

## The Oregonian

# Multnomah County voters may decide whether to tax soda, sugary beverages

*By Jessica Floum*

*April 4, 2017*

Health advocates who see sugary drinks as one of the biggest obstacles in their drive to promote health want Multnomah County voters to give them a new tool: a soda tax.

If they gather enough signatures, voters will decide in November whether to add a tax of 1.5 cents per ounce on sugary drinks, including soda, energy drinks and sweetened teas. That means an 18 cent tax for the average 12 ounce can of soda or a 51 cent tax per liter.

The proposal suggests using revenue from the tax to help pay for early childhood education, reading and literacy initiatives and programs in schools to promote healthy food and lifestyle choices. Those could include school gardens, playground improvements, physical education classes and curriculum focused on nutrition, particularly for low-income children.

The group needs to gather 17,381 signatures from Multnomah voters to get the measure placed on the ballot. Organizers say they aim to gather 25,000.

The measure could raise \$28.4 million per year, according to the Childhood Obesity Intervention Cost-Effectiveness Study conducted by researchers at Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health and paid for by health policy advocacy groups.

Former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg provided seed money to get the Multnomah County initiative off the ground. Coalition representatives would not specify Monday how much he contributed.

The American Heart Association is working to build a new advocacy group they're calling the Yes for Healthy Kids and Education coalition, said Christina Bodamer, the association's Oregon government relations director. The organization hopes to limit obesity and unhealthy eating, both of which significantly contribute to heart disease, Bodamer said.

"Portland has a great history of taking care of our children," Bodamer said. "I hope that Multnomah County and others will be supportive of support for our low-income communities."

The American Heart Association has helped passed similar measures in San Francisco, Berkeley, Oakland, Philadelphia, Boulder, Cook County, Ill., and Albany, Calif. Berkeley -- the first city to pass a tax on sugary drinks -- has reduced consumption of sugary drinks by more than 20 percent in two years, according to [an American Journal of Public Health study](#).

"Now is the time because we've been building off of a lot of success around the country," Bodamer said. "We've seen fantastic results in reduced consumption of sugar and actually increased consumption of water."

Bodamer said she expects the soda industry to fight the tax as it has in other cities around the country. The American Beverage Association spent at least \$21.3 million to combat a similar soda tax in San Francisco that [voters approved in November](#), the [San Francisco Chronicle reported](#).

Representatives of beverage associations have argued that a soda tax would burden small grocers and other distributors and raise the price to customers.

Rob Douglas, the spokesman for the Oregon Soft Drink Association did not respond to requests for comment from The Oregonian/OregonLive late Monday.

Bloomberg spent \$7.95 million to support the San Francisco ballot measure.

Nationally, Type 2 diabetes increased by almost 30 percent between 2000 and 2009, according to a study presented to the Pediatric Academic Societies' meeting in 2014. Sugary drinks are the largest source of added sugars in kids' diets, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The West Coast used to lag behind national obesity and diabetes trends, but Oregon and others have caught up, said Dr. Robert Quintos, board president of the American Heart Association of Oregon & SW Washington.

Sugar consumption and related health consequences such as heart disease have also increased, Quintos said. Quintos said the heart health industry has a long way to go in terms of preventing heart disease, but changing sugar consumption habits is a good start.

"If you can change behaviors early, it's going to have a lifelong impact," Quintos said.

## **The Portland Tribune**

### **City Hall Update: Council mulls more ethical investing**

*By Jim Redden*

*April 4, 2017*

Also last week, the Bureau of Development Services announced it would open Thursday evenings for residential permits and begin enforcing short-term rental rules.

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The City Council postponed consideration of a new socially responsible investment policy from last week until this Wednesday afternoon. The hearing is now scheduled for 2 p.m. on April 5.

After being pressed by numerous advocacy organizations to not invest in certain corporations over the years, the council directed the city treasurer last December to stop investing in all corporations until it adopted a new policy.

Among other things, the new policy introduced by Mayor Ted Wheeler would direct the treasurer to apply the minimum standards set by a third-party socially responsible evaluation

firm when determining whether or not to purchase a stock. Placing a large number of corporations off-limits could potentially reduce the maximum return the city can make on its investments.

