

The Oregonian

Portland City Council and Timbers move forward on new stadium expansion agreement

By Jessica Floum

June 21, 2017

The Portland City Council approved a new deal with the Portland Timbers Wednesday that will exempt the team from about \$5 million in ticket taxes in exchange for the team investing \$50 million in a stadium expansion projected to add 3,000 to 4,000 seats to Providence Park.

That represents a change from an earlier tax break agreement that would have cost the city \$2 million in foregone ticket taxes over a longer period of time.

The added seats are expected to net the city up to \$5 million in taxes by 2038.

The city asked the soccer team to switch from a 10-year tax exemption it had granted the club in May to a seven-year exemption so that the city could ensure the team would resume tax payments by 2026. That way, the city could secure income for large debt payments on the stadium coming due then, officials said.

"That creates more cash flow into the fund at a time when the fund needs it," said Susan Hartnett, manager of the city's venue activities fund.

Lease agreements with the Portland Trail Blazers are set to expire in 2025, Hartnett said. Taxes and fees from Portland Trail Blazers games and related parking ticket sales make up about 40 percent of the fund's revenue.

The uncertain nature of the Trail Blazers' post-2025 deal inspired the city to secure the future revenue from Timbers owner Peregrine Partners, she said.

"We didn't put as much emphasis on the actual dollar amount as we did on the timing of when and how those revenue changes occurred," Hartnett said.

Although the new tax break is about \$3 million more in the near term, it will result in the Timbers paying higher taxes after 2025, officials said.

"The exemption is basically similar value," Portland's Chief Administrative Officer Tom Rinehart said. "There is more money exempted up front for Peregrine" and the revenue flow is greater in later years.

Mayor Ted Wheeler said Wednesday, "This deal I believe is a great example of private business stepping up and funding improvements they need that will also benefit the community."

Timbers President of Business Mike Golub lauded the team's partnership with the city.

The expansion deal, he said, "is a win for our fans."

The Portland Tribune

After homeless count, officials talk about what's next

By Lyndsey Hewitt

June 22, 2017

One idea from City Commission Chloe Eudaly: Join with other cities facing same problem along the West Coast

While homeless people dwelled almost directly outside the Multnomah County building on Monday, officials inside were discussing future strategies to help them into housing.

Local housing officials convened after preliminary results of the federally mandated "Point-in-Time" count were released, documenting a nearly 10 percent rise in homeless people in the city since 2015, despite millions of dollars and years of ongoing efforts to tackle the issue.

"Homelessness is up. That's not a good thing. We also know that the drivers in our community continue to work against us — that's those income levels and those rent levels," said Marc Jolin, executive director of the city-county Joint Office of Homeless Services and A Home for Everyone, an executive committee of local governments, including Gresham, and Home Forward created to address the issue.

"The big issue is the number of people. Every time we've gotten more money, the number of people we've been able to help has gone up to new heights," said Denis Theriault, spokesman for the agencies. Outreach workers and volunteers counted 4,177 people who met the definition of homeless set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, or HUD.

In Multnomah County in 2016, fair-market rent for a two-bedroom apartment was \$1,208, according to HUD. For 2017, that rose to \$1,242. That means someone would have to work well over 70 hours a week at minimum wage to afford a two-bedroom rental. To afford a monthly rent of \$1,242 here without spending more than 30 percent of income, one would need to make \$23.88 an hour.

"We've definitely seen an increase in folks on disability income or Social Security income who were homeless again, after five-plus years of stability, because they can no longer afford their rent on a fixed income," said Shannon Singleton, executive director of JOIN, a nonprofit that helps get homeless people into housing. She was on the streets helping to count people for the Point-in-Time count.

The count data reflects a rise in homeless people saying they are disabled in some way — 60 percent of those responding — as well as ongoing racial disparities.

"In terms of sub-population dynamics, the fact that we're seeing the rates in disability in homelessness in general increase ... that's something we definitely need to come to grips with," Jolin told the committee.

