

The Oregonian

Skyscrapers for Post Office Site? Portland Firm's Extravagant Pitch

*By Anna Marum
November 14, 2017*

William Kaven Architecture wants to design the tallest building in the Pacific Northwest. And it wants to put it on Portland's Pearl District Post Office blocks, the site the city offered to Amazon for its second headquarters.

The concept, released by the Portland firm on Monday, proposed two skyscrapers, one of which would rise 970 feet. Together, the high rises would provide about 5 million square feet for retail, office, hotel rooms, apartments or condos.

According to the announcement, the two buildings would be linked by "a glass-enclosed botanical bridge spanning 236 feet across the North Park Blocks some 680 feet in the air, providing dramatic aerial views of the entire city."

The proposal would also be able to accommodate a transportation hub for high-speed rail or a Hyperloop, the news release said.

Many said Portland didn't have much of a chance, given its proximity to Seattle. If Amazon doesn't choose the City of Roses, the company has prompted Portland to take a hard look at how it wants to grow.

But proposed height limits for the site would allow buildings as tall as 400 feet.

In an email to The Oregonian/OregonLive, Daniel Kaven, a partner with the architecture firm, acknowledged the constraints of the height limits. But he said the city, which is considering zoning changes in its Central City 2035 plan, should think big.

"City Council is able to amend this if needed/desired," he wrote. "It is our belief that there should not be a limit on the height and that vertical development on this scale is necessary."

In the firm's announcement, it said its proposed towers would be large enough to serve as a headquarters for a Fortune 100 company like as Amazon. In early September, the e-commerce giant announced it was in the market for a second company headquarters, one that could accommodate 50,000 employees, and that it was prepared to invest \$5 billion in construction alone. Last month, Amazon said it said it received 238 proposals from municipalities throughout North America.

But Portland, so close to the company's Seattle headquarters, is viewed a long shot for Amazon's second home base. Last week, Prosper Portland, the city's urban renewal agency, called on developers to submit applications to craft a master plan for the Post Office site and the surrounding blocks, dubbed the "Broadway Corridor."

The city hopes to implement this master plan regardless of who the tenants might be.

William Kaven intends to submit a formal proposal to Prosper Portland early next year.

The Portland Tribune

City Hall Update: Council Approves Disclosure Policy

By Jim Redden

November 14, 2017

Plus, nearly \$12 million in surplus funds is spent and development proposals are sought for the Broadway Corridor

The City Council unanimously approved a new policy on Wednesday requiring members of advisory committees to formally declare if they, family members or their employers could benefit financially from recommendations they are considering.

The council did not prohibit those with such conflicts from voting or even discussing the recommendation that could produce such benefits, deciding that disclosing them was sufficient.

Commissioner Nick Fish said the policy was long overdue and will help ensure transparency on future council decisions.

Council spends surplus funds

On Wednesday the City Council approved spending nearly \$12 million in funds that came in above what had been projected for the current budget.

Under existing policies, half the money went for infrastructure maintenance and repairs, including \$4.9 million to replace an overpass at North 42nd Avenue and Lombard Street. Another \$1 million was approved for emergency power systems at the 911 Center and Justice Center.

The remaining \$5.9 million was split between dozens of different agencies, including \$1.7 million for additional police and homeless services, such as expanded shelter capacity.

Broadway Corridor proposals sought

Prosper Portland, formerly known as the Portland Development Commission, formally invited developers on Wednesday to submit applications to create a master plan for redeveloping the 32 acres at the west end of the Broadway Bridge, including the U.S. Post Office site it bought last year for \$88 million. It is called the Broadway Corridor.

The proposals are being sought even though the city offered Amazon the opportunity to build its second headquarters there. Unlike other cities pursuing the deal, Portland did not offer the company any tax breaks or other incentives to pick the site.

The request seeks developers with experience in public-private partnerships and high-density projects. Prosper Portland envisions a mix of office towers and both affordable and market rate housing being built on the acreage. Prosper Portland hopes to recoup \$40 million from such projects.

Problems Arise at Kenton Women's Village

*By Lyndsey Hewitt
November 13, 2017*

Neighbors worry there's not enough oversight of tiny-home village for formerly homeless. Also, residents there say homes aren't effective for winter.

Six months in to its year-long pilot project, the Kenton Women's Village meant to transition formerly homeless women into permanent housing is facing trouble.

In a statement posted to its website on Sunday, the Kenton Neighborhood Association stated that allegations of "illegal activity" had occurred at the village, located across the street from Kenton Park in North Portland.

The first steering committee meeting for all members involved is on Monday evening, Nov. 13, where Kenton Neighborhood Association chair Tyler Roppe expects much of the meeting will discuss the issues.

Catholic Charities, the nonprofit tasked with overseeing the village, including having two site managers who work there, issued a statement blaming the fact that residents of the village are protected under landlord-tenant law, meaning they don't have to participate in case management and can't be easily evicted for violating rules.

