

The Oregonian

Water Bureau OK's Fire Retardant Drops in Portland Bull Run Watershed

By Rob Davis

September 6, 2017

The Portland Water Bureau has approved fire retardant drops in the Bull Run watershed, a decision that allows firefighters to dump toxic chemicals in the city's pristine source of drinking water.

The city agency did not publicly announce the decision, confirming it Wednesday only after repeated inquiries from The Oregonian/OregonLive.

"The Portland Water Bureau has authorized unified command to use whatever measures are necessary to fight the fire within the watershed and are prepared to support their efforts in any way we can," Nicole Adams, a bureau spokeswoman, said in an email. "During this very critical time of trying to contain the fire, the Water Bureau will not impede the efforts of the firefighters."

Use of chemicals to protect the forest in Bull Run could be controversial in a city that has fought for years to keep fluoride out of its water.

Adams said the bureau's water quality staff has anticipated the possibility that fire retardant would be needed and has a plan to monitor its use and impact in the watershed that feeds the taps of nearly 1 million people. None has been used yet, she said.

The retardant, typically dropped by air, would only be applied to areas that are actively burning, Adams said.

The U.S. Forest Service has repeatedly been sued over its use of retardant. Andy Stahl, executive director of a Eugene group called Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics, called the chemical applications ineffective and wasteful.

The suggestion that retardant would be applied to areas that are burning suggests "the Portland Water Bureau has not got a clue," Stahl said.

A map created by The Oregonian/OregonLive shows as of Tuesday night at 8 p.m., the fire had only burned 100 acres inside a protective buffer surrounding the Bull Run drainage.

Retardant can't put fires out, he said, only slow a fire's advance if it thoroughly coats vegetation, denying the fire its ignition source. That's hard to do with a wind-driven crown fire burning through old growth trees like the Eagle Creek fire, he said.

"There is no evidence that it serves any useful purpose in stopping forest fires," Stahl said. "If retardant was so great at stopping fires, why hasn't it stopped this one?"

Stahl said using retardant would not likely harm Portland's water supply unless it was dumped directly in a reservoir. But it can be toxic to fish.

Though it is not allowed to be used within 300 feet of streams and rivers, accidental drops occur every fire season - and can have serious consequences. A 2002 retardant drop on the Fall River in Central Oregon killed more than 22,000 trout and was so toxic the Deschutes River tributary still hadn't recovered five years later.

The vibrant red retardant commonly used by the Forest Service is about 85 percent water. The rest is fertilizer, which contains ammonia and nitrates, with iron oxide added to give the material its red hue. The slurry works by acting as a barrier to a plant's ignition.

As of Tuesday night, the Eagle Creek fire had burned about 100 acres in a protected buffer surrounding the drainage that yields Portland's water. Adams said the fire still remains far from critical infrastructure and far from the drainage area. The uncontained perimeter is about 7 miles north of the city's headworks facility. If it was threatened, the city would have to abandon its Bull Run supply and get its water from a backup source.

City Council Approves 5 Percent Premium Pay to Encourage New Police Chief, Top Brass to Live in Portland

*By Maxine Bernstein
September 6, 2017*

Portland's City Council on Wednesday voted 4 to 0 to approve a 5 percent boost in annual base pay for the next chief of police and other top brass who live in the city.

Mayor Ted Wheeler, who serves as police commissioner, said he hoped the residency incentive encourages Portland's police captains, commanders, assistant chief and newly-selected chief Danielle Outlaw, of Oakland, to reside in the city.

With Outlaw expected to start as the city's top cop on Oct. 2, the mayor called it an "ideal time" to approve the residency incentive.

Having officers live in the city is intended to help improve "communication and trust between the people in the community and the police officers who serve that community," Wheeler said.

The council's emergency ordinance will go into effect immediately.

Outlaw, a 41-year-old deputy chief in Oakland and the first African American woman named to lead the Portland Police Bureau, has expressed a desire to live within the city limits. Outlaw is searching for a home in Portland, according to the mayor's spokesman Michael Cox.

The 5 percent boost would be added to Outlaw's base salary of \$215,000, bringing her annual pay to \$225,750. She's expected to start Oct. 2.