All are looking toward different housing strategies to help, and more neighborhood support of projects, such as the newly established tiny-home village in North Portland's Kenton neighborhood.

Singleton hopes more churches in the area step up to help shelter families until they can get access to a home.

Portland City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, who also serves on the executive committee, said it might be helpful to start a statewide conversation on homelessness — or host a "West Coast assembly."

Cities all along the West Coast are grappling with homelessness: Seattle, Los Angeles and Alameda, California, all observed significant spikes in their homeless counts.

Eudaly's idea wasn't the first time an assembly of sorts has been suggested. In December 2015, shortly after the housing and homelessness state of emergency was declared, mayors met for a two-day "West Coast Mayors Summit" where they admitted that they didn't understand enough about homelessness to address — and fund — the issue appropriately.

At the time, they agreed to create a West Coast Mayors Alliance to fund research into the root causes of homelessness — be it rent increases, mental health or drug addiction — and the most appropriate programs to help them lead productive lives. But the cities haven't yet followed through on that pledge. However, according to Michael Cox, mayor's office spokesman, the groups "meet at the staff level once a month, and are planning our next in-person meeting with the mayors."

Nonetheless, there have been some successes this year, such as reducing the number of those sleeping on the streets and increasing space in homeless shelters.

But officials know there's still a long road ahead, and they say they need private-sector help.

"I think we've made some policy commitments and we're seeing some progress on those fronts — and we have a lot of hard work to do still, as a community," Jolin said.

For a previous Portland Tribune story on the issue, visit portlandtribune.com/pt/9-news/363521-243994-number-of-homeless-on-the-rise-count-shows.

Southeast neighborhood association calls on city to stop homeless sweeps

By Lyndsey Hewitt

June 21, 2017

Montavilla Neighborhood Association board adopts biting resolution calling homeless sweeps a 'waste of taxpayer dollars.'

A neighborhood in southeast Portland is calling on the city of Portland to stop "sweeping" homeless camps within its geographical boundaries.

The board of the Montavilla Neighborhood Association adopted a biting resolution on behalf of the rest of the neighborhood, first reported by the Portland Mercury on Tuesday, calling on the city to stop sweeps in that area. The neighborhood hugs Interstate 205 on the east side, Interstate 84 on the north, and Southeast 76th Avenue on the west side.

The resolution says that "sweeps, as a policy of addressing homelessness, has failed and is not achieving positive outcomes for housed or houseless Portlanders and wastes taxpayer dollars" and don't reduce homelessness.

The resolution was posted to the Montavilla Neighborhood Association website with an accompanying blog post, which called sweeps inhumane and also pointed to the 10 percent

increase in the homeless population observed in the 2017 federally mandated Point-in-Time count.

'We have an obligation'

The mayor's office says they have an obligation to address the 20-50 notifications that they receive a week through its One Point of Contact system, which logs complaints from Portland residents about homeless camps.

"We have an obligation to those residents," says Michael Cox, Mayor Ted Wheeler's spokesman. Although he said that right now, there's actually not a lot of active camping happening in Montavilla.

"We prioritize which camps we're going to clean based on factors, like whether there's environmental concerns, threats to public health and threats to public safety," he said.

The neighborhood resolution has three points: it urges the city of Portland to stop further sweeps of camps in its neighborhood "which may be unconstitutional and be human rights violations"; urges the Portland City council to convene a meeting of stakeholders to include neighborhood associations, neighborhood coalitions, the housing bureau, Joint Office of Homeless Services, advocacy groups and others to "develop a responsible five-year plan to address homelessness by allocating limited taxpayer dollars on long-term solutions" including shelter beds, transitional housing and mental health and substance abuse services; and calls on other neighborhood associations within the Southeast Uplift Neighborhood Coalition to join their association in encouraging these efforts.

The A Home for Everyone task force, a joint committee of local government and the city of Gresham, and A Home Forward, was created to address some of these issues, such as shelter and housing.

