 p.m. and 7 a.m. on city property. In many cases, people didn't move along in the morning.

"A policy that no one understands was not making the situation better," Hales said Tuesday.

"People believed that camping was made legal," the mayor's office said in a press release, "and outreach workers and law enforcement struggled to educate people about the difference between a safe night's sleep and unsanctioned camping."

Homeless advocates praised Hales' plan six months ago, lauding it for decriminalizing sleeping outside.

Hales said even with the change, homeless people will continue to be treated with compassion if their camp sites are not a nuisance, and they'll be provided with time and storage compartments if their camp is to be dismantled.

High-complaint areas will be the priority for enforcement, he said. Campers will receive 72 hours' written notice before their camp is swept, and any valuables found will be stored for retrieval.

One such area was targeted even before the Tuesday decision.

The city recently announced it would put a stop to camping along the Springwater Corridor, where the homeless population has reached an estimated 500 people in the past year. A sweep is planned for Sept. 1.

Those plans are unchanged by Tuesday's decision, Hales said.

A one-night count in 2015 showed 1,887 people were unsheltered and sleeping on Multnomah County streets. Another 872 were sleeping in shelters.

The city said it will work with social service providers and police to inform homeless campers of the priority locations for enforcement.

The end to the safe sleep policy was effective immediately, but Hales will convene a work group to continue examining the city's policies that impact people sleeping on the streets, his office said.

"Our message today is still dissonant," he said. "It's still illegal to camp in Portland, but there aren't enough shelter beds. That is an ambiguity we have to live in until we have enough shelter beds."

The City Council declared a homelessness emergency last fall, and Hales rolled out the safe sleep guidelines in February as part of several six-month pilot programs aimed at aiding the crisis.

Hales deemed successful a sanitation program, in which the city put out dumpsters and portable toilets for the homeless around the city.

He also expanded a storage program, which gave homeless people a place to secure belongings while they went to appointments or job interviews.

At least four people who were using the city's storage containers have moved into housing and found jobs, according to the mayor's office. The storage program was also credited with reducing complaints and preventing a large encampment from starting.

Another program that will continue is One Point of Contact, a system established to deal with complaints about homelessness. The system, which provides an online form, an app, and an email address for complaints, receives about 200 reports each week and has received more than 3,000 total, the city said.

Tony Hernandez of The Oregonian staff contributed to this report.

The Portland Tribune

Hales: Homeless camping pilot program to end

By Jim Redden

08/02/2016

Mayor Charlie Hales admits that some of his six month pilot projects to help the homeless have not worked as well as hoped.

Among other things, Hales is allowing the "Safe Sleep Guidelines" that allow the homeless to camp overnight on unused city properties to expire. According to a Tuesday press release from Hales' office, the guidelines, "the guidelines caused confusion; people believed that camping was made legal, and outreach workers and law enforcement struggled to educate people about the difference between a safe night's sleep and unsanctioned camping."

According to the release, Hales will convene a workgroup of experts to further examine the city's policies affecting the sleeping outside and to develop recommendations for treating the homeless with compassion and not criminalizing homelessness.

It is unclear how the end of the program will affect those currently sleeping in tents or under tarps around the city. The release says the city will prioritize the enforcement of the anti-camping policies that had been suspended on "areas that have the greatest impact on livability."

According to the release, six pilot programs were launched under the State of Emergency in Housing & Homelessness that the City Council declared last October. They were intended to address different issues housed and unhoused Portlanders face as the city grapples with affordable housing crisis, including homelessness.

"The State of Emergency means three things: first, rapid action; second, deliberate experimentation; and third, real money," Mayor Hales says. "We quickly launched several pilot programs in response to livability issues associated with the homeless crisis. They were deliberate experiments to determine how we should allocate resources."

With the six months ending on Aug. 2, the pilot programs were reviewed for efficacy. The release says some were successful and will continue, some were adjusted to be more effective, and one — "Safe Sleep Guidelines" — will end.

The release says Hales is also adjusting the process for establishing sanctioned campsites. From now on, the such campsites will be managed by nonprofit organizations. The city will provide basic services, including water and sanitation, and the City-County Joint Office of Homeless Services will facilitate the provision of social services.