The 5 percent premium pay for high-ranking supervisors, including the chief, assistant chiefs, commanders and captains who live in the city, would match the same residency incentive pay granted to police lieutenants in the city's 2015-2018 union contract with the Portland Police Commanding Officers Association.

Anna Kanwit, manager of the city's Bureau of Human Resources, has estimated the residency incentive pay for the top ranked officers will cost the city between \$30,000 and \$50,000 annually, based on the 2016 payroll file of command officers who now live within the city limits.

Commissioner Chloe Eudaly said she'd like the city to explore extending such a residency premium to other city employees. Commissioner Amanda Fritz said she supported the premium pay if it encourages more command staff to live in the city. Commissioner Dan Saltzman was not present for the vote.

Before Wednesday's vote, only lieutenants had the residency 5 percent boost in pay added in its current contract. The rank-and-file police – including officers, detectives, sergeants and forensic

criminalists - are not required to move to Portland and don't receive a premium if they live in the city. If an officer moves to Portland, the city will reimburse the officer for relocation expenses.

A captain's salary ranges from \$128,000 to \$139,000. A commander's salary ranges from \$144,000 to \$159,000. An assistant chief's salary ranges from \$113,000 to \$162,000.

Portland's Central City Plan: 9 Key Changes Proposed

By Maxine Bernstein

September 6, 2017

Portland's original Central City Plan envisioned a streetcar rolling through a massive new mixed-use district in a former railyard in the northwest corner of the city.

And perhaps along the way, that vintage trolley would pass by the new public aquarium, or offer views of the shops built along the span of a new pedestrian bridge. (Some of the details from that 1988 plan have proved a little off in the intervening decades.)

On Thursday, though, the Portland City Council will discuss an update to that plan in an attempt to shape how downtown, the Lloyd District and the Central Eastside will develop by 2035.

By that time, Portland planners expect the central city to be home to 95,000 people – 56,000 more than now -- and 174,000 jobs.

The council will meet 2 p.m. Thursday and at the same time Sept. 14 for public hearings on parts of the plan. The council isn't expected to vote on it until early next year, and it's likely they'll introduce amendments in the meantime.

Here are some key proposals in the new plan.

Interstate 5 Rose Quarter project

The plan would formally acknowledge the state transportation department's proposal to add lanes on Interstate 5 through the Rose Quarter and make over the nearby surface streets. The state Legislature has pledged millions of dollars for the project, and city transportation officials say it's a rare opportunity to reestablish street connections broken when the freeway was built.

A group of environmental and transportation activists has sprung up to oppose the widening of I-5, saying it wouldn't meaningfully improve congestion. They point to studies that show drivers respond to newly expanded freeways by increasing their driving, soon clogging the road again.

Taller buildings (in some areas)

The city is raising the maximum building height near the downtown Transit Mall and the Morrison and Hawthorne bridgeheads in an effort to increase density near bus and MAX lines. The city also aims to make the tricky lots between bridge ramps more attractive to developers by increasing the heights allowed there.

The city has mapped proposed heights by tax lot.

Shorter buildings (in some areas)

In some historic districts, the city is lowering the maximum heights to prevent new buildings from overwhelming the historical ones.

One four-block section of Old Town/Chinatown could see building heights restricted to 125 feet from 350 feet. Property owners there have already raised objections.

Lifeline for historic buildings

Zoning rules cap not only overall height but also floor-area. The plan would let historic buildings transfer their unused floor-area to new development sites anywhere in the central city — but only if the historic building is seismically updated.

The goal is to let historic buildings sell off their “air rights” to fund seismic retrofits.

Shared parking

The plan would let new developments exceed the amount of off-street parking they’re normally allowed to build if the parking is shared with another property. Planners said this would allow parking to operate more efficiently. At the same time, the city plans restrict the construction of new parking and aims to reduce the amount of parking per resident.

Adjusting view corridors

Portland is adjusting some of its “view corridors” — swaths of land where development is restricted to protect views from a certain point. Some are being corrected because new mapping technology has made it easier to tell which properties could potentially block a view.