The Southeast Uplift neighborhood coalition, which oversees 20 neighborhood associations in that quadrant, has not taken a stance on the issue yet.

According to Anne Dufay, executive director (although retiring at the end of next month), the coalition will be able to discuss it at their next board meeting on July 10.

She said that, moving forward, it will depend on what Montavilla Neighborhood Association asks from the coalition, such as writing a letter of support.

How 'sweeps' work

Homeless advocates have been urging local government to stop homeless sweeps for years, calling them inhumane and displacing them when there's not much alternative as affordable housing remains in short supply. Many homeless people will move when asked, but simply find another spot to camp nearby.

In response to the neighborhood calling sweeps inhumane and a violation of human rights, Cox said that the idea that people are just being "swept" out of an area is a misconception.

"We operate under the Anderson agreement, which prescribes exactly how we can go about cleaning camps. We can't do camp sweeps, that's a misconception. We have posting requirements — we go there and connect folks to options around shelter and services," Cox said.

The Anderson agreement is a process that came by way of the Anderson v. Portland lawsuit in 2009, which settled in 2012. Part of the settlement requires the city to post ahead of a cleanup, and then service providers are notified. City cleanups give campers between 24 hours and a week to pack up.

Cox also noted that much camping in Montavilla happens on Oregon Department of Transportation property, and that it's a multi-jurisdictional issue.

The multi-jurisdictional problem has also been an issue in the Southeast neighborhood of Lents, just south of Montavilla, where large camps have sprawled over a number of different government properties, including the city of Portland (Bureau of Transportation), ODOT, TriMet and even Multnomah County property.

The most recent campsite report through the One Point of Contact system for June 12-18 noted 559 reports of campsites throughout the city, with 133 of those reports on ODOT properties and eight on Union Pacific Railway property.

Cox said that ODOT operates under a court mandate for their camp cleanups as well, but that it's different from the Anderson agreement. The agencies, he said, are attempting to coordinate on the issue of homeless camps sprawling over different jurisdictions.

"We've brought together partners from other jurisdictions, both city bureaus and state agencies to work through these issues to get something of a unified approach," Cox said.

It's unsure how much collectively the different agencies are spending on homeless camp cleanups. However, for comparison, one of the largest homeless camps the city has seen, that along the Springwater Corridor Trail in Southeast Portland last year where hundreds of campers dwelled, cost about \$130,000 for contracted services when it was cleared out last summer. An additional \$3,500 was spent on materials, like garbage bags, bee control and signage, according to the Office of Management and Finance.

'The same campers come right back'

So what exactly can the Montavilla Neighborhood Association resolution do?

According to Paul Leistner, neighborhood program coordinator the Office of Neighborhood Involvement, "it has no formal authority. It's just persuasive in the sense they have sent this on, they can express themselves to the decision makers, but it doesn't bind anybody." He added that there's sometimes confusion over a board taking a stance — that it doesn't mean that all residents of the neighborhood or even the neighborhood association agree with it. He compared it to if an editorial board wrote an op-ed in the newspaper.

"It's raising an awareness of an issue ... if they're seeing negative impacts because of that policy, it's keeping in line with what neighborhoods do if they feel a policy isn't having good results in their community," Leistner, who has studied the city's neighborhood system for the last 40 years, said.

In a statement by the Montavilla Neighborhood Association board to the Portland Tribune via Facebook, the group said they stand by their statements despite Cox's response that the city has an obligation to respond to complaints lodged by their residents:

"We believe the city council has a duty to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars and sweeps are ineffective. The camps come back weeks or months later. We need long-term solutions, which homeless advocacy groups have been saying for years. ... If the mayor's sweeps policy was working and connecting people to services, then the same campers wouldn't be returning. Even the most vocal opponents of our resolution, which is a small number of neighbors, acknowledge that the same campers come right back."

The Portland Business Journal

Portland City Council OKs \$50M Timbers/Thorns stadium plan

By Andy Giegerich

June 22, 2017

The Portland Timbers and Thorns plans to renovate Providence Park are a go.