"While there is a zero-tolerance policy for illegal activity at Kenton Women's Village, the Portland City Attorney's Office informed Catholic Charities that all clients of the village are protected by landlord-tenant law, including eviction procedures. As such, clients violating rules of the village or choosing not to participate in case management may do so, with impunity. Catholic Charities took responsibility for the village under the assumption that landlord-tenant law would not be applicable to this transitional program model," Catholic Charities' statement reads.

It continues: "Because Catholic Charities is committed to assuring the wellbeing of villagers and maintaining a healthy environment for those participating in the program, we find the City Attorney's interpretation of landlord-tenant law to be problematic."

The village, comprised of 14 tiny homes, has 12 women there now after one was transitioned into permanent housing and another left the village because of issues with another resident.

Two women who are married entered the village together, but when things became problematic, one filed a restraining order against the other.

One left voluntarily, according to site manager Bernadette Stetz, while the other stayed. However at least one resident on the site said the woman was forced out rather than left voluntarily.

Several other women were on track to leave the village in the next few weeks as well, according to Stetz.

On Friday evening, an email was sent to groups involved with the installation of the village, including Catholic Charities, the Joint Office of Homeless Services, Village Coalition, Kenton Business Association and others — detailing problems at the village, including a video allegedly showing drug dealing, and reports of other problems.

The video and email was put together by a recently-resigned board member of the Village Coalition, the group that helped champion the village's formation.

Now the neighborhood is questioning Catholic Charities' ability to oversee the village.

They're concerned that the organization may have dismissed or ignored the reports of criminal behavior.

"I feel like there's been a lack of oversight and accountability and the neighborhood had to step into that role," said Tyler Roppe, president of the neighborhood association.

The email was also sent to Commander Robert King at the Portland Police Bureau. Catholic Charities' Executive Director Dean Richard Birkel responded, which the neighborhood association published in its online statement:

"Catholic Charities is committed to assuring the wellbeing of villagers and to maintaining a healthy environment for those who reside there," Birkel wrote. "We have gone above and beyond in many areas of management and security, including securing and paying for overnight security that is not reimbursed by our current limited contract."

The organization plans to investigate.

"Catholic Charities will have a full report of the investigation by the end of the week and will implement necessary changes to respond accordingly. We will continue to collaborate with the community to achieve our shared goals of getting villagers into permanent housing with access to the services they need to succeed," their statement continues.

Including the neighborhood association's concerns about activity at the village, at one point the association sent a letter to the city because a tent encampment had formed near the village.

It was then cleared out by the city.

Catholic Charities gets a total of \$150,000 of government funds to run the Kenton village, including \$75,000 for one full-time case manager and \$75,000 for one full-time village manager.

Tiny homes too cold

Village residents, neighbors as well as Stetz have said the tiny homes aren't at all adequate for winter.

"We had neighbors going down there, like, why are they telling us they're cold?" Roppe said.

Neighbor Terrance Moses has been spending around 30 hours a week at the village helping with various needs, but lately trying to weatherize the homes. He was awarded a Spirit of Portland Award by the city of Portland recently for his efforts.

"They're starting to look pretty good. We're struggling to figure out how to keep them completely warm. So that's one of our toughest challenges right now," he said. "So far the community has donated sleeping bags and blankets. We're trying to figure out if anybody has any ideas on how to heat a small pod like that."

They also are looking for volunteers to help with caulking the homes.

"It's worse than tents," said resident Lynette Ingalls, 52. "The cold stays in the wood (of the tiny home)."

Resident Rachel Flores said once the temperatures have hit below 40, it's especially bad.

"The tin ones, within are like ice boxes," she said.

Students built the homes as part of a design contest. In Ingles' tiny home, the back wall was made of small windows as an aesthetic touch. Moses worked to cover the windows and better insulate the structure for her. They're not allowed to have any heaters due to fire hazards.

Additionally, as the days have been more cloudy and rainy, solar panels aren't holding charge to plug in even an electric blanket.

"I get about 15 minutes (of electricity) at night," Ingalls said.

Of course it's not all bad. Flores, a recovering heroin addict, is happy to have a roof over her head.

"There's safety in numbers. Just having a roof over my head gives me a sense of stability and safety," she said.

She stays with her partner in one of the tiny homes while they use another of the homes for storage.

Update: By the Monday night meeting, the city and nonprofit had reconciled program ambiguities or misunderstandings, and they're proceeding as they had originally intended, meaning there's a high bar for "exclusion," not eviction, since the site operates like an emergency shelter — not permanent housing.

Additionally, Catholic Charities officials said that there's no evidence of drug dealing on the video and they're assuming no illegal activity happened, although they're still investigating.