One view corridor would be curtailed: Taller buildings would be allowed along Southwest Jefferson Street, potentially reducing the view of the Vista Bridge from the Interstate 405 overpass. The city instead proposes to build a small park to view the bridge at the Jefferson and 18th Avenue traffic circle.

Mayor Ted Wheeler proposed an amendment to the plan that would create a new view corridor from the Salmon Street Springs fountain at Tom McCall Waterfront Park toward Mt. Hood.

More waterfront amenities

Along the Willamette River, the plan calls for buildings to be further set back from the water and sets new landscaping standards intended to minimize the effect on the environment.

The plan also calls for more visible changes. It would allow small retail operations, such as kayak rentals or ice cream stands, in areas set aside as green space along the river. And it also calls for allowing up to eight seasonal floating swim platforms in the Willamette. The Portland City Council, and Wheeler in particular, have previously moved to promote more swimming and boating along the riverfront.

Reducing residential zoning -- to increase housing

The plan calls for rezoning some parts of downtown currently designated for high-density housing. Instead, they would be zoned for high-density commercial use.

Why reduce residential zoning during a housing shortage that’s pushed rents and home prices ever higher?

Planners say that the commercial zoning has actually produced more housing in recent years — 166 units per acre, compared with 133 units per acre in the residential zones. Joe Zehnder, the planning bureau’s assistant director, said that’s likely because developers are more willing to invest in sites with more flexible zoning.

'Green Loop'

The plan includes plans to build a “Green Loop” — a sort of street-park hybrid geared to bicycles and pedestrians that would extend six miles through downtown, the Lloyd District and the Central Eastside, crossing the river on the Broadway Bridge and Tilikum Crossing.

The Portland Tribune

Build Portland Won't Fill City's Hole

By Jim Redden
September 7, 2017

City Council learns Mayor Ted Wheeler's plan not near enough to cover Portland's maintenance gap

As the Portland City Council plans for tens of thousands more people to move to Portland over the next 20 years, it's confronting an increasingly apparent problem — the city doesn't have nearly enough money to maintain its existing streets, parks, civic buildings, and water and sewer systems, let alone expand them sufficiently to meet the expected demand.

"Our infrastructure needs are enormous," Mayor Ted Wheeler said last Tuesday during a council work session on the Build Portland initiative he sponsored in the budget that took effect July 1.

Although Build Portland is estimated to generate an additional \$600 million for infrastructure maintenance by 2040, the discussion quickly revealed that even that sum won't be nearly enough. The staff presentation showed the city needs to spend \$288 million a year over the next 10 years just to eliminate the current deferred-maintenance gap for infrastructure.

Most of that money — \$222.5 million a year — is needed by the Portland Bureau of Transportation, which has fallen far behind on maintaining the city's streets. But \$21.8 million a year is needed for civic buildings, \$14.9 million for parks, \$18.7 million for the water system, and \$10 million for the sewer and storm drainage system.

And that's just for maintenance, not the expansions needed to accommodate all of the estimated growth.

During the Aug. 29 work session, PBOT leaders reported they have identified \$1.4 billion worth of projects intended to achieve the city's goal of allowing residents to complete 70 percent of all trips by walking, biking or taking transit.

Despite the looming shortfall, the work session began with positive news.

Chief Administrative Officer Tom Rinehart congratulated the council for increasing the amount of money available for infrastructure maintenance in recent years. Among other things, the council persuaded voters to approve a \$68 million parks maintenance bond in 2014 and a temporary 10-cents-a-gallon gas tax measure in 2016 that's expected to generate \$64 million for street maintenance and safety projects over four years. And the council agreed to dedicate half of all "one-time" surplus money available every year to infrastructure maintenance. That's generated \$41.4 million since the 2015-16 fiscal year.

In addition, the council learned the new transportation funding package approved by the 2017 Oregon Legislature should dedicate an additional \$30 million a year in state gas tax proceeds to the city when it is fully phased in.

And the Build Portland initiative — the subject of the work session — will produce \$50 million for infrastructure maintenance over the next seven years — but 12 times that much by 2040.

