

The Oregonian

Portland Agrees to Sell Hydroelectric Power to PGE for undisclosed Amount

By Jessica Floum

August 30, 2017

Portland will sell hydroelectric power from a city-owned plant at the Bull Run watershed to Portland General Electric in an opaque deal that could lose taxpayers money over the next three years in an effort to make money later.

In the past, the city paid PGE to maintain and operate its hydroelectric facility then sold the power to the utility. The deal netted the city an average profit of \$300,000 a year over the last four years.

PGE's contract ends Thursday, however, and the utility told Portland months ago that it no longer wishes to operate the plant.

On Wednesday, the Portland City Council unanimously approved three contracts needed to operate the plant and transmit power to the grid, including a deal to sell power to PGE so long as the city does not tell the public how much PGE will pay. A city risk analysis said the deal could yield the city \$3 million to \$8.5 million over the next 15 years.

But it could also lose the city as much as \$2 million over the next three years if the city has extremely dry weather.

Portland is considering putting taxpayer dollars at risk to sell hydroelectric power, and it won't tell the public exactly how much it stands to make -- or lose -- from the arrangement.

Water Bureau officials insisted that agreeing to keep how much PGE will pay quiet was necessary to get the utility to agree to a deal that was in the best interest of the city. They say PGE will pay the city above-market rates – something city taxpayers will be able to learn for certain only after the fact, when the utility reports its power purchases to federal regulators.

The city was able to get PGE to pay above market price for its power by agreeing to keep the price confidential, water commissioner Nick Fish said.

"The idea somehow that we've taken an approach against our ratepayers is Orwellian," Fish said. "This is how we got a better return."

The city did not solicit proposals from other energy companies before agreeing to PGE's deal.

Mike Weedall is a member of the water bureau's advisory committee, the Portland Utility Board, and the retired vice president of energy efficiency at the Bonneville Power Administration.

Weedall told committee members in a meeting last week that the city could have made a lot more money. He said he'd talked to people in the industry who said they would have loved to bid on the project.

"The only way to find out the real value and to get maximum value is to put it out to bid," Weedall told *The Oregonian/OregonLive* Wednesday. "To me, it's just simple."

The power purchasing deal was among three contracts approved unanimously by the city council Wednesday. Commissioner Dan Saltzman was absent.

The other two contracts run for five years. The council approved paying PGE \$200,000 a year to maintain the facilities necessary to transmit power. Commissioners also agreed to pay Eugene Water & Electric Board \$420,000 over the five years to schedule the power transmission.

Last month, the council agreed to pay Energy Northwest, a Washington agency, \$8 million to operate the hydroelectric plant through 2022.

Fish acknowledged that the deal carries risk, but said the city's Chief Financial Officer Ken Rust determined that risk is "very small."

Fish said "time will tell" whether the city's deal with PGE is in the public's best interest.

"I'm not here to oversell or undersell this deal," he said. "I'm here simply to say I think this is the best deal we could cobble together under the circumstances."

Police Shoot Bank Robbery Suspect After NE Portland Chase

By Shane Dixon Kavanaugh

August 30, 2017

A crime spree that appeared to span three counties came to a violent end on Wednesday when a police officer shot a bank robbery suspect in Northeast Portland, law enforcement officials said.

A Portland cop wounded the suspect after he took police on a wild chase and crashed a stolen car in the North Tabor neighborhood, a bureau spokesman said.

The suspect, who has not been identified, was later rushed to a hospital and is expected to survive.

Sgt. Chris Burley, a police spokesman, said officers near Southeast Cesar E. Chavez Boulevard and Southeast Clinton Street first spotted a blue 1987 Chevrolet Blazer around 12:40 p.m. Authorities believed the vehicle had been stolen and was later involved with a Washington County bank robbery earlier in the day.

When the cops attempted to stop the driver he stepped on the gas and sped away, Burley said. Officers pursued the Blazer for more than two dozen blocks before the suspect plowed into a parked car along 100 block of Southeast 55th Avenue, between Couch and Davis streets.

Burley said officers gave orders for the suspect to exit the Blazer and surrender. One of the cops then opened fire on the suspect after he refused to comply.

Officers provided first aid on the wounded man until emergency responders arrived, Burley said. One of the cops suffered a minor injury and was treated at the scene.

Burley said authorities believe the Blazer had been boosted during a burglary in Yamhill County shortly after 7 a.m. Wednesday. They also believe it was later used as a getaway vehicle in the robbery of the U.S. Bank branch, 18485 S.W. Farmington Road, around 9:30 a.m.