"One of the issues here is people are making a lot of assumptions. There's a stigma. That's too bad," said Trell Anderson, of Catholic Charities, referring to those who are or were homeless. "We want to make sure we're running a good village."

The project is scheduled to end in June after one year, and it's unclear if it will move to another location or cease operation.

This article originally misspelled Ingalls' last name, and Catholic Charities receives \$150,000 from local government, according to the nonprofit.

State fines Loretta Smith \$250, Citing Election-law Violations

*By Nick Budnick
November 14, 2017*

Investigation based on complaint by Multnomah Commissioner's staffer; Smith calls 'minor issue'

The Oregon Secretary of State's office plans to fine Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith \$250 after investigating a complaint that her staffers were made to work on campaign events, but says several allegations could not be proven.

While the fine is small, it's significant because it comes as Smith is campaigning for her next office. Facing county term limits, she has declared that she is running for Portland City Council, though she has not formally filed.

On Monday afternoon the state notified Smith that it had found sufficient evidence to prove three violations, but "insufficient evidence" to prove other of the allegations. However, the state's investigation was hampered by a reluctance to talk by potential witnesses, wrote state elections director Stephen Trout in a letter to Smith.

It's clear that members of her staff volunteered at political events, he wrote, but whether it was truly voluntary is "not as clear ... For a number of staff it is clear that they wanted to volunteer at the political events and were willing to use their vacation and other leave to do so. Others testified they felt participating in these political events was expected as a part of their jobs, although they did use vacation time to do it. Some witnesses expressed concern of retaliation if they provided information for this investigation."

The Secretary of State investigation was launched at the request of Smith. But Smith, in a statement, characterized it as political, saying, "From the beginning I believed this process was politically motivated so I am gratified that the Secretary of State found no evidence of any violations except a single minor issue. We have already taken corrective action to address it while also remaining completely focused on being a strong voice for the most vulnerable in our community."

In the end, the violations found by the Secretary of State included three instances where Smith staffers were asked during her county staff meetings whether they wanted to volunteer at particular political events.

In one such meeting, on Oct. 2015, one witness testified that she participated in a senior breakfast even though it was her anniversary, because "she believed [she] had little choice in the matter," Trout wrote.

The investigation by the Secretary of State centered on a letter that the county received from a Smith staffer, MeeSeon Kwon, on Jan. 22, 2017, that was first reported by Willamette Week. In it, Kwon accused Smith of bullying behavior, misuse of county funds, and of compelling her and other employees to staff political fundraisers and other events.

The county subsequently paid Kwon \$23,000 to settle a potential lawsuit.

After Kwon's accusations were echoed by another former Smith staffer, an investigation conducted by an outside consultant to the county found that the allegations could not be proven, but that the pattern of statements by witnesses suggested the behavior likely happened. Smith's allies blasted the finding as racially motivated.

Smith had asked the county to investigate, but subsequently filed a tort claim notice, essentially a threat of lawsuit, trying to block the investigation, portraying it as an effort by Chair Deborah Kafoury to take out a political rival. Kafoury denied the claim.

On Jan. 27, Smith wrote the Secretary of State's office asking that it investigate Kwon's allegations, records show.

In a follow-up letter to the Secretary of State's elections investigator, Smith's lawyer, Charles Paternoster, said Kwon's complaint was inaccurate in several respects.

Kwon could not immediately be reached to comment on the investigation's outcome.

The fine comes as Smith has said she is running to succeed Portland Commissioner Dan Saltzman. The race is hotly contested, with former lawmaker Jo Ann Hardesty, City Hall staffer Andrea Valderrama, and business manager and neighborhood activist Felicia Williams having filed. Former OPB commentator Spencer Raymond has also said he is running.

Under state election rules, Smith has the right to request a hearing to protest the fine.

This article will be updated later today.

Portland Home Sellers Must Get Energy Audit

By Steve Law

November 14, 2017

City requirement to get Home Energy Score before properties are listed for sale takes effect January 1

Ever shop for a home and wonder how much it would cost to heat and cool?

Starting in January, anyone shopping for a newly listed house in Portland can get a rough estimate of the property's energy bills, via a Home Energy Score.

Last year, the Portland City Council approved an ordinance requiring home sellers to obtain a Home Energy Score before they list their homes for sale or commence advertising it, and the new mandate takes effect Jan. 1.

Getting a Home Energy Score — akin to a miles-per-gallon sticker on cars for sale — likely will be viewed as a hassle by many home sellers and Realtor. But city officials expect it will encourage many sellers to improve their homes' energy efficiency, saving the buyers money on utility bills and lowering the use of fossil fuels that contribute to climate change.

Lynn Merrick, who recently commissioned a Home Energy Score for her century-old Mount Tabor home as part of a "beta test" of the new program, was surprised by the results. The house scored only a "3" out of a possible "10" after a home energy assessor conducted a 90-minute review, said Merrick, a climate change activist who founded the Let's Talk Climate community forum series.