That money will come from urban renewal districts that are scheduled to expire in coming years. In the past, the additional general fund dollars generated by increased property values in expiring urban renewal districts would go to city agencies without dedicated revenue sources. But

Wheeler convinced the council that dedicating the money to infrastructure maintenance was smarter.

However, as the council learned last Tuesday, the city's maintenance needs are far greater.

"\$600 million doesn't solve the problem, only a portion of the problem," said City Budget Office Director Andrew Scott, who noted spending on repair, replacement and rehabilitation actually had shrunk as a percentage of the total budget over the past three years.

That prompted Wheeler to say the city needs new revenue sources, although he did not suggest any. Metro and TriMet officials have talked about putting a regional transportation funding measure on the November 2018 ballot to help pay for transit and other transportation improvements in the Southwest Corridor between Portland and Tualatin, and possibly other projects in the tricounty area, too. No decision has yet been made.

To maximize the effectiveness of the Build Portland spending, Rinehart said it should focus on projects that promise "triple wins," which he described as fulfilling three council priorities or policies. In addition to maintenance, that could include improving safety, increasing the chances of surviving an earthquake or natural disaster, and raising the living standards in traditionally underserved neighborhoods, such as those in East Portland.

Two city officials offered examples of such potential projects.

Portland Parks & Recreation Director Mike Abbaté talked about upgrading aging community centers that serve low-income residents. They include: the Community Music Center, built in 1912 and located at 3350 S.E. Francis St.; the Peninsula Park Community Center, built in 1913 and located at 700 N. Rosa Parks Way; and the Multnomah Arts Center, built in 1919 and located at 7688 S.W. Capitol Highway.

PBOT Asset Manager Emily Tritsch said her agency had identified poorly maintained transportation corridors that serve designated urban centers in low-income neighborhoods. They include portions of Stark Street, Foster Road, Holgate Boulevard and 122nd Avenue, all in Southeast or East Portland.

The council agreed with the concept and asked how a list of eligible projects could be developed. Rinehart proposed the council approve a resolution in September creating a Build Portland Advisory Committee of city asset managers who would prepare and submit a list next spring.

According to Rinehart, the resolution also should include a financing schedule. The city may need to borrow to fund the first projects, because the urban renewal areas do not begin expiring until the 2020-21 fiscal year. Even then, the amount of available general fund dollars will not increase substantially until the 2024-25 fiscal year, when they will begin growing toward \$50 million a year by 2034-35.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz insisted the committee include community members, like the ones who developed the list of projects being funded by the parks maintenance bond. Wheeler and Commissioner Chloe Eudaly agreed and directed Rinehart to prepare the resolution. Commissioner Nick Fish, who is being treated for cancer, watched the session online at home. Commissioner Dan Saltzman was absent.

Affordable housing, too

City also will have affordable housing projects to maintain

The city of Portland soon will begin spending about a quarter-billion dollars on buildings that will require continuous maintenance. But unlike most current city buildings, they will come with

an ongoing source of maintenance funds. The buildings will be the affordable housing projects built or preserved with bond funds approved by city voters at the November 2016 election.

The City Council is scheduled to approve the criteria for spending the \$258.4 million bond proceeds on Oct. 11. Up to 7 percent can be spent on administrative costs, leaving the rest for either building new projects or preserving existing residential units. Although the final mix of the 1,300 expected units has yet to be determined because of a spending restriction in the Oregon Constitution, all of them must be owned by the city. This is different than in the past, where the city has contributed to affordable housing projects owned by others.

As the landlord of the new projects, the city will charge and collect rent for the units. Although some of the money will pay off the bonds, the rest is available to operate and maintain the units.

The city will be limited in how much it can charge for the units, however. All must be affordable to households earning 60 percent or less of the area median income (up to \$3,735 monthly for a family of four). Almost half — 600 units — will be affordable for households earning 30 percent or less of the median income (up to \$1,867 monthly for a family of four).

The draft framework is scheduled to be presented at four public meetings before the council hearing. The Portland Housing Bureau also is conducting both mail and online surveys on it. You can find the details at portlandoregon.gov/phb/74574.