Officials said an armed suspect robbed the bank of an undisclosed amount of cash. Witnesses said the man left in a turquoise Blazer.

Two witnesses in Portland's North Tabor neighborhood told The Oregonian/OregonLive they heard numerous sirens converge on the area of the shooting. They then heard shouts followed by three shots.

Bill Bixenstein, 39, of Landis & Landis Construction was working road and sewer maintenance on Northeast 53rd Avenue near Couch when law enforcement swarmed the area.

He said he saw police surround the Blazer and tell a suspect to get out. But the suspect refused at first.

"He wasn't showing his hands," Bixenstein said.

Then came the shots.

About 15 to 20 seconds passed, Bixenstein said, before the suspect finally surrendered and police pulled him out of the SUV.

"It looked like he had been shot in the shoulder," Bixenstein said, adding that he could see a red blot and ripped clothing near that area of the man's body.

Bixenstein said he was shocked by the suspect's refusal to get out of the car. "You're hit, dude. You're done. You're boxed in. You may as well call it quits," he said.

David York, 63, who lives near Northeast 56th Avenue and Davis Street, also described hearing sirens, yelling then three shots.

"I heard three, four, five sirens. But they didn't pass by. I was starting to wonder what was going on," he said

Then he heard the shots.

"Three pops," York said.

The Portland Tribune

Sources Say: Portland-area Voters Souring on Outlook

*By Jim Redden
August 31, 2017*

Plus, City Council Position 3 race officially underway and other elected officials not criticized as much as Mayor Ted Wheeler for trying to stop right wing rallies

According to a DHM Research survey conducted in mid-August, voters in the region are evenly split about whether it is moving in the "right direction" or on the "wrong track." Forty-one percent agreed with either choice, with the rest undecided.

That's a big change from March, when a DMH survey found 48 percent felt the region was moving in the "right direction" compared to 39 percent who said it was on the "wrong track." And even then, those who said "right direction" had fallen 12 percentage points from the 60 percent who indicated that in 2013 and 2014 surveys.

Perhaps surprisingly, metro voters are even more pessimistic than the state as a whole, where 43 percent said "right direction" in the most recent DMH survey compared to 40 percent who chose "wrong track."

A recent Moore Research survey of Portlanders showed they are even more pessimistic. It found that 36 percent of city voters thought Portland was moving in the "right direction" compared to 48 percent who said on the "wrong track." The company's previous results for the same question were not available.

Council candidates raising money

The race for the City Council Position 3 seat is officially under way.

Former Oregon legislator and current NAACP Portland chapter President Jo Ann Hardesty has filed a campaign committee and reported raising \$6,225 so far to challenge Commissioner Dan Saltzman next year. The largest contribution is \$1,000 from Roberto Lovato of Portland, a frequent City Council protester. The largest expenditure is \$513 to Morel Ink for envelopes.

Meanwhile, Saltzman has reported raising over \$69,000 in cash and in-kind donations so far this year. His largest contribution is \$1,000 from BBB Enterprises, a Portland business. His largest expenditure is \$25,500 to Winning Mark, the campaign management firm owned by Mark Wiener.

Violence apparently does change things

Mayor Ted Wheeler was accused of not respecting the First Amendment when he asked the federal government to cancel the permit it had issued for the June 4 "free speech rally" in downtown Terry Schunk Plaza. Other elected officials are not facing such criticism for doing similar things — since the violence in Charlottesville, Virginia.

In Portland, Wheeler said the local rally organized by Patriot Prayer founder Joey Gibson would lead to clashes with counterprotesters. That's what happened in Virginia, leading Gov. Terry McAuliffe to suspend all future protests at the park with the Robert E. Lee statue, where violence broke out Aug. 12.

"Let me be clear, this executive order has nothing to do with infringing upon First Amendment rights," McAuliffe said in a statement that went largely unchallenged.

Then when Gibson got a permit for an Aug. 26 rally in a federal park in San Francisco, Mayor Ed Lee tried unsuccessfully to have it withdrawn and U.S. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, who represents the city, also called for the rally to be cancelled. Pelosi was ridiculed by some for saying, "The Constitution does not say that a person can yell 'wolf' in a crowded theater."

Gibson called off the rally the day before it was scheduled, citing threats of violence.

Central City Prepping for Major Growth

*By Jim Redden
August 31, 2017*

Proposed plan includes Green Loop, redeveloped downtown post office complex, building height adjustments

Although the central city covers just over 3 percent of Portland, the City Council has decided it should accommodate 30 percent of all growth between now and 2035 — including 38,000 more households and 51,000 additional jobs.