"It's kind of embarrassing to be this climate advocate and find our scores so low," Merrick said. Especially after she and her husband thought they were reducing its energy use by installing a solar water heating system, rooftop photovoltaic solar panels and an energy-efficient radiant heating system.

"We learned that we need a whole other foot of insulation in our attic," Merrick said. They also learned their windows are leaky.

Ideally, she and her husband would have gotten such a report when they bought their house long ago.

"Can you imagine our utility savings over a 20-year period? It would probably be several thousand dollars."

Merrick may engage in a friendly competition with some of her environmentally minded neighbors to see who can improve their Home Energy Scores the most, and lower their utility bills. Even if they don't benefit financially for that many years, she figures it's the right thing to do.

"By spending most of our lives with a huge carbon footprint, it seems like the least we can do for the generation coming up."

Opposition campaign fizzled

The mandate was enacted in the final days of then-Mayor Charlie Hales' administration, as part of his "bucket list" of policies to address climate change. The Portland Metropolitan Association of Realtors led a vigorous campaign against it, calling it a useless mandate that would raise the prices of homes, kill some house sales, and achieve little.

But with that battle lost, Realtors now must educate their clients of the need to get a Home Energy Score. Failure to obtain one can result in a \$500 fine.

"They may not be overjoyed about it, but they are also good soldiers," said Stephanie Swanson, vice president for communications at Enhabit, the nonprofit formerly known as Clean Energy Works. Enhabit was contracted by the city to help launch the new program, in part because of its considerable experience in the field. Enhabit has conducted 14,000 such assessments over the years, and helps refer clients to trained contractors. It also helps people get loans so they pay for energy-saving improvements via their monthly PGE, Pacific Power or NW Natural bills.

Earth Advantage, another homegrown nonprofit that developed a similar rating system for new homes, is overseeing training of home energy assessors and doing quality control for the program, Swanson said.

Volunteer programs sagging

Portland and the state of Oregon have been national leaders at trying to encourage energy efficiency, such as providing subsidies from Energy Trust of Oregon for home energy retrofits. But with historically cheap natural gas prices due to fracking, the payback period for improvements has grown longer, and fewer people are taking advantage.

That's why the city decided to make the Home Energy Scores mandatory, as a few other cities have done.

Prospective home sellers must hire a home energy assessor to visit their home and prepare the Home Energy Score. The city projects that will cost \$150 to \$250, though that depends on how the market evolves. Enhabit has a team of home energy assessors and is offering the service for \$229 until year-end.

Portland is using a Home Energy Score developed by the U.S. Department of Energy, with one addition. The two-page report will include an assessment of the home's carbon footprint, in tons of emissions per year as well as a numeric rating. Reports will itemize projects that could improve the Home Energy Score, if they can pay for themselves in energy savings over the ensuing decade, Swanson said.

Lynae Forbes, president of the Hasson Group, figures the startup phase of the new mandate will be bumpy, but she's more focused on making sure her company's 180 residential real estate agents are trained on the new program than complaining about it.

Forbes worries that prices could go higher if there is a backlog of requests for Home Energy Scores. When that occurs for home appraisals, she notes, it's common for appraisers to "jack up their prices to double or more if people want to get it done in a timely manner."

But, in contrast to the dire warnings made by Realtors when trying to kill the mandate, Forbes doubts it will dissuade people from buying stately old homes — the kind that are the draftiest. "That population of home buyers are not buying it for efficiency factors," she reasons. "I don't really buy into the fear factor that it's going to affect home values to any significant extent."

However, she does foresee some buyers using faults pinpointed by the Home Energy Scores to bargain with sellers to rectify those weaknesses, such as adding insulation. That happens routinely after home inspections.

Portlanders hoping to list their homes in the new year are advised to start planning now.

Realtors will make sure their clients understand the new mandate and direct them to the city website or other resources, Forbes said. "I don't want to see people get anxious about this."

Find out more

Enhabit promises to send a home energy assessor to a client's home within three to five days, and produce the report before they leave the premises.

The assessor punches in about 50 data points, including details about the home's insulation and other features. Then the software program spits out an average utility bill, taking into account prevailing prices and average family size and energy usage.

The reports will be publicly available on the Green Building Registry website.

- To learn more about the city program and arrange a Home Energy Score with the city's designated nonprofit: enhabit.org
- To find a contractor to do home energy retrofits that might be eligible for rebates from Energy Trust of Oregon, call 1-866-368-7878 or visit: energytrust.org/findacontractor
- City webpage on the Home Energy Score: bit.ly/2hnQjdY

Willamette Week

A 970-Foot Tower in the Pearl District? Not Likely

*By Rachel Monahan
November 13, 2017*

In the latest salvo in the war over the skyline of Portland, a local architect today released a concept for the old U.S. Post Office site in the Pearl District that would include a tower 970 feet tall.