Sources Say: Fish Gets High Praise from Unexpected Source

By Jim Redden

September 7, 2017

Plus, liberal organizations make money criticizing extremists and other states have worse drug problems

Since City Commissioner Nick Fish's announcement last month that he's fighting cancer, he's received words of encouragement from colleagues and everyday Portlanders alike, many of whom have praised his service on the City Council.

Especially noteworthy is the praise from John Gibson, president of Southwest Neighborhoods Inc., which includes the part of town where Fish had been criticized for allowing the Portland Water Bureau to sell surplus property to a developer with only limited public notice.

Fish ultimately agreed and persuaded the council to adopt a much more transparent process for selling surplus properties.

Gibson did not mention that incident in his September column in the neighborhood coalition's monthly newsletter. But he responded to Fish's announcement by writing, "based on my 40-plus years of observation and involvement with Portland city politics, I have no doubt I've not seen a more skilled, talented or better person serving as City Commissioner than Nick Fish."

Gibson went on to commend Fish for voting to build the more expensive and effective options for fighting cryptosporidium in the Bull Run watershed, even though he is up for re-election next year.

Raising money off extremists

After Donald Trump was elected president last November, he became the favorite target of Democratic candidates and liberal organizations looking to raise cash. In Oregon, everyone on

the left from Oregon Gov. Kate Brown to local pro-choice groups urged their supporters to help them resist his policies.

But especially after the racial violence in Charlottesville, Virginia, fundraising appeals have also targeted far-right extremists. For example, on Aug. 31, the liberal advocacy organization Defend Oregon sent out an email seeking funds to oppose three proposed ballot measure petitions. In the email, the organization said the measures were supported by "extremist groups," "white supremacists," "heavily armed extremists," and "a hate group funded by white supremacists."

The proposed measures would repeal a new state law allowing firearms to be taken from a person deemed dangerous by a judge, repeal a new tax on medical providers to help fund the state's Medicaid program, and repeal an existing law preventing state and local law enforcement officers from cooperating with federal officers when immigration status is the only crime under investigation.

Oregon drug problem not so bad?

Oregon has a national reputation as a haven for junkies, fueled in part by such movies as "Drugstore Cowboy" and "My Own Private Idaho" by local filmmaker Gus Van Zant. But according to a new report by the Centers for Disease Control, heroin deaths have risen much faster in the Midwest and Northeast than on the West Coast over the past five years.

According to the report released last Thursday, although heroin overdose deaths quadrupled nationwide between 2006 and 2015 across the country, in Oregon they dropped from a high of 3.2 per 100,000 people in 2012 to 2.2 in 2015.

The report says prescription painkillers are a much bigger problem in Oregon. They accounted for 4.5 deaths per 100,000 people in 2015, although that was a drop from 6.5 in 2006.

The Portland Mercury

As Fire Creeps Toward Portland's Water Supply, the City Could Switch to Well Water

*By Dirk VanderHart
September 6, 2017*

The Eagle Creek Fire incinerating the gorge is showing no signs of slowing its explosive growth. In the last 24 hours, the fire has joined up with another fire—the Indian Creek Fire. What was a 10,000 acre burn at this point yesterday is now estimated at 31,000 acres. And it's creeping toward Portland's water supply.

Yesterday, officials announced the fire had found its way into the Bull Run water shed, Portland's most abundant and treasured source of drinking water. That could mean trouble. So officials are considering switching water systems.

This morning, Commissioner Nick Fish, who oversees the Portland Water Bureau, said that while there's currently no "imminent threat" to the water supply, the city might consider switching to its secondary source, the Columbia South Shore Well Field.

"If at some point it is determined that because of material in air that's landing in the water, or because of landslides or any other potential risk to our water supply, we will convert to the

Columbia water system on an interim basis," Fish said at this morning's Portland City Council meeting. "We may do it earlier rather than later out of an abundance of caution."

More likely, says Water Bureau spokesperson Jaymee Cuti, the bureau would switch over if it evacuates employees as the fire nears.

In any case, if a switch happens, Portlanders could be asked to curtail their water use. Fish says that capacity at the Columbia well field is "slightly below" what the city's able to offer through the Bull Run water shed.