And the "One Point of Contact" system for reporting livability issues is being adjusted by allowing reports to be taken through an online form, the PDX Reporter cellphone app, via e-mail (reportpdx@portlandoregon.gov) or via phone call (503-823-4000).

In addition, the “Day Storage Pilot” that provides large containers for the possessions of homeless people will be expanded to more than the current locations under the west end of the Steel Bridge and on North Greeley, near the city sanctioned Hazelnut Grove campsite. And the “Sanitation Pilot” that picks up waste from campsites and the “High Intensity Street Engagement” program that connects homeless people to services and housing will be continued.

Homeless tensions simmer as Springwater Corridor sweep delayed

By Jim Redden
08/02/2016

Only a few days before it was scheduled, Mayor Charlie Hales postponed the homeless sweep of the Springwater Corridor from Aug. 1 to Sept. 1.

Although neighbors and businesses along the corridor have been complaining about the increasingly visible number of campers for months, some homeless advocates still oppose the sweep. A number of them rallied in front of City Hall on Thursday, the day after Hales announced the delay, and called on him to allow the campers to remain.

The delay pushes the cleanup past the annual Hood to Coast Relay, which is scheduled to send over 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.

Hales said he pushed back the 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 was as humane and compassionate as possible. Adjusting to social service providers’ requests is part of that,” Hales said in a July 27 release from his office.

Hales originally 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 a 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,” Mayor Hales said. “That continues to be true. Recognizing that, I want to ensure this cleanup was is humane and compassionate as possible. Adjusting to social service providers’ requests is part of that.

Some homeless advocates have been urging 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 currently for sale and bid are scheduled to be received by Aug. 15.

Dozens of sites considered for homeless camps and shelters

Portland and Multnomah County officials have considered dozens of site for potential homeless shelters or campgrounds in the region in recent months, according to a list of locations obtained by the Portland Tribune through a public records records request.

Although many have been rejected for a variety of zoning and other reasons, those still under consideration include a former restaurant at 816 N.E. Grand Ave. and a vacant lot at Northeast 74th and Roselawn St.

Mayor Charlie Hales’ office declined to say whether negotiations over those other properties are current underway, saying real estate transactions are confidential. But the list shows that city and county officials have searched far and wide to find homeless shelter and camping sites since both governments declared a housing crisis of emergency late last year.

According to Mayor Charlie Hales spokeswoman Sara Hottman, the list has compiled from “bureau recommendations, other folks suggesting spaces, and combing through sources identifying vacant buildings and land.” They were prioritized through a process that included visits, inspections, and negotiations. If a site is deemed viable, the joint team goes went the steps of getting it into opening condition.

An example is the county-owned Hansen Building, located in the former Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office headquarters in Southeast Portland, which required the transfer of sheriff’s deputies into a Portland Police Bureau building in Southeast Portland. It opened earlier this week.

Another example is removing contaminated dirt from the so-called Kalbrener Property near the Springwater Corridor, which is planned to accommodate 100 of the estimated 500 homeless people expected to be accommodate from there by Sept. 1.

Hottman says that the current city budget includes \$16.2 million for homeless services and \$690,000 for coordinated campsite and homelessness management. These revenues of money will help fund preparing properties to be used for indoor or outdoor shelters by the city and newly-created City-County Joint Office for Homeless Services.

You can see the entire list at weena.me/M

Willamette Week

Mayor Charlie Hales Scales Back His Policy Allowing People to Sleep on the Street

Hales has decided that the guidelines were too confusing, his release says.

By Rachel Monahan
08/02/2016

Mayor Charlie Hales is scaling back his high-profile policy that allowed Portland's homeless to put up tents on city property and sleep on the sidewalks at night.

Hales announced the six-month pilot policy in February.

That six months is up next week, and the mayor has decided that the guidelines were too confusing, he says. In a press release, he says the policy ends today, and camping on the streets remains illegal.

But Hales tells *WW* he will continue to instruct park rangers and police officers to use their best judgment when dealing with people sleeping outside, and his office will not prioritize enforcement of the camping ban if the campers aren't causing problems.