That's more than double the maximum height limit the City Council is currently weighing for the site—so the rendering represents more of a ploy to motivate elected officials than a serious proposition.

The concept, according to a press release by William / Kaven and Kaven + Co., includes a "glass-enclosed botanical bridge" that would be 236 feet long and 680 feet up in the air.

"The city of Portland, currently, is devoid of iconic buildings—at least any that a tourist or foreign architect might recognize," wrote Daniel Kaven, a partner of the architecture firm, in an op-ed for the Daily Journal of Commerce. "It is easily established that great buildings drive tourism and generate money. Every year millions of people make trips to destination cities just to see towers, memorials, skyscrapers."

There are plenty of Portlanders who don't want to the skyline crowded with tall towers, especially close to the river.

But the architecture firm is not one of them.

"It would be an abomination to limit the 14 acres of the USPS site, in the heart of the city of Portland, to any height, thereby potentially missing the architectural opportunity of our lifetime," wrote Kaven.

The Post Office site is one of the most desired pieces of real estate in Portland.

Last year, Prosper Portland—the urban renewal agency—bought the site for \$88 million. Having spent lavishly on the property, Prosper Portland is now looking to turn it into an apartment and retail center to match the Pearl.

Prosper Portland began the official process to seek a development partner at the Post Office site earlier this month.

The Portland Mercury

Mayor Ted Wheeler Is "Satisfied" With Police Involvement in a Secretive Federal Task Force

By Dirk VanderHart

November 14, 2017

Last week a coalition of police watchdogs, civil liberties groups, and others sprung a new proposition on Mayor Ted Wheeler.

Two years after the city voted to re-join the FBI's secretive Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), the groups began a renewed call for Portland to pull the plug. In the age of Trump, their thinking goes, the city should not be devoting resources (in this case two police officers) to the secretive body. Advocates worry about improper surveillance, and of local cops breaking state laws as a result of their involvement.

Joining and breaking ties with the JTTF (the city's done both) has typically been a decision voted on by all of the City Council's five members, but the latest calls to disband have particular relevance to Wheeler, who personally oversees the police bureau.

So is Wheeler interested in calls to depart from the JTTF? Nope.

"The Mayor evaluates our participation in the JTTF on an ongoing basis, and is satisfied with our current involvement," Wheeler spokesperson Michael Cox tells the Mercury.

Wheeler's support for the arrangement suggests a majority of city council is happy to be part of the JTTF. In a 3-2 vote in which Portland decided to fully rejoin the task force in 2015, current commissioners Nick Fish and Dan Saltzman cast votes in support.

Portland's Now Finding Cryptosporidium in Its Water Supply Weekly

By Dirk VanderHart

November 13, 2017

Portland recently went four and a half years without detecting Cryptosporidium in its water supply. Now it can't go a week without turning up the parasite.

The latest detections, the Portland Water Bureau announced today, came in samples collected last week. In fact, samples from November 5, 6, 7, and 8 turned up at least one Crypto "oocyst." That's the longest string of days with positive samples since at least 2012, according to a city web page on crypto testing. But they're far from alone. Since mid-October, Crypto has shown up

in samples from the Bull Run Watershed on a weekly basis. In total, 34 oocysts have been detected in 27 samples this year.

Crypto is a parasite that in some forms can pose health risks for humans—especially those with compromised immune systems. City and county health officials are quick to point out there's been no sign of adverse health effects in the recent spate of detections, and the water bureau isn't advising people to avoid Portland's water.

Cryptosporidium is frequently present in animal scat, and the PWB has theorized that heavy rains have washed it into the Bull Run water supply with increasing frequency. But serious rainfall wasn't foreign to Portland from April 2012 to December 2016, when there were no crypto detections in the water supply. It's still not clear what exactly accounts for the newly frequent detections.

"Because of the size of the reservoirs, mixing of the water within the reservoirs, and travel time, our modeling has shown that once Crypto enters the reservoirs, it is possible that it may be detected at the intake for several weeks after a single event," PWB spokesperson Jaymee Cuti told the Mercury recently. "Therefore, when Crypto is detected at the intake, it is not always evident which rain event it may be related to."

To eliminate risks from Cryptosporidium and other threats, Portland City Council recently voted to move forward with a massive filtration plant that estimates suggest will cost up to \$500 million.

The Daily Journal of Commerce

Request for Qualifications issued for Broadway Corridor Redevelopment

*By Chuck Slothower
November 10, 2017*

Prosper Portland has issued a request for qualifications for a developer to take the lead on redevelopment of the 32-acre Broadway Corridor in Northwest Portland.

After a development planning phase with ZGF Architects, the chosen developer will have exclusive negotiating rights to develop the 13.5-acre U.S. Postal Service property within the Broadway Corridor.