To help make that happen, city planners have prepared Central City 2035, a plan to be considered by the council on Sept. 7. Among other things, it adjusts the maximum allowable height of residential and office buildings in various parts of the 11 districts concentrated on both sides of the Willamette River. It is also designed to preserve historic districts and create more open spaces to improve livability.

"This plan makes sure there's room and space for both, and that we have a welcoming, prosperous and equitable city for everyone," says Susan Anderson, director of the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, which drafted the plan.

The council set this goal last year when it updated the state-mandated Comprehensive Plan intended to guide growth in the city for the next two decades. Planners believe it can be achieved because the central city has the highest concentration of infrastructure needed to support such growth, including the Transit Mall where TriMet bus and MAX lines cross.

Although the "comp plan" update has yet to be officially acknowledged by the state Department of Land Conservation and Development as required by state land use planning laws, work on CC2035 — as city planners call it — has been under way for seven years. Plans for each district have been drafted, along with transportation, environmental protection and other plans that cross their borders.

Most of the area designated as central city is located on the west side of the Willamette River. It includes the Downtown, Pearl, Old Town/Chinatown, Goose Hollow, West End, University District/South Auditorium, and South Waterfront districts. On the east side, it includes the Lower Albina, Lloyd and Central Eastside districts.

Key changes

Fitting so many more people and jobs into just five square miles is very challenging. The combined plans are as thick as a phone book and difficult for the average person to understand. But planners say the following opportunities help make it possible:

The 13.4-acre U.S. Post Office distribution center at the south end of the Broadway Bridge will be demolished and replaced with a new neighborhood. The site was bought last year for \$88 million by Prosper Portland, formerly known as the Portland Development Commission. The city urban renewal agency is preparing a master plan known as the Broadway Corridor that includes approximately 10 additional surrounding acres, allowing for 24 acres of redevelopment between the Pearl District and Old Town/Chinatown.

- A proposed Green Loop would connect both sides of the river with a broad, tree-lined pathway reserved for pedestrians and bicyclists. Described as "a six-mile linear park," it is expected to encourage walking and biking within the central city, both for commuting and recreation. Although the exact route has yet to be determined, some parking and traffic lanes are expected to be eliminated on a number of downtown and central eastside streets.
- Creating incentives to encourage the redevelopment of underused properties, such as surface parking lots.
- Protecting and enhancing the environment along the Willamette River through the central city with a new overlay zone, while also encouraging small businesses such as ice cream stands and kayak rentals along its banks.
- Preserving historic districts by lowering maximum allowable heights in them and encouraging seismic upgrades of existing buildings by transferring their potential increases to new projects in other areas.

Even though maximum heights are proposed to be lowered in some areas, they would be raised in others, so total development capacity in the central city would be increased 7 percent, including bonus heights to meet such goals as increasing affordable housing.

The plan is not without controversy. In October 2015, the City Auditor's Office ruled that property owners on a West End advisory committee should have declared potential conflicts of

interest before voting to recommend denser developments. Although no one was penalized, public comments available on the planning bureau's website show some people are concerned about encouraging tall buildings there.

"A building taller than 100 feet will block the sun from reaching my windows as well as hurt the community garden we have on the second-floor court yard. I also think taller buildings will create a less livable and communal environment, which is important since so many people live and play in the west end, as opposed to the business district, where livability is less important," writes Don Hew, a resident of the St. Francis Apartments at 1024 S.W. Main St.

In addition, the Transportation System Plan approved with the comp. plan update includes rebuilding the intersection of I-5 and I-84 in the Rose Quarter to reduce congestion, a top priority of the Oregon Department of Transportation. That is opposed by environmentalists, who argue such projects encourage driving and more greenhouse gas emissions.

Building a denser central city

Central City 2035 builds on two previous landmark growth plans. The Downtown Plan approved by the City Council in 1972 coincided with a regional shift from freeway building to investments in mass transit and resulted in the downtown Transit Mall and Pioneer Courthouse Square. The first Central City Plan approved in 1988 expanded the concept of the urban core to include nearby neighborhoods on both sides of the Willamette River.

The 10 districts covered by the current Central City Plan encompass 2,972 acres, just 3.2 percent of Portland. Unlike the first Central City Plan, Central City 2035 proposes only a modest boundary increase. It would add the 18 acres known as the Clinton Triangle along the north side of Southeast Powell Boulevard just east of Southeast Milwaukie Avenue. Even if that is approved, the Central City would still be a small fraction of the 92,846 acres in Portland.