"This would not be the greatest time to leave your sprinklers on all day or take your 15th bath or whatever," he said. "It's not going to be an inconvenience for everybody."

Cuti says if Portland switches to the alternate supply, it's not clear ratepayers will see any change in service. She says water use typically drops around Labor Day, anyway.

"As we move forward in the month, we expect to see demand fall closer to our groundwater capacity," Cuti says. If demand's too high, though, the Water Bureau can ask its wholesale customers to get some water from elsewhere.

"Should we need to further reduce," Cuti says. "We can communicate with our customers about efficient water use."

The Daily Journal of Commerce

Preparing for a Big One

By Chuck Slothower

September 6, 2017

The Portland City Council is preparing to consider a policy that would require owners of unreinforced brick buildings to retrofit them, and building owners are urging the city to provide financing.

Portland has 1,644 unreinforced masonry buildings, according to a city inventory. They are 88 years old on average.

Portland officials have anticipated the need to retrofit the city's unreinforced masonry (URM) buildings for years. The city's first retrofit requirements were adopted in the mid-1990s. But increasing awareness of Portland's risk for a potentially devastating Cascadia subduction zone earthquake has added urgency to the efforts.

Even landlords now recognize that seismic retrofit requirements are coming.

"At the end of the day, it's how can it be done, not should it be done," said Gwenn Baldwin, a lobbyist who represents the Masonry Building Owners of Oregon.

The URM Policy Committee will meet for the final time on Oct. 4. The City Council will then perform its first review of the policy Oct. 19. The council is not expected to vote on the policy at that meeting.

The policy's creation is overseen by the city's Bureau of Emergency Management, which is overseen by Mayor Ted Wheeler. His office is monitoring the URM Policy Committee's work, spokesman Michael Cox said.

"We've been working closely with them on refining their proposal," he said.

The policy has been years in the making, in part because building upgrade mandates often face resistance from property owners. Seismic retrofits are a particularly costly upgrade, often requiring landlords to evict or temporarily relocate tenants for months while work proceeds.

Adding to the difficulties is the city's new relocation assistance ordinance that requires landlords to compensate tenants upon issuing a no-cause eviction. The relocation assistance varies by the size of unit, ranging from \$2,900 to vacate a studio apartment to \$4,500 for a unit with at least three bedrooms.

Those costs add up. Last spring, Urban Development + Partners evicted tenants from 65 units at the Fairmount Hotel to make way for a major renovation. The fees cost the Portland developer \$199,800.

In concept, seismic retrofits could hardly be simpler: add steel. Typically, steel bars are added to reinforce masonry walls. Parapets and other features are tied down into more durable structures.

The construction is straightforward, but the costs can be high, particularly for the owners of small buildings that generate modest leasing income.

And not all unreinforced masonry buildings are for-profit operations. The city's inventory lists approximately 45 schools and 35 churches. Central City Concern, one of the city's largest nonprofit owners of affordable housing, owns several unreinforced masonry buildings.

URM buildings were built in Portland between about 1870 and 1960, according to the city's draft summary. Many of the buildings are located downtown, in Old Town Chinatown and in the Central Eastside Industrial District.

Government officials have known of Portland's seismic risks for years, but a story in the Portland Mercury in 2012 shed light on the scale of the problem. Former Commissioner Steve Novick drew attention to the issue, and then a 2015 article in The New Yorker added alarm with scenarios of widespread death, displacement and structural failures from the inevitable earthquake.

A draft of the city's policy was released in April, and changes may still be made. The draft policy takes a tiered approach to regulating URM retrofits.

The URM committee process has helped make the draft policy workable for building owners, Baldwin said.

"The process has actually accomplished what you hope from the Portland process," she said. "It has become more practical, more grounded."

In the tiered approach, the vast majority of unreinforced masonry buildings is in class 3, designated for buildings with more than 10 occupants but no critical infrastructure. Draft retrofit standards for those buildings call for bracing unreinforced masonry parapets, cornices and chimneys, anchoring walls to floors and roofs, attaching a diaphragm to vertical elements to transfer in plane shear and out-of-plane wall bracing for taller walls.