The area is a rare opportunity to develop a swath of land in Portland's urban center. The developable area is substantial – the city's Broadway Corridor Framework Plan, published last year, envisions 3.8 million square feet of development along with parks, open space and transportation infrastructure. The plan calls for development of nearly 2.1 million square feet of residential space, including a substantial complement of affordable housing.

In October, the City Council agreed to increase allowable building heights in the Broadway Corridor to 450 feet north of Northwest Johnson Street and 250 feet south of it. Floor-area ratios were also increased.

Prosper Portland will host an informational pre-proposal meeting Dec. 6. Questions are due Jan. 5, 2018, and proposals are due Jan. 19, 2018.

Prosper Portland's board plans to choose a developer on April 11, 2018. The agency would then enter a memorandum of understanding with that developer in May 2018. A development agreement would follow in mid-2019.

Door Opens to More Affordable Commercial Space in Portland

*By Chuck Slothower
November 14, 2017*

The city of Portland is forging a new program to provide affordable commercial space in city-owned buildings.

The Affordable Commercial Tenanting Program will offer leases below market rate and technical assistance to selected commercial tenants, with a preference for businesses owned by women and persons of color.

At first, the city is offering affordable commercial space in four buildings where projects managed by Prosper Portland are ongoing. The buildings are Alberta Commons in Northeast Portland, the Southwest 10th Avenue and Yamhill Street parking garage in downtown and two small buildings at Southeast 92nd Avenue and Foster Road in Lents: Oliver Station and Lents Commons.

In total, the available space represents at least 12,000 square feet – and likely more after the parking garage's affordable retail space is determined.

Prosper Portland has received more than 30 applications for the program, said Alison Wicks, a project coordinator for the city agency. It's accepting applications for the first three buildings; the 10th & Yamhill garage will open for applications at a later date.

The program has been a "long time coming," Commissioner Nick Fish said. The city missed opportunities to maintain affordable commercial space during the most recent recession, he said.

"We were building very attractive affordable housing developments throughout the city, but we never viewed the commercial spaces as a community asset," Fish said during a City Council meeting last week. "In fact, in many ways, we got it completely wrong."

Nonprofit housing developers were not able to effectively use the ground-floor commercial spaces in affordable housing developments, Fish said.

"It was not in their wheelhouse to know how to market it and sell it," he said. "That was not their core expertise."

Mayor Ted Wheeler said the program is emblematic of a recent refocus in mission at Prosper Portland, which in May rebranded (the agency was formerly the Portland Development Commission) to place a greater emphasis on equity and shared prosperity. In August 2016, Kimberly Branam was promoted to executive director. Seats on the agency's board have turned over too.

"I'm thrilled with the new direction of Prosper Portland, and I think this is a great example of the direction we're going to see Prosper Portland go under new leadership," he said.

The program is in part a reaction to increased rental rates and scarce vacancies, Wicks said. But affordable commercial space is needed for businesses owned by women and persons of color in any economy, she said.

“Those are businesses that will consistently have barriers to entering into a retail space,” she said. “That’s something that even in a downturn would be exacerbated.”

Prosper Portland is looking to form an ongoing partnership with the Housing Bureau to provide affordable commercial space, said Kyra Straussman, Prosper Portland’s director of development and investment.

“What’s happening here is an innovation nationally, so it’s not like we have a lot of examples to run with,” Straussman told the City Council.

Alberta Commons will have about 5,100 square feet in total for four program participants, who will receive business coaching from Micro Enterprise Services of Oregon, a Portland nonprofit group.

Lents Commons will have 3,725 square feet of affordable commercial space, likely split between two tenants, Wicks said.

Oliver Station will have approximately 4,000 square feet of affordable commercial space through an agreement with developer Palindrome Communities, likely divided by two to three tenants.

The downtown parking garage, which is on the verge of a major renovation, will have 21,000 square feet of commercial space, although it’s unclear how much of that space will be dedicated to program participants.

Prosper Portland is working with brokers on each project now, and is in discussions with prospective tenants, Wicks said. Some tenants could be chosen by the end of the year, with tenant build-outs beginning in early 2018.

The Skanner

Fitzpatrick Presents 'Pathway 1000' Plan Before City Council

*By Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives, Inc.
November 13, 2017*

At the start of the month, Maxine Fitzpatrick, executive director of Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives (PCRI), presented the Pathway 1000 Implementation Plan before Mayor Ted Wheeler, Commissioners Amanda Fritz and Chloe Eudaly, community members, and a host of PCRI staff and board members.

Fitzpatrick’s purpose of implementing the Pathway 1000 initiative is to restore involuntary displacement by building 80 homes per year over the next ten years, totaling 800 homes for purchase and 200 rentals in North and Northeast Portland.