As Oregon Public Broadcasting reports, the Portland City Council voted unanimously to approve the plan, which expands the home of the soccer teams and Portland State University's football team.

The city owns the stadium. Peregrine Sports owns the Timbers and the Thorns.

The teams' owners announced the plan in April. The teams will spend \$50 million to add 4,000 seats at Providence Park by 2020.

The Timbers have 15,000 people on the team's season ticket waiting list.

The new seats would sit along the stadium's east side, with four new tiers of seating that promises to remake the Goose Hollow neighborhood's dynamic. The work would, along Southwest 18th Avenue, create an arcade-like walk that's open to the public adjacent to the stadium.

Mike Golub, the Timbers and Thorns president of business, said the move will keep the teams in Portland "for the long term."

Opinion: Stop criticizing Mayor Wheeler — and start helping him

Guest columnist Vanessa Sturgeon applauds Portland's leader for taking risks and trying to do what's best for the city.

By Vanessa Sturgeon

June 22, 2017

In his immortal Gettysburg Address, Abraham Lincoln declared that the Civil War was being waged so that "government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the Earth."

In his 1961 inaugural address, John Kennedy issued his timeless challenge to "ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country."

These epic calls to action from two great Americans resonate today.

The words "by the people" are a vital part of Lincoln's eloquent phrase. In a country so divided that it went to war with itself, Lincoln's notion of government "by the people" was an appeal to the governed to rise up and help those who govern, not view government as an adversary.

When townspeople in the old west elected a sheriff, they didn't expect that one sheriff, however competent, to singlehandedly protect the town. These townspeople rallied volunteers to help their

sheriff defend against pillagers, form posses to track down outlaws, or grab a shovel to fight a fire.

Just as a football team can't survive on a great quarterback alone, our leaders can only do so much to achieve the campaign promises we endorsed at the ballot box when we voted for them. Once they're elected, we owe our leaders more than our vote. We owe them the initiative to grab a shovel and do our part.

Ted Wheeler knows what it's like to have high expectations placed on one set of shoulders. Ted was dealt a tough hand when he was elected as Portland mayor last year. He inherited a tumultuous political landscape riddled with a smorgasbord of controversies, including housing, homelessness, ramshackle roads, racial tension, deficit spending and police practices to name a few.

Ted had already proven his ability to get results in elected office when he served as Multnomah County chair from 2007-2010, and was then appointed state treasurer by Governor Kulongoski in 2010, winning re-election to that post twice. Throughout his career he's shown himself to be fair-minded with diverse groups of constituents; a good listener, a doer, not just a talker.

He came into the mayor's office with a sound, sensible agenda. But he's been repeatedly distracted from advancing that agenda by a series of civic crises, often followed by a tirade of criticism for his responses to those crises.

A recent example was the wrenching dilemma he faced in the aftermath of the tragic triple stabbings May 26 on a TriMet MAX train. With emotions raw in a city reeling in outrage over the MAX incident, Wheeler asked organizers of two opposing events – a Trump Free Speech Rally and a March Against Sharia — to voluntarily withdraw from their planned demonstrations to avoid a potentially violent confrontation between the two groups.

“They wouldn't do that,” explained the mayor in an Oregon Public Broadcast interview, “so I did call upon the federal government to ask if in the interest of imminent public safety concerns whether they would consider withdrawing the permit.”

Ted proceeded to take heat from the left, right and middle for what was perceived to be his suppression of free speech. But the mayor rose above the rhetoric, calmly moving on to what he described as “Plan C, which is making sure that we have all the right assets in place to do everything we can to protect people who are expressing their First Amendment rights and make sure that at the end of the day all protesters and counter protesters are all heard and that they get to go home to their families safe and sound.”

In other words, take prudent precautions to protect the safety of your constituents – the primary responsibility of any mayor.

As the critics piled on, Ted chose not to “worry too much about the latest tweet or Facebook post and focus instead with the organizers and the law enforcement community to make sure people here are protected — that's my objective right now.”