"It is not legal to camp in Portland," Hales says, but adds that the prohibition against camping will remain the "lowest priority for enforcement."

Related: How one Portland neighborhood learned to stop worrying and love the homeless

The release from Hales' office today walks a fine line—it says the "Safe Sleep" pilot policy is over, but doesn't say what will replace it.

"The pilot was intended to provide certainty to homeless people that they would be able to get a safe night's sleep — without being awoken for violating the camping ordinance — and clarity for law enforcement that tents were permissible overnight, under certain conditions," Hales spokeswoman Sara Hottman writes in a press release. "However, the guidelines caused confusion; people believed that camping was made legal, and outreach workers and law enforcement struggled to educate people about the difference between a safe night's sleep and unsanctioned camping. Homeless people, housed people, and the Police Bureau indicated that the guidelines were not practicable."

The decision comes against the backdrop of plans to sweep the Springwater Corridor, which has become among the largest homeless camps in the country with up to 500 people camped out on the nature trail and bike area. Two and a half weeks ago, Hales announced plans to sweep the Springwater on Aug. 1. Under threat of a lawsuit, Hales has since delayed those sweeps till Sept. 1.

Hales' policy was aimed at creating guidelines for the homeless to sleep on the streets while the city worked at trying to find shelters and permanent housing.

Related: A Field Guide to Urban Camping in Portland

In February, the city had a shortfall of shelter beds, with 1,400 fewer spaces than homeless people on the streets. As of the last official count in January 2015, there were 3,801 people on the streets or in shelters.

Less than 100 shelter beds have opened since then.

As part of the camping policy announced in February, the mayor's office also promised to open new shelters as well as open authorized campgrounds and locate parking lots for RV and car campers.

Among the more high-profile proposals included opening a city parking garage to tent camping at night and replicating San Francisco's Navigation Center at the old Washington High School campus. Neither has come to fruition.

The mayor has also failed to find places with parking lots for RVs and car campers.

Camping on the Springwater was never allowed under the mayor's camping policy, which expressly forbid camping in parks or in groups of more than six. The size of the camp was large enough that the mayor launched a six-month long process to figure out what to do, though neighborhood anger and pressure from fellow City Commissioners overtook that lengthy planning process.

Portland City Hall Is Poised to Admit It Wrapped Cannabis Businesses in Too Much Red Tape

Weed entrepreneurs have numerous complaints about the Office of Neighborhood Involvement.

By Beth Slovic
08/02/2016

Last year, Paul Pedreira decided to walk away from a career as assistant director for the NBC television series Grimm and sink his savings into Oregon's growing recreational cannabis industry.

He planned to open a dispensary in St. Johns. But he soon found himself tangled in a bizarre thicket of city regulation.

Portland nixed the location of his store in 2015, even though the state had approved it. When Pedreira found another commercial building, the Office of Neighborhood Involvement required him to undergo an extensive permitting process to change its use to allow marijuana inside. He had to spend \$3,600 for an architect to draw floor plans, even though the only major changes to the storefront were a paint job, some new light fixtures and security cameras, he says.

Pedreira finally opened Portland Best Buds on North Lombard Street. But he remains bitter toward City Hall.

"I don't want to sound over the top," says Pedreira, "but it's very authoritarian."

It's not unusual to hear a Portland small-business owner griping about excessive red tape. And cannabis entrepreneurs, lawyers and activists have been grumbling for several months about onerous rules created and enforced by the Office of Neighborhood Involvement.

But this time, most of the City Council seems to agree: Marijuana business regulation under Commissioner Amanda Fritz has gone too far.

A majority of the council appears poised to roll back some of the city's year-old rules governing where and how dispensaries operate.

"We shouldn't perpetuate fees and regulations simply to maintain a regulatory structure if the regulatory structure is unnecessary," says Commissioner Steve Novick.

Novick and his colleagues are being urged on by U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.), who in May complained to Mayor Charlie Hales and the rest of the City Council that Portland duplicates the state's marijuana regulations, to the detriment of small-business owners.

Critics like Blumenauer note that an entrepreneur seeking a recreational license would pay twice as much in Portland as in other cities—because Portland charges \$4,975 a year per license on top of the \$4,750 that goes to the state.