Despite that, the number of households in the central city is expected to grow from 26,000 to 64,000 by 2035. The number of jobs is forecast to increase from 123,000 to 174,000. Altogether, Portland is expected to add at least 132,000 more households and 140,000 jobs over the next 20 years.

The City Council held a work session on the plan Aug. 15, although only commissioners Amanda Fritz and Dan Saltzman were able to attend. Both were generally supportive. "It's a good-looking plan. I like it," Saltzman said.

Mayor Ted Wheeler has already told the planning bureau he intends to introduce some amendments, however, and Saltzman said he may do so, too, after the public testifies on it.

The council is expected to vote on the plan in January 2018.

The Portland Mercury

Portland Police Shoot Person During Attempted Traffic Stop of Car They Say Was Stolen

*By Doug Brown
August 30, 2017*

A Portland police officer shot someone today during what Portland Police Bureau (PPB) said was an attempted traffic stop of a stolen car associated with a bank robbery.

The unnamed person (the "suspect") is still alive, the bureau says, and was taken to a hospital. A cop at the scene had "a minor injury and is being treated at the scene."

It happened on NE 55th St, just off Burnside.

That's all the information we have right now. We'll update the story when we know more.

The City's Now Using "No Camping" Signs to Deter Campers from Parks

By Dirk VanderHart

August 30, 2017

With its homeless population on the rise, and following a steep increase in people living in RVs and other vehicles, the City of Portland turned to a new idea last month to steer the destitute away from parks: signs.

From July 10-31, the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) installed a total of 45 "No Camping" signs on the perimeters of three city parks in Southeast Portland: Laurelhurst, Sewallcrest, and Midland.

They're simple affairs, featuring a tent slashed through with a red "no" symbol, the words "NO CAMPING," and a list of city ordinances outlawing camping—in parks and on all city-owned land—should the homeless want to look them up.

The signs are paired with new placards prohibiting parking near the park from 10 pm to 5 am.

"The desired impact of the signs is to educate about the camping prohibition in and around parks, where an increase in car/RV camping has been noted," says Mark Ross, a spokesperson for Portland Parks and Recreation, which worked in concert with PBOT to put up the placards.

The strategy comes as cities throughout the country struggle to address a housing crisis playing out nationwide—and as homeless advocates increasingly push back against anti-camping laws. In one recent ruling, a federal judge issued an order temporarily stopping Houston from enforcing its own camping ban.

The City of Portland has long been selective about where and when it chooses to crack down on camping, but the new roadside placards are a first.

"It's an inexpensive but tangible way to message that the activity that's happening is not permitted," says Ross.

The city ordered around 200 signs, at a total cost of approximately \$1,750, and doesn't have immediate plans for the extras, he says.

The notices, it turns out, were created as members of the Laurelhurst Neighborhood Association (LNA) recently demanded a response to people living on the outskirts of Laurelhurst Park. The organization went so far as to ask for stepped-up penalties for homeless people who camp near the park—a request Mayor Ted Wheeler denied.

The first 24 signs went up around Laurelhurst Park on July 10, with seven more added three weeks later, Ross says. Residents of the well-heeled neighborhood are "ecstatic," according to TJ Browning, a member of the LNA's safety committee.

"Since we've had the signs, it's dropped tremendously," Browning says. "If we had 40 regular campers before, we've got a handful now. People are returning to the park."

A trip to Laurelhurst Park on Monday, August 28, suggested Browning is right. While several camps were set up along the park's southern edge (there are no placards on Southeast Stark), there were none to be found on Southeast Ankeny, where mansions overlook Laurelhurst's scenic glades. Several people appeared to be living in their cars on the park's outskirts.

Further south, Sewallcrest Park—where neighbors have also complained—was absent of apparent campers. A single shopping cart lingered on a sidewalk nearby.

There was also an indication that not everyone's taking the new signage seriously. One of Sewallcrest's 11 "No Camping" signs had already been snapped in half.

Hall Monitor: Back on Hoyt Street

By Dirk VanderHart

August 30, 2017

It hasn't been easy to keep track of Portland's homeless shelters over the last two years.

Ever since former Mayor Charlie Hales declared a housing state of emergency in September of 2015, the city and county have unveiled a rotating cast of buildings where down-and-out Portlanders might find respite.

A women's shelter in a Southwest Portland Army Reserve center opened in November 2015. It lasted six months.