During the presentation, Fitzpatrick proposed that the city adopt the plan as a model replicable for future projects around Portland to “mitigate and rectify the damage done to our most vulnerable community members, elderly African Americans, and African Americans displaced from their homes due to Portland’s ongoing gentrification crisis.”

Nan Stark, Northeast district liaison of the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability explains, “The Pathway 1000’s holistic approach to individual and community wealth building includes the development of affordable housing for home ownership. The community benefits from the creation of long-term jobs, affordable commercial spaces, and related positive economic impacts.”

Since inception in 1992, PCRI has acquired endangered homes, helped families secure conventional mortgages to repurchase them, and retained other properties as long-term affordable rentals.

Please contact PCRI for more information.

The Portland Observer

No More Gang Lists

By Danny Peterson

November 14, 2017

How advocates, new practices and technology bought change

New police practices, technological advances, and years of advocacy by civil rights advocates pushing for a change have culminated in the Portland Police Bureau’s decision to phase out using a gang designation database as a law enforcement tool, which was officially halted last month.

Though Portland police said gang lists were never made public, the more than 20-year-old practice of tracking suspected and known gang members was determined to be unfairly and disproportionately impacting minorities, a position held for years by national and local civil rights groups like the NAACP and American Civil Liberties Union.

The gang designations also did not necessarily distinguish between a non-criminal gang member and ones with a criminal history. Of the 359 “criminal gang affiliates” that Portland police flagged, as of last year, 81 percent were part of a racial or ethnic minority, officials said.

Black Male Achievement, a group associated with the Portland Office of Equity and Human Rights, was one of the civil rights organizations that has been advocating for eliminating the gang lists.

“It’s an excellent policy change,” said C.J. Robbins, the group’s program coordinator. “It’s a piece of a much larger puzzle. I’m definitely encouraged by the movement.”

Robbins thinks the new policy will encourage police officers to see black members of the community as individuals a bit more. The old policy also was not helping people trying to escape gangs or anyone experiencing the stigma of being labeled a gang member.

Dontae Blake was an ex-gang member who has taken responsibility for his past and successfully lived criminal-free for the better part of a decade.

He said eliminating the gang lists improves his attitude toward police, dusting off an old idea that police were “just bad dudes that [...] want to kill us in the streets.”

“It means something to me that on a piece of paper, somewhere, it don't just say, 'There's Dontae Blake, he's a Crip.’” Blake told the Portland Observer. “Personally it feels good to have a stigma off my back.

Blake has been doing anti-gang outreach for Unify Portland, a violence prevention program for at-risk youth for more than two years now. Since 2010, he has been mentoring younger gang members to help them get out of a life of crime by taking them on camping excursions in Bend for his non-profit, Live Free.

Lieutenant Andrew Shearer of the Portland Police Bureau feels that eliminating the gang lists has already increased community trust, and he said the new policy has not negatively impacted law enforcement efforts.

Shearer said the bureau's decision came as the culmination of conversations in the past couple of months with the bureau's Tactical Operations Division, which Shearer leads; the Gang Enforcement Team, many of whom also advocated for the change; and newly appointed Police Chief Danielle Outlaw, Portland's first African American woman police chief.

Though a gang designation database was a police tool once thought to help solve crimes, newer technology has rendered it largely obsolete, Shearer said. He cited technological advances in forensic shell casing analysis that can now link bullet casings to specific parts of the city and to specific weapons as one example.

"In the previous year, we've only had about seven gang designations leading up to this. So it's not something that's really used as much as it once was," Shearer said.

Gang designations were also once thought to increase officer safety. However, Shearer said police endangerment is now mitigated by flagging individuals with a violent or weapons history, instead of simply using a gang affiliation by itself, as an indicator of a potential threat.

"The reality is there are people who are involved in some of these organizations who may not be actively involved in criminal activity. And we need to focus on those that are." Shearer said.

Police reform advocates for groups like Black Male Achievement are looking for more progress in terms of ex-gang members who are now peace-abiding citizens transitioning back into society, since many of them report having difficulty meeting their needs, like finding gainful employment and shelter.

"I think, you know, our view in the future will be towards meeting those needs, towards making sure that the policies, practices and procedures that need to be addressed for them to be thriving [will occur]," Robbins said.

According to a 2016 Racial and Ethnic Disparities Report of Multnomah County, African Americans are six times more likely than whites to be jailed. African American unemployment rates were also seven percent higher than whites from the years 2010-2012, according to Poverty in Multnomah County report from 2014.

According to national statistics from Center for American Progress and Crime & Delinquency, African Americans are 2.5 times more likely to be arrested than whites and 49 percent of black men will be arrested at least once by age 23.

OPB

Portland Plans to Give Away Its Old Tasers. Are They Safe?

By Amelia Templeton

November 14, 2017

The Portland Police Bureau is looking to get rid of close to 700 outdated Tasers, and wants permission from the City Council to donate some of the stun guns to other law enforcement agencies.