Following the dueling demonstrations of Sunday June 4, an Oregonian editorial read, “It would not be an overstatement to say that Portland braced for riots over the weekend, with a pro-Trump rally facing provocations from multiple factions claiming the high ground on anti-hate speech.

But while Sunday afternoon had its woolly moments in which police blocked antagonists from one another, as well as decisively shut down a city park that served as an anti-Trump staging area, the day ended with just 14 arrests and without serious incident. Portland, and Portland police, take a bow. Sunday is how democracy is done.”

Ted's composure, leadership, preparation, and tireless advocacy of peace and civility were major factors in the avoidance of greater violence on that Sunday, and his leadership has helped reduce public safety risks posed by a number of other recent demonstrations in Portland.

To put things into perspective, Ted Wheeler isn't the first Oregon politician to create a conflict by simply trying to avoid one.

In 1970, Oregon's legendary governor Tom McCall was castigated for his scheme to avoid violent protests of a planned visit by President Richard Nixon to a Portland American Legion conference. When an FBI report estimated a potential collision of 25,000 Legionnaires and 50,000 anti-war protestors, with a possible outcome more violent than the disastrous 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, McCall conceived Vortex I, a week-long rock festival designed to lure young revelers 20 miles out of downtown to Clackamas County's bucolic McIver Park. The scheme worked. There were no major incidents during the convention.

But McCall was reamed for what was seen as a lenient lapse in law enforcement at Vortex. Less than three months before the November vote in which he sought re-election, McCall fretted that he had "committed political suicide." Despite blistering criticism of the governor's scheme – still said to be the only state-sponsored rock festival in U.S. history — McCall's gamble paid off and he was re-elected. "There was a lot of pot smoking and skinny dipping," McCall later recalled to writer Studs Terkel, "but nobody was killed."

Elected officials are an easy target for countless constituent frustrations. They always have been. But as the examples of Ted Wheeler and Tom McCall demonstrate, courage under pressure from those we choose to lead us doesn't always get the credit it deserves.

And no matter how good those leaders are, we should all remember that even the best leaders need more hands than their own to do the work, more shoulders than their own to carry the load.

That's the case with Ted Wheeler. He has a good vision for this city and he's doing his best to implement it while trying to correct past shortcomings and put out new fires, none of which were of his making.

So whether you voted for the man or not, the next time you're aggravated with something going on in this town, try taking a breath and contacting the mayor's office instead of tweeting or Facebooking your frustration.

Not just to complain or ask what he can do for you, but to ask what you can do to make Portland more of a government by the people, not just for the people.

To ask him what you can do to help him help us.

The Portland Observer

Pinched by Development

Expansion next door impacts legacy business

By Zachary Senn

June 20, 2017

A black family in business in Portland for generations has been hit hard by some unintended consequences of gentrification, raising concerns about how the city's building codes and utility regulations can negatively affect a minority business.

Herman and Rickey Brame say that the construction of a restaurant next door to their commercial building on Northeast Killingsworth Street is causing them to shutter a barbershop that has served the community for years.

Historically, the Brame family has experienced displacement in Portland multiple times, beginning with the 1948 Vanport Flood. Their father's first barbershop was located on Cherry Street, demolished by Urban Renewal in the 1960s to make way for the construction of Veterans Memorial Coliseum.

The family's current troubles are rooted in an electrical meter that juts out from the west side of their commercial building, which is located at 543-549 N.E. Killingsworth St.

The meter must be accessed from the neighboring property in order to be read. The new developer, however, is building right up to the property line, which is compelling the Brames to move the meter. Due to regulations imposed by Pacific Power, the Brames must also rewire their entire building to meet current industrial and commercial standards. The current wiring dates back to the 1940s.

"It's considered industrial," explained Rickey Brame, who has nearly three decades of experience working as a professional electrician, "which means we've got to have sprinkler systems and everything. It's not just moving the meters, it snowballs."