And they say the Office of Neighborhood Involvement—Fritz's domain since Hales dropped it in her lap in 2015—is the wrong place for fostering a burgeoning industry. (Fritz ran ONI from 2009 to 2013, when Hales took over for two years, before abruptly giving it back to Fritz.)

"The notion that there will be an expensive, duplicative program raises questions," says Blumenauer. "For Portland, it's time to get it right."

This fall, the City Council will discuss whether to trim back the rules it passed less than a year ago, on Sept. 30 and Oct. 21, 2015.

"I think it's worth taking a look at the whole structure," says Novick, who last year supported the rules.

"We need to take a fresh look," says Commissioner Nick Fish, who also voted to adopt the regulations.

They're joined by Commissioner Dan Saltzman, who last year was the lone no vote against Portland's marijuana regulations. "I see no rhyme or reason why we have a separate regulatory program," he says. "I think the regulations that the state Legislature and the [Oregon Liquor Control Commission] have spent a lot of time on are sufficient."

Frustration with city cannabis regulations had been building through the spring—especially after the Office of Neighborhood Involvement in May banned the giveaway of marijuana at any event to which tickets had been sold. (Disclosure: WW has sponsored such events in the past.) Portland has taken other restrictive measures against practices state law otherwise allows, such as banning home delivery of recreational marijuana.

Fritz defends ONI's work but says she's open to revisions, including allowing marijuana deliveries. "We are trying to make this a success for small business," she says.

Even as its decisions became more controversial, ONI's marijuana office grew: It now has nine employees.

Portland's fees on marijuana businesses spell big bucks for city government—at least \$825,000 is projected in 2016-17. But the system is set up to fund itself, meaning the fees pay for the regulators and aren't supposed to be tapped to pay for other wish-list items. (That's why the city is separately seeking voter approval of a 3 percent tax on recreational marijuana sales this November.)

To a far smaller degree, the city also duplicates the state's regulation of bars—a task that also falls to ONI.

But Saltzman says it's a mistake to treat dispensaries like bars, because dispensaries have far fewer and less serious impacts on surrounding neighborhoods. People consume alcohol at bars, whereas they simply shop for pot at dispensaries. "It's an entirely different buzz, so to speak," he says.

Mayor Charlie Hales championed the city's rules. His office says he's deferring to Fritz now.

Mayor-elect Ted Wheeler, who employed a campaign fundraiser who lobbies for the marijuana industry, says "we should regularly evaluate which of Portland's regulations are unnecessarily duplicative."

Advocates for rolling back Portland's rules point 110 miles south to Eugene—where the city has no rules specific to marijuana businesses. "We treat them the same as any other business applying for a permit," says Jan Bohman, a city spokeswoman.

Eugene, of course, is far smaller than Portland, with only 28 dispensaries selling recreational and medical marijuana, compared with 156 in Portland, according to the Oregon Health Authority.

Still, the fact that Eugene has come this far with no additional regulations is striking to some commissioners.

"I want to hear from the people of Eugene whether the way they're doing it has caused any problems," says Novick. "If Eugene with no additional regulations isn't getting any complaints, then maybe we rethink the whole thing."

For Pedreira, change can't come soon enough.

"It feels like they're trying to thin out small businesses," he says, "by making it harder and more expensive to operate."

Complaint Desk: Portland entrepreneurs gripe about the city's pot regulations.

When Portland adopted rules last year to govern its growing pot industry, Mayor Charlie Hales said he preferred overregulation.

"I want us to assert our ability to be a local regulator," Hales said during a 2015 City Council meeting, "and then, over time, tune those regulations."

Dispensaries and other cannabis businesses have chafed under those rules. Here are their top five complaints. BETH SLOVIC.

1. Portland slams business owners with fees.

Retail shops applying for medical and recreational licenses from the city pay \$975 in fees for each application, even though the forms are identical. They then pay \$3,500 and \$4,975 license fees annually. That's on top of the license fees they pay to the state. No other Portland business faces these high fees. New bars, for example, pay \$100 application fees and \$35 annual renewal fees.

