

The Oregonian

Portland colleges, city tout new \$100 million academic building in downtown

By Andrew Theen

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Portland State University struck out in 2015 when it asked state lawmakers for \$17 million to help build a new home for the Graduate School of Education. But the upside did not become apparent until Monday.

That's when PSU President Wim Wiewel revealed a bigger and bolder vision for the parking lot on the edge of campus, and the new partnerships that would make it happen: A \$100 million hub for public health, education and city services.

The new tower at Southwest Fourth Avenue and Montgomery Street, is expected to open by 2020. It brings PSU, Oregon Health & Science University, Portland Community College and the city together in an effort that wasn't certain less than a year ago.

Last summer, a business partner, described in PSU documents only as "an educational non-profit organization," abruptly walked away from the negotiating table after years of planning.

[The unnamed company](#) "got cold feet," Wiewel said in an interview Monday. "We saw the project go away,"

Wiewel declined to identify the organization, but said he was "very upset, very bothered" by its decision to pull out. The exit meant PSU - already in perpetual fundraising mode and facing uncertain budgetary times- had to figure out how to come up with another \$15 million for the project, or dramatically shrink it.

Wiewel was tired of asking donors for money to pay for buildings. He'd been fundraising for the \$60.5 million business school since arriving at PSU in 2008, and calling for cash on the \$51.1 million Viking Pavilion renovation, and already eyeing donors to help pay for a planned \$70 million renovation of Neuberger Hall in coming years.

"You can only go to the well so many times," Wiewel said, "so we just needed a different way."

That different way presented itself in an already existing partnership: The OHSU-PSU School of Public Health.

The joint school, launched in 2014, had no home, but eyed one sometime in the future. The program is still awaiting accreditation but has some 1,500 undergraduate and graduate students. It is spread out between the two campuses, with some staff and faculty up on Portland's Marquam Hill and others throughout the city's Park Blocks.

Last fall, PSU officials decided to see if they could accelerate the timeline for finding a permanent home for the school, Wiewel said.

In September, PSU contacted OHSU President Joe Robertson to gauge interest on making the site at Fourth and Montgomery that home.

Robertson agreed to the plan. "We are just so thrilled to be a partner in this development," Robertson said Monday during a news conference on PSU's campus.

The schools will jointly raise \$15 million for the project, a new prospect for the two schools.

"Anytime you say this is a joint fundraising thing you're taking a leap of faith," Wiewel said. "But fortunately, we feel very good."

On Monday morning, Wiewel was joined by Robertson, PCC President Mark Mitsui and Mayor Ted Wheeler.

By 2020, the coalition expects to open the new building downtown. Still in the design phase, the building is projected to be seven to nine stories tall. Once completed, it would be one of the largest academic structures in the city and fill a gaping void for PSU and the city along the nearby MAX and Portland Streetcar lines.

It will be the eventual new home of both the Graduate School of Education and the OHSU-PSU School of Public Health. Plans include a [community dental clinic](#), behavioral health services and spots for a ground floor restaurant and retail space.

It will also fill the lot once set aside for the Oregon Sustainability Center, the ill-fated environmental building plan that was shelved by then-Mayor Sam Adams in 2012.

While he won't be in the president's chair when the building is completed, Wiewel can claim victory on a couple fronts.

He negotiated a deal with the city after then-Mayor Charlie Hales pushed to close the short-lived urban renewal district that was expected to pay for [\\$50.3 million in projects](#) on campus. The city agreed to hand over the 33,500-square-foot property at Southwest Fourth Avenue and Montgomery Street, recently appraised at \$7.3 million, to PSU for \$1.

"He had no idea that he would get pushback," Wiewel said of Hales' proposal to shutter the urban renewal area, "and that he would have to come up with something equivalent."

The city also agreed to be a tenant in a new building. Wheeler said the city will move a yet-to-be-named city bureau to the building once completed. Portland will chip in \$15 million to own its 32,000-square-foot space, likely by issuing debt. The city, in need of additional office space, will occupy two floors.

PCC is expected to move its dental hygiene and assisting from the Southwest Sylvania campus in Southwest Portland to downtown. The school will pay \$15 million for its 30,000-square-foot in the building and use bonds approved by taxpayers in 2008.

On Monday, much of the news conference centered on the public health crises facing the city.

David Bangsberg, [a Portland native and the dean of the OHSU-PSU School of Public Health](#), said his school will be at the forefront of research and public policy in the metro area.

One-third of Oregon women suffer from depression, he said. More Oregonians die from opioid overdoses than traffic fatalities. Some 138,000 children under five-years-old don't have access to basic health services or early childhood education.

His school will study all those issues and possible public policy solutions, he said. "Our future health and well-being is in the hands of our students," he said.

The program will help students get "the skills they need to reverse these challenges."

Like its failed predecessor, [the sustainability center](#), the building is also heavily reliant on public dollars. The group is seeking \$51 million in state bonds to help pay for the building.

Without it, the building won't happen.

Wheeler said the building presents an "unparalleled opportunity for students and the community at large."

The four institutions expect to press lawmakers to approve the capital construction request in the coming months, but they aren't too concerned.

The project, even without OHSU's participation, already ranked as one of the top priorities in the state.

"I would be very surprised if this is not funded," said Wheeler, the former State Treasurer of the bond request. It is listed as the top individual project request by the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission, above competing high-profile requests such as the University of Oregon's \$100 million Knight science campus and Oregon State University's \$69 million for further expansion in Bend.