Brian Alfrey, who co-owns the adjacent development site at 533 N.E. Killingsworth along with his business partner Mike Gadberry, says that he is just trying to breathe new life into an underutilized piece of land.

"It was a dilapidated old locksmith building. The roof was falling in, and it was just terrible," said Alfrey. "We bought it, and we wanted to do something better for the neighborhood."

Alfrey and Gadberry also own the Radio Room, a popular bar and restaurant on Northeast Alberta Street that is situated inside a repurposed gas station.

Rickey Brame says that he isn't opposed to the new development for the neighborhood, but is feeling forced out by the project.

"We welcomed them at first, when we got the notice from the city," he said. "We were tired of looking at that eye-sore too!"

Alfrey, who is himself a native of northeast Portland, says that he is simply trying to create a space that will help to preserve the historic characteristics of the Killingsworth business corridor, which Rickey and Herman Brame describe as "the soul of the city."

"We opted not to do a \$2,000-a-month apartment complex," Alfrey says, "but to do something that's a little truer to the neighborhood."

Alfrey and Gadberry offered \$10,000 to help cover the cost of moving the meter; Rickey Brame, however, says that the cost of rewiring the entire structure would be substantially higher.

The Brames say that while some space between construction projects and property lines are required in residential areas, there are no such requirements in commercial zones.

Ross Caron, public information officer for the Portland Bureau of Development Services, says city regulators are aware of the situation involving the Brame's building. He explained that Pacific Power, and not the city, is compelling them to rewire the structure.

Pacific Power could not be immediately reached for comment.

The Brames add that while they understand that the developers are observing current regulations, say City Hall isn't going far enough to protect existing landowners and minority business owners from new developments.

"No matter what the code says," said Herman Brame, "the code is wrong."

Pointing to already-gentrified neighborhoods like Mississippi and Alberta, the Brames say that the burden placed on them is another obstacle to staying put in parts of the city that are rapidly changing.

"I have a minimum of 5 employees here," said Rickey Brame. "These are minority workers trying to stay in our own neighborhood."

Herman Brame says that city leaders are ignoring the plight of black residents and business owners who are being forced out of inner Portland.

"You can cite codes and email back and forth, but that doesn't get anything done," he says. "At some point, they need to get out and walk around and see what's actually going on."

Herman Brame penned a letter to Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler asking him to review his family's case, and learn more about how Portland residents are being affected by the city's zoning rules.

"We hope that they can review their code, and take this into consideration," Herman Brame said.

For now, the Brames are preparing to shut down the barbershop as the new construction is ready to begin. He is hoping, however, that a salon that's attached to the barbershop can remain in operation for the foreseeable future. The salon is run by his daughter, who is the fourth generation of the Brame family to be successful in the beauty industry.

"The barbershop is going to be cut off," Rickey Brame says. "We're going to be shut down. We've got no choice."

The barbershop is scheduled to have its power cut on Friday, June 23.

"We will survive. We own this land," Rickey Brame said, adding, "But this could have us shut down three years."

OPB

Portland Approves \$50 Million Soccer Stadium Expansion

By Amelia Templeton

June 21, 2017

The Portland City Council voted unanimously Wednesday to approve a plan that would expand the Providence Park Stadium, home to the Portland Timbers, the Portland Thorns and Portland State University football.

The city of Portland owns the stadium, but the two soccer clubs are owned by a private company, Peregrine Sports.

Peregrine said there are more soccer fans in Portland than there are seats in the stadium; currently, there are about 13,000 people on a waiting list for season tickets to Timbers games.

The expansion will add up to 4,000 more seats and a new cantilevered roof to help keep fans dry during the rainy season.

Peregrine has agreed to pay the \$50 million cost of building the expansion. In exchange, the city has agreed to forfeit its share of ticket revenues, losing out on about \$5.1 million between 2018 and 2025.

City managers project the city will make money on the deal in the long run.

At present, the majority of the city's revenue from spectator venues comes from the Rose Quarter, which is home to the Portland Trail Blazers.