### **Nighttime hours for development bureau**

Beginning on April 6, the Bureau of Development Services will be open every Thursday from 5 to 7:30 p.m. for homeowners and tenants to obtain permits for residential renovation projects. It is the first publicly announced initiative since Mayor Ted Wheeler assigned BDS to Commissioner Chloe Eudaly in January.

"Traditionally, regular business hours make it somewhat difficult for working people and their families to get to the city for permits," Eudaly says of the Residential Permit Nights for one- and two-family dwellings.

The BDS Development Services Center is located on the ground floor of the 1900 Building at 1900 S.W. Fourth Ave.

### **City to enforce short-term rental rules**

Eudaly also is overseeing the Bureau of Development Services as it begins enforcing stiffer penalties for violating city regulations on short-term rentals, including rooms in primary homes booked through companies like Airbnb and Home Away.

The rules were adopted by BDS on Feb. 9. They took effect March 31 and are intended to carry out requirements the City Council approved when it allowed short-term rentals in long-term residences in August 2014. They include requiring the owners to be licensed and have their properties inspected to ensure the safety of their guests.

Those caught violating the Portland Zoning Code Accessory Short Term Rentals (ASTR) regulations will be issued citations ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000, depending on the offense.

## **Property owner says eviction notice served on R2DToo**

*By Jim Redden*

*April 3, 2017*

Portland Development Commission has agreed to buy property if it is free and clear on April 7

The Right 2 Dream Too homeless camp has been served with an eviction notice.

Michael Wright, one of four co-owners of the property where the camp is located, confirms the notice was served last week. It was first reported by the Portland Mercury.

"We met a couple weeks ago and they promised they would move when I gave them notice. I hope they live up to it," Wright told the Portland Tribune on Monday afternoon.

R2DToo, as the camp is commonly known, is located on a vacant quarter block at Northwest 4th and Burnside. The Portland Development Commission has agreed to purchase the property for \$1.2 million on April 7 if it is free and clear.

The City Council had promised to find a new location for the camp before the deadline, but two potential sites fell through and no new one has been announced. Wright said he was waiting to

see if the council kept its promise, but could not wait any long. He and the other owner have been sued by two Old Town property owners who say the camp is driving down the value of their properties.

"We'll see how it goes," Wright said.

To see a previous Portland Tribune story on the issue, go to [tinyurl.com/lhoryg5](http://tinyurl.com/lhoryg5).

## **Wheeler expects to pick next police chief in July**

*By Jim Redden*

*April 3, 2017*

Mayor is looking for someone with an ability to lead and reform, a belief in community policing, and a dedication to diversity.

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Mayor Ted Wheeler has decided the city will conduct its own national search for the next police chief and expects to make a final decision in July.

Wheeler promised the next chief would be selected after a national search when he ran for mayor last year. After he took office in January, he tried to line up a national recruitment firm to help with the search. Only one expressed interest, however, and Wheeler decided the city's Human Resources Bureau could do a better job.

"Portland is unique, as is our city's approach to process and engagement. In the end we felt we were more capable of undertaking this project in a way that reflected our community approach and values," says Wheeler spokesman Michael Cox.

According to Cox, "Human Resources is putting together a project plan and proposed budget this week. We have already started meeting with stakeholders to get their input on characteristics and qualification to inform the job announcement. We expect to have the project plan, budget, and job announcement done in April, open the position for applications in May, then interview candidates and make an offer in July."

Cox says Wheeler agrees with the characteristics and qualification for the next chief that have been proposed by the stakeholders he has met with.

"The Mayor has a strong view of what he expects and a lot of that is reflected in what we're hearing from the stakeholders: an ability to lead and reform, a belief in community policing, and a dedication to diversity," Cox says.

Mike Marshman, the last permanent chief, is currently on paid administrative leave pending an Independent Police Review investigation into a report that he directed his executive assistant to forge his signature on a document saying he attended a mandatory training session he actually missed. The assistant, Lt. Michael Leasure, is also on leave. Assistant Chief Chris Davis is serving as acting chief.

## The Portland Mercury

### R2DToo Has Been Served With an Eviction Notice

By Dirk VanderHart

April 3, 2017

Less than a week before Right 2 Dream Too is supposed to leave its longtime home, the six-year-old camp is facing formal eviction.