Wiewel said the only partner we're stilling waiting for is the Legislature.

"We feel quite positive and encouraged that this will happen," he said Monday.

The Portland Mercury

Portland's About to Consider New, Watered Down Changes to Police Oversight

By Dirk VanderHart

March 20, 2017

Changing up the city's system for police oversight has been a herky-jerky process of late.

Last year, when the City Auditor's Office cooked up a host of code changes that would've dramatically reshaped that labyrinthine system—and, Auditor Mary Hull Caballero argued, help the city comply with a [federal settlement](#)—it was met with a wall of opposition.

As we [reported at the time](#), members of the city's police-hawking Citizen Review Committee took umbrage with a change that would have moved the system further out of the public eye. And when the auditor's office scrapped that bit, even the [remaining proposals](#) got a tepid response from a City Hall that at the time was [forming up a controversial contract](#) with the city's largest police union.

So on Thursday, the auditor's office will try again. It's slated to bring a watered down set of changes to the city code [[PDF](#)] dealing with the city's Independent Police Review (IPR).

Update, 7:40 pm: The ordinance has been rescheduled for April 13.

Original post:

"It's a much more conservative package than it was in September," says IPR Director Constantin Severe. "That was dead in the water."

Last year's proposed changes would have taken steps to limit how much say an officer's direct supervisor has in disciplining that officer over a citizen complaint—an aspect of the police discipline process that [became a flashpoint in at least one instance last year](#). They would have modified the structure of the Citizen Review Committee (CRC), which hears the pleas of citizens

who want to appeal how their complaints have been handled. And they would have cut out the public's ability to testify at those appeal hearings.

All of that's gone now. The most notable tweak to city code being floated on Thursday is the formal codification of a "supervisory investigation," in which ultra-low-level complaints are handled by an officer's supervisor, as opposed to by investigators at IPR or the police bureau's Internal Affairs unit.

Severe uses the hypothetical example of a citizen complaint that an officer was rude because of the way he hooked his thumbs inside his vest, which Severe says is in line with some complaints that come in. Rather than taking up investigatory time, the idea is that the complaint could be forwarded to that officer's sergeant, freeing up time for more serious complaints.

The code changes would also move the public comment period at CRC hearings. Currently, audience members have an opportunity to speak before the body begins a hearing on whether an officer should be disciplined. The new proposal would shift comments to after the hearing.

And notably, the ordinance keeps an item from September, which mandates that the director of IPR be notified when there's information a police bureau member "has engaged in conduct that may be subject to criminal and/or administrative investigation." That language has at least some roots in the time former Police Chief Larry O'Dea shot his friend, but [no one bothered to mention it](#) to IPR.

"This is the beginning of the city kind of making a choice about these kind of accountability measures," Severe says. He describes the creation of Portland's system of police accountability as piecemeal, taking on new provisions here and there, without much concern for creating a cohesive whole. "This is the beginning of creating an accountability system that is global in perspective."

He argues the changes will reduce redundancies and increase his investigators' ability to process complaints. But he also acknowledges that bolder suggestions got stripped out if they didn't have buy in from the police bureau, the Portland Police Association, or the public.

"Given that Portland works a lot on consensus... we weren't able to put them in this particular code change," Severe says. "We're basically acting as scriveners here."

But as these things so frequently are, the proposal has already been met with opposition from the group Portland Copwatch, which today sent along a lengthy set of critiques, and urged city council to "modify or postpone" a vote on the ordinance. The group opposes putting citizen testimony after appeal hearings on police discipline.

"Taking away public input before votes at the CRC will be a serious blow to the system's credibility," Copwatch says in the letter.

The group also wants the CRC expanded from 11 to 15 members in order to ease strain on members, among other things.

Daily Journal of Commerce

City of Portland, universities plan major development

By Chuck Slothower

March 20, 2017

Portland State University, Oregon Health & Science University, Portland Community College and the city of Portland announced plans Monday to build a \$100 million, nine-story downtown building that would house offices and academic facilities.

The project set for a city-owned parking lot at the southeast corner of Southwest Fourth Avenue and Montgomery Street would bring together the OHSU-PSU School of Public Health, PSU's Graduate School of Education, PCC's dental program and city government offices.

The institutions plan to open the building in September 2020. It would mark the first time all three higher-education institutions and the city shared a building.

A request for early assistance published Monday called for a nine-story building with ground-floor commercial use.

The ground floor would hold a mix of retailers and restaurants, according to a PSU news release. PSU plans to operate a low-cost counseling center on the site, and PCC would move its dental clinic from its Sylvania campus to the downtown building.

The partners have asked the state Legislature to approve \$51 million in bonds for the project. Additional funding would come from the three institutions and the city, which would all have ownership interests in the project, according to a PSU news release.

PSU plans to purchase the lot from the Portland Development Commission.

The project is planned on a site previously targeted for the Oregon Sustainability Center, a proposal that then-Mayor Sam Adams and then-Gov. Ted Kulongoski launched in 2012 and fizzled when the Legislature declined to approve \$80 million in bonds.

A PSU spokeswoman said the new proposal is different.

"It's really a brand new project. It has new partners and it's going to be a different building," PSU's Suzanne Pardington Effros said.

The project is at the top of the list of capital priorities from Oregon universities, Effros said. "Being at the top of the list makes us pretty confident," she said.

Bora Architects has done some preliminary design work for the project, Effros said.

A request for proposals for a design firm will be posted in April, and design work is slated to begin in July. The team is aiming to break ground in 2018.