2. Portland imposes requirements that don't apply to other businesses.

As a condition of their city licenses, pot businesses operating in commercial zones also have to obtain commercial building permits. Other businesses don't automatically face this hurdle, says Ross Caron, a spokesman for the Bureau of Development Services.

3. Portland's rules duplicate the state's.

State officials, for example, ask shops for security plans. So does the city. The state requires owners to detail how they'll keep minors from buying pot. Portland seeks similar plans, which also call for dealing with complaints from neighbors.

4. Portland's Office of Neighborhood Involvement gets things backward.

To apply for a state license to sell recreational pot, owners need what's called a land-use compatibility statement from the city. To get that, owners must pay the \$975 recreational marijuana application fee and the \$4,975 license fee. That means they're paying for a city license before knowing whether they'll be approved. "It's unclear what happens from there," says Meghan Walstatter of Pure Green.

5. Portland prohibits activities that the state allows.

Portland voters overwhelmingly approved legalization, but city rules are more restrictive than state regulations. For example, Portland doesn't allow pot delivery to homes even though the state does.

The Portland Mercury

Mayor Charlie Hales Has Pulled the Plug on His Radical, "Rational" Safe Sleep Policy

By Dirk VanderHart

08/02/2016

YOU WOULDN'T have known it from the increasing panic over homelessness, but there was actual excitement over Mayor Charlie Hales' "safe sleep policy."

In a nation where there's an increasing acknowledgment that criminalizing homeless people for being homeless is the wrong position, Hales' six-month experiment—which formally allowed small groups to sleep on sidewalks or camp on "remnant" properties, since there was nowhere else for them—looked like something to watch.

And not just in February, when Hales' office unveiled the much-discussed policies. Just last Wednesday, July 27, national advocates were thinking hard about the safe sleep experiment.

Eric Tars, a senior attorney with the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, was at a conference in Washington, DC, that day. He told me he'd been planning on spotlighting Portland as a national leader in not criminalizing homelessness for a talk he was giving.

The problem: Hales had recently announced a massive sweep of the Springwater Corridor.

"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," Tars said.

And now we know how it develops. A little less than six months after it was introduced, Hales announced Tuesday that the safe-sleep policy is officially dead—effective immediately. (Local homeless advocates had advanced warning of the plan.)

"The guidelines caused confusion," Hales' office said in the announcement. "People believed that camping was made legal, and outreach workers and law enforcement struggled to educate people about the difference between a safe night's sleep and unsanctioned camping."

While Hales offered assurances he "remains committed to the principles behind the Safe Sleep Guidelines," it's impossible to ignore a glaring distinction: Of a raft of new policies Hales put in place earlier in the year, this is the only one that's getting the axe.

The mayor is extending the life of two day-storage containers, and will continue to place dumpsters and portable toilets in areas frequented by homeless Portlanders, he says. He'll modify, but continue, plans to establish more organized encampments around the city. And he'll tweak a system that collects complaints about homelessness in one place.

But the safe-sleep policy, arguably the most radical—and, some said, "rational"—of the mayor's actions on homelessness, is gone.

This isn't out of the blue. Hales had told the *Mercury* in recent days the policy hadn't worked out as he'd hoped. The mayor also says he'll still prioritize enforcement in certain areas more than others.

That was pretty much the status quo before February—a necessity since there's no way the city could enforce its camping ordinance across the board to begin with.

Hales' announcement comes less than a week after he placated concerned social services providers regarding a massive impending sweep of the Springwater Corridor. In the face of concerns—and a promised lawsuit from the Oregon Law Center—Hales agreed to push the sweep back a month. That's less than the law center had pushed for. A demand letter [PDF] the organization sent the city—obtained via public records request—shows the OLC initially pressed for "at least two additional months."

With his announcement today, the mayor probably dodges yet another lawsuit. As the *Mercury* was first to report, a judge dismissed a lawsuit over the safe sleep policy on July 13, but left the door open for plaintiffs—neighborhood representatives and business groups—to re-file.

With today's news, Paul Conable, the attorney representing plaintiffs in the suit, was unsure whether his clients would pursue the litigation (which was solely aimed at tossing the safe sleep policy).

"Our filing would be due tomorrow," Conable said, "if it's still necessary."