R2DToo Chairperson Sarah Chandler confirms to the *Mercury* that the homeless rest area was served last week with notice to vacate the property by landowner Michael Wright. Others, including a spokesperson in Mayor Ted Wheeler's office, had suggested that was the case. Wright himself didn't return calls, but **told us last year** he was planning to evict the camp.

The order adds another layer of complexity to an already thorny situation. **Under an agreement** between the Portland Development Commission (PDC) and Wright (along with several co-owners), the property at West Burnside and 4th must be vacant by April 7—this Friday. If it's not, the city can demand more than \$300,000 the PDC paid to maintain an option to purchase the plot, and walk away from potentially purchasing the land for another \$1.2 million.

But while the PDC has said forcefully in recent weeks it's going to hold fast to that deadline, that resolve might be slipping. Wheeler's chief spokesperson, Michael Cox, tells the *Mercury* that there is potential wiggle room in the deal.

"If there's a solution and all it requires is a little bit of problem solving and short-term flexibility, that's hypothetically something we could all discuss," Cox says. "Discussions would have to be in the context of a certain solution, rather than just contributing to the general sense of uncertainty."

People involved in ongoing talks have been cagey about details in recent weeks, but it appears Wheeler's office is still working to find a solution that ends with R2DToo in a new space. Without an earlier decision by Wheeler, the camp might have already moved. Commissioner Amanda Fritz hoped to put R2DToo on a city-owned parking lot on Southwest Naito, but Wheeler **refused to put city resources** into that arrangement.

"We are in regular active dialogue with the folks are R2DToo trying to land at a solution for their April 7 problem," Cox says. "I think all parties are hopeful we can come up with something."

Chandler confirms, saying it's "not exactly clear" when the rest area would have to be out of the plot under the eviction notice.

"We're still in negotiation," she says. "I'm hopeful and confident that we will find some place to be."

# Daily Journal of Commerce

## Housing bond oversight committee in the works

*By Chuck Slothower*

*March 31, 2017*

The city of Portland is convening a five-member bond oversight committee to guide the Housing Bureau's use of \$258 million of bond money approved in November.

Expenditures from the voter-approved housing bond are on hold after Mayor Ted Wheeler in January directed the **Housing Bureau** to review its spending priorities and policies. The bureau had received criticism for getting too few affordable units for its dollars spent.

Formation of the **Bond Oversight Committee** was due to gain **City Council** approval Wednesday, but the council could not muster a quorum. The committee membership is expected to be approved at an upcoming council meeting.

The five appointed committee members will be Stephen Green, Jes Larson, Susan Emmons, Todd Struble and Allen Lazo. Their appointments will last until March 1, 2022.

The committee will provide oversight of spending from the housing bond. The committee will publish an annual report and oversee a yearly audit.

The Housing Bureau is also assembling a larger group of about 15 community experts in affordable housing, development, financing and related fields to come up with criteria to evaluate affordable housing proposals. That group will function as an advisory board to the bond oversight committee, and include industry professionals who are precluded from serving on the oversight committee due to conflict-of-interest policies.

While spending the bond money is on hold, the Housing Bureau continues to hear pitches, Director Kurt Creager said.

"We're hearing proposals from private developers of things they would consider building and selling to the city," he said. "Until the guidelines are developed, it would be premature to act on those."

Guidelines could be written by June, Creager said.

The Housing Bureau is moving forward on other fronts. In February, it purchased the Ellington Apartments in Northeast Portland for \$47 million. The bureau also is advancing housing projects funded by tax-increment financing.

Some nonprofit developers are hoping the city's process doesn't drag on, with projects waiting on the outcome.

"We're hopeful that they understand the high demand for housing in the city of Portland and they come to a conclusion on how they want to create a process very quickly," said Cynthia Parker, president and CEO of **Bridge Housing**.

One project, in the Produce Row area of Southeast Portland, is on hold until the city concludes its process, Parker said.

Another nonprofit's executive said the delay in using housing bond funding was not a major obstacle.

"That directive has not impacted us so far because the projects in our pipeline are not using those funds," said Travis Phillips, director of housing development at **Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives Inc.**

PCRI is developing two affordable housing projects along Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard using TIF financing and low-income housing tax credit equity.