Owners of class 3 buildings would have five years to assess needed seismic upgrades, 10 years to brace parapets and attach walls to the roof, 20 years to complete wall-to-floor attachments and wall strengthening and 25 years to complete all work. A five-year extension could be provided for hardship.

Class 1 buildings – critical ones such as hospitals and fire stations that must be occupied after an earthquake – have much tighter timelines. Owners of these buildings are given three years to assess and 10 years to complete a retrofit.

Class 2 buildings include schools and churches. Owners of those buildings are given three years for assessment, 10 years for bracing and 20 years to complete a retrofit.

Class 4 buildings are one- to two-story buildings with up to 10 occupants. Owners of those are given 10 years to complete a seismic retrofit.

Affordable housing providers are working to make sure the policy doesn't result in the closure of any buildings. Central City Concern has been in contact with the Portland Housing Bureau to devise an exception for affordable housing.

The amendment, if adopted by the URM Policy Committee and City Council, would allow an extended timeline for owners of affordable housing to evaluate and conduct retrofits of their buildings, said Sean Hubert, chief housing and employment officer for Central City Concern.

“We feel in terms of the affordable housing piece that that is a good compromise,” he said.

If the amendment is not adopted, Central City Concern would oppose the URM policy, Hubert said.

City codes beginning in the 1970s resulted in the closure of thousands of single-room occupancy units, which share kitchens and bathrooms and serve as housing of last resort for many impoverished individuals, Hubert said. The closure of those units coincided with a rise in homelessness, he said.

“A lot of that loss was due to the city getting more tough on code enforcement and new codes,” he said.

Seismic retrofits for multistory apartment buildings are costlier than similar upgrades for buildings with open floor plans, Hubert said.

“What we have found – in order to do a full seismic retrofit – you have to shore up the diaphragm at each level, which means you have to tear up everything,” he said. “It’s a very costly prospect.”

For many owners of small URM buildings, the property serves as their retirement income, said Susan Steward, executive director of the Building Owners and Managers Association of Oregon. It’s critical the city provide financing for the seismic retrofits, she said.

“I’m still concerned at the end of the day they’re going to pass this with nothing in place (for financial assistance),” she said.

Few buildings have sufficient equity to finance costly retrofits, she said.

A program called PropertyFit aims to close the financial gap. It’s operated by Prosper Portland, Multnomah County and the Energy Trust of Oregon, with outside capital partners. The program offers financing beginning at \$200,000 with terms of up to 30 years. The loans are secured by a property lien.

The program has yet to be tested, however.

City officials appear to be sympathetic to building owners’ concerns, Steward said.

“They seem to get it,” she said.

City officials are aware of the financing challenges, but also hesitant to hand out dollars to private property owners. A property-tax abatement may be part of the answer.

The policy is on the right track – as long as financing comes together, Baldwin said.

“We’re close,” she said. “But don’t get things out of order. Don’t pass (the policy) and then figure out financing.”

OPB

Portland Approves Pay Premium If Police Leaders Live in City Limits

*By Anna Griffin
September 6, 2017*

Portland leaders have agreed to pay police command staff more money to live within city limits.

The City Council voted Wednesday to encourage command officers to live in the city by giving them a 5 percent pay increase if they do. The raise would include captains, commanders, assistant chiefs and Mayor Ted Wheeler’s choice to be the next police chief, Oakland Deputy Police Chief Danielle Outlaw, if they live in Portland.

The estimated annual cost to the city is an additional \$30,000 to \$50,000 a year.

“This encourages our command staff to live in the city they serve, which is of course a national best practice,” Wheeler said. “And it is on the list of many people’s top items with regard to police reform in terms of building communication and trust between the people of a community and the police officers who serve that community.”

Police lieutenants already receive a 5 percent premium to live within city limits. Commissioner Chloe Eudaly voted for the increase and said she’d like to see the city consider similar incentives for other public employees to live in Portland rather than a less-expensive suburb.

Outlaw is slated to earn \$215,000 a year if she opts not to settle in the city.