Then there was the Peace Shelter, a downtown building donated temporarily by Portland's Menashe family, which twice served as shelter space. Developer Tom Cody kicked in a property of his own, providing temporary winter shelter just off O'Bryant Square.

Even the largest facility in the county—the 200-bed Hansen Shelter at Northeast Glisan and 122nd—is on borrowed time. The former sheriff's office headquarters has a host of deficiencies, and wasn't supposed to serve the homeless for longer than a year. It's now been around 13 months, with no definitive closing date in sight.

This bopping around is not how you'd choose to serve the city's growing homeless population, but the authorities battling the crisis often don't have a choice. They're struggling in the same frenzied real estate environment as everyone else—with NIMBYism and zoning restrictions thrown in for good measure.

Which helps explain why the city/county Joint Office of Homeless Services (JOHS) is courting something of an old flame.

Last week, the Portland Tribune reported that officials have been laying groundwork for a big, new, long-term shelter—not in East Portland, where beds are scarce, or far-flung Southwest, but in social service-heavy Old Town, not far from four existing year-round shelters.

The JOHS has its eye on a long-dormant warehouse at 320 NW Hoyt, just east of the Greyhound station and Bud Clark Commons.

"This is meant to end that sort of 'bopping around,' as you put it," says Denis Theriault, a spokesperson for the homelessness office and former Mercury reporter. "This allows us to be in control for a large amount of time."

Theriault's got history with Hoyt Street building. As the prior steward of this column, he watched as former Mayor Charlie Hales mooned over the old gray warehouse in late 2013—

hoping to put homeless rest area Right 2 Dream Too into some of the building's more than 29,000 square feet.

The plan generated a lot of hope, then fizzled. On top of the \$10,000 in monthly rent to lease the building from its Seattle owners, the city found it needed some \$335,000 in renovations.

But here we are again.

Theriault says it's still too early to say whether a shelter space is feasible. Sure, JOHS has more resources than the R2DToo effort did, but the larger scale officials now have in mind—up to 200 beds—also likely means far larger renovation expenses, and a rent deal hasn't been hammered out.

There are also concerns from Old Town neighbors who are ready to see the area attract more than homeless services.

They've got a point. The renewed run at a Hoyt Street shelter is, yet again, not a strategy you'd necessarily pick if given a choice.

And again, it's not clear we have one.

The Portland Business Journal

Portland, Facing “Stark Choice”, Finalizes New Hydroelectric Deals

By Pete Danko
August 30, 2017

The Portland City Council on Wednesday unanimously approved the final pieces in a package of deals that will keep the city in the hydropower business.

Four separate deals replace an expiring comprehensive agreement under which Portland General Electric had operated and maintained the Portland Hydroelectric Project in the Bull Run watershed, and bought its power output. That agreement had generated net revenue of \$14 million over the past 35 years, according to the city.

Commissioner Nick Fish, who oversees the Portland Water Bureau, shepherded the deal through the council.

The city now runs the risk that a succession of dry years early in the new arrangement could turn a \$1.8 million Bureau of Hydroelectric Power fund surplus into a \$200,000 deficit.

Commissioner Nick Fish, who oversees the Water Bureau, said that on balance, it was worth taking that small gamble

“We had a stark choice,” Fish said. “We had lost a sweetheart contract that we had had for many years with PGE. We could mothball hydropower and in a sense turn our back on \$55 million of public investment.

“Or we could take a calculated risk based on the advice we received from a blue-chip roster of professional consultants that we hired to guide us in the negotiation, and see whether we could continue to provide clean energy and value for our community.”

A risk analysis presented to the council said there was a better than 99 percent chance the city would make money over the next 15 years under the new arrangement, with revenues projected to exceed expenditures by \$5.8 million by the end of the period.

"I'm not here to either oversell or undersell this deal," Fish said. "I'm here simply to say I think this is the best deal we could cobble together under the circumstances."

PGE will still buy the output from the project, at an undisclosed rate, in a 15-year deal.

Confidentiality is common in utility power purchase agreements, and Fish said it was key to the city getting an above-market price from PGE for the power.

The three other parts of the new arrangement include a five-year, \$8 million agreement with power services agency Energy Northwest to operate and maintain the plants; a \$1 million, five-year deal with PGE for transmission line maintenance; and a \$420,000, five-year deal with Eugene Water & Electric Board for power scheduling services.

The Portland Hydroelectric Project consists of two dams with powerhouses, one that can generate 24 megawatts, the other 12 megawatts. The project's average annual output over the past 20 years — 85,716 megawatt-hours — has been equal to the energy used by about 8,770 Portland General Electric residential customers.