The X26 model Tasers the Police Bureau wants to give away were once the company's most popular model. Critics say they are less safe than newer models and more likely to interfere with a person's heart rhythm and possibly trigger cardiac arrest.

Taser stopped manufacturing the X26 three years ago. The company, which changed its name to Axon in March, never recalled the X26 and disputes that it is less safe than other models.

"It's a 14-year-old weapon design. They're analog. We've developed much better technology to make them more efficient," Steve Tuttle, a spokesman for Axon.

The Portland Police Bureau started phasing out the X26 and switching over to a newer model two years ago.

The PPB says it hopes to donate about 120 of the older devices to other law enforcement agencies that still use them, including the Newberg-Dundee Police Department, Yamhill County, Wheeler County and Rockaway Beach.

"We're very grateful that Portland is repurposing them to us," said Capt. Jeff Kosmicki with the Newberg-Dundee Police Department.

Kosmicki says the department currently equips all its officers with the X26, and that getting the leftovers from Portland will save him from having to make a costly upgrade to the newer models.

"Once I realized that they were getting rid of these and acquiring new Tasers, I asked if we could get enough for every single police officer in Yamhill County. They're going to give us 80 or 90," he said.

A number of published research papers and a recent investigative reporting series by Reuters have raised questions about the safety of the X26. Some scientists have long reported that Tasers can cause "cardiac capture" or elevated heart rates in experiments on pigs.

In 2009, Axon, known then as Taser International, advised law enforcement agencies to avoid hitting suspects in the chest.

In a 2014 study, a cardiologist at the Indiana School of Medicine reviewed eight cases in which people had heart attacks that followed Taser X26 applications. The cardiologist concluded that Tasers can cause heart attacks.

Taser International disputed the study's conclusions. The company has pointed to other factors, including drug use, pre-existing heart conditions and difficulty breathing as more likely explanations for deaths that have been linked to their product.

The 2017 series by reporters at Reuters found that medical examiners and coroners have cited Taser stun-guns as a cause or contributor in more than 150 deaths nationwide. Reuters also tallied 128 cases of wrongful death lawsuits filed against Taser or Axon.

Reuters asserted that the X26 poses a greater risk of triggering heart problems than the company's other models, because its barbs can deliver a significantly higher maximum charge — 125 microcoulombs per pulse. The Reuters report says the company deliberately reduced the maximum charge delivered by newer models to make them safer.

Axon spokesman Steve Tuttle confirmed that the X26 model delivers a maximum charge of 125 microcoulombs, while newer models deliver a much smaller 66 microcoulombs, as Reuters reported. But he denied that the older models are unsafe.

“Axon disagrees that X26 poses a safety risk of cardiac arrest,” he said.

The Portland Police Bureau also contests the suggestion that the older model of Taser it wants to donate to other agencies is less safe.

“It was discontinued because Axon developed improved models, which are necessarily more advanced. We have zero safety concerns about the electricity of a CEW,” wrote Erik Daniels, a certified Taser trainer with the Portland Police Bureau.

In defense of the device's safety, Daniels cited an excerpt from a newsletter put out by the Force Science Institute.

The excerpt quotes Dr. Mark Kroll, an adjunct professor at the University of Minnesota.

“Electricity is not like poison,” Kroll stressed. “It does not ‘build up’ in the human body by extended or repeated exposure, and it does not combine with other stressors to produce an enhanced effect. So a cumulative number of seconds of CEW exposure does not increase the risk of serious injury or death.

“If an electrical current is strong enough to electrocute it will do so in and of itself in one to five seconds,” he said. “Prolonged delivery of weaker currents has essentially no effect. The number of trigger pulls of a CEW may seem alarming to a judge or jury that doesn't understand electricity but scientifically it's irrelevant in terms of life-threatening danger.”

Kroll, the expert the Portland Police cite, has served on the board of directors of Axon since 2005 and is a member of the committee that handles litigation against the company.

His advice runs counter to the Portland Police Bureau's own directives regarding electronic control weapons, adopted after the U.S. Department of Justice found the agency had a pattern of using them excessively and applying multiple shocks unnecessarily.

The Bureau's directives instruct officers to avoid using more than three applications of a stun gun against the same individual and to wait a “reasonable amount of time” plus warn a suspect before issuing more than one application of charge.

Kosmicki, with the Newberg-Dundee Police Department, said his agency also had no concerns about the safety record of the X26 model stun gun.

“I don't believe that the Tasers are killing people,” he said. “Based on someone who's used them, it results in fewer injuries to the officer or the suspect.”

The Portland Police Bureau has said it may also try to sell its leftover X26 Tasers back to the manufacturer, but the company said it no longer runs a buy-back program.

The Portland City Council is set to vote Wednesday on whether to authorize the donation of its surplus stun guns.