

The Oregonian

Portland Art Museum Gets the City Council's Approval to Enclose Public Space as Part of Renovation

*By Jessica Floum
December 13, 2017*

The Portland Art Museum got the go ahead from the City Council on Wednesday to build a glass pavilion in what is now a public walkway, making possible museum officials' plans to connect their two buildings.

The decision was not without controversy.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz voted against allowing enclosure of the easement, making the decision a 3-1 vote. Commissioner Dan Saltzman, who originally brought the proposal before council in April, was absent.

"The benefits of the museum are obvious and many," Fritz said. "The benefits to the community of closing off the right of way are undetermined at best, and I'm disappointed that we're not able to get to more of a win-win situation."

The museum's main building opened in 1932 at Park Avenue and Jefferson Street. In 1968, the city council vacated the block of Southwest Madison on the museum's north side to create an outdoor pedestrian walkway decorated with sculptures from the museum. The walkway remained open to the public at all times until 1984, when the city voted to close the walkway to the public between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. to combat vandalism.

The council's approval enables the museum to move forward with its plans to build a three-story glass pavilion, named for abstract artist Mark Rothko, that would connect its two buildings in the South Park Blocks and serve as a new museum entrance.

The museum plans to raise \$50 million in private philanthropic contributions to complete the project.

When the project made its first city council debut in April, members of the public came out in droves to testify against it for forcing members of the public to go well out of their way when traversing between 10th Avenue to the Park Blocks. Enclosing the easement would limit access to the 10th Avenue Portland Streetcar stop and other city services, especially for people with disabilities. Portland Disability Coordinator Nickole Cheron explained at the time how detrimental it would be to require people in wheelchairs to roll three blocks around what would become a super-block to get to the Streetcar's wheelchair ramp.

One woman with a lung disease said the change would literally take her breath away by making her walk further than she was able.

To address those concerns and secure council support, museum leaders agreed to keep the pavilion open to the public for more hours than it originally proposed. Pedestrians, their pets and even dismounted bikers will be able to walk through the pavilion every day of the year from 5:30 to 12 a.m. on weekdays, from 7 a.m. to 12 a.m. on Saturdays and from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Sundays. They will have to pass through doorways under the eye of a security guard to move through the now-unobstructed passageway.

Museum officials also considered feedback about the lack of accessibility in their museum overall and revised their proposed museum design in part to increase accessibility. Currently, for

example, the only way for people in wheelchairs to access the multi-storied and many-staired museum is through a back entrance.

"It is second-class access to what should be a world class community facility," Mayor Ted Wheeler said.

They also made plans to meet with the Portland Commission on Disability to further discuss how to increase accessibility for people with disabilities and to enhance the museum experience for deaf and blind patrons.

Cheron last week told The Oregonian/OregonLive that she was impressed by museum director Brian Ferriso's efforts, calling him "amazingly committed to creating a museum that was accessible to people at many different levels."

"I am convinced this is the right step forward," Mayor Ted Wheeler said. "This corrects what I think is an egregious problem with regard to ... access" for people with disabilities.

Of the members of the public who testified last week in opposition, several expressed concerns about what walking around the city block instead of through the museum property would mean for their safety.

Wheeler said Wednesday that he took those concerns seriously.

"That's a bigger problem than whether or not we should build this entry way," Wheeler said.

"That's a question about the broader sense of security in the neighborhood. We need to address those issues, and I'm committed to it."

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler Honors Vera Katz

By Jessica Floum

December 13, 2017

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler kicked off Wednesday's City Council meeting by honoring the woman who sat in his seat for 12 years.

Vera Katz was Portland's last mayor to serve three terms and Oregon's first female House speaker.

She died Monday morning at 84, a week after her family started her hospice care and ended her treatment for kidney failure.

"Vera Katz was larger than life," Wheeler said. She "represented in my mind the very best of the American spirit. ... All of us in public service can aspire to her boldness, her candor and especially her humanity."

Colleagues described former Portland mayor Vera Katz as a warm, strong, persistent force and a pioneer for women in politics. Her son, Los Angeles journalist Jesse Katz, remembers her as a doting mother and grandmother and a Jewish immigrant eager to give back to the country that gave her family a new life after they fled Europe during World War II.

Katz's son, Jesse, and Ted Wheeler went to Lincoln High School together, both graduating in 1981. The former mayor's son had some kind words about the current mayor.

"Ted was our senior class president, so we knew from an early age that he had a bright future!" Katz, now a journalist in Los Angeles, wrote in an email.

The mayor said he has a hard time separating his memory of Katz the mayor from Katz the school mom.

"It's extremely rare that someone as accomplished in public life makes a similar impact in their personal life, and as I read all the memories that people put forth this week, it's clear that she did both," Wheeler said.

The current mayor spoke of the impact Katz left on local and state politics and in the personal lives of many. He said he hopes to do the same.

"I know I'm not a Vera Katz, but she has put the path before me and I aspire to lead the way that she led this city," Wheeler said. "I believe I'm capable of that, and I know somewhere she's looking down on me, hoping that I live up to that expectation."

Portland Police Officer charged with Official Misconduct

*By Maxine Bernstein
December 13, 2017*

A Portland police officer has been charged with official misconduct for alleged sexual activity while on duty and is set to enter a plea and be sentenced Thursday.

The criminal information charging Christian Robert Berge, 46, with one count of first-degree official misconduct was signed Monday and filed Tuesday in Multnomah County Circuit Court.

The information doesn't detail the allegation but a source familiar with the investigation said Berge is accused of having sexual activity on duty with a civilian.

The charging document alleges that Berge "unlawfully and knowingly" engaged in "unauthorized exercise of his official duties, with intent to obtain a benefit" while a Portland police officer between Aug. 12, 2015, and May 3, 2017.

Berge joined the bureau in December 2007 after working as an officer in San Francisco. He worked patrol out of North Precinct but had been on front desk duty at the Central Precinct based in downtown earlier this year before he was placed on paid leave.

Portland police spokesman Sgt. Chris Burley said Berge was still employed as a Portland police officer on Wednesday. Burley said he did not have information on the allegation.

Berge is expected to be stripped of his police certification as part of his plea and sentencing, set for 1:30 p.m. Thursday before Multnomah County Judge Eric J. Bergstrom.

Officer Daryl Turner, president of the Portland Police Association, declined any comment on the pending case.

Berge previously was investigated by Portland police internal affairs, accused of punching a woman in the head during a civil hold on her way to a detox center. The Police Bureau didn't uphold the complaint.

Berge is also named in a pending federal lawsuit, which alleges that he unlawfully stopped a couple in April 2015 without reason, ordered the driver to get his "black ass" out of the car and searched the car, finding nothing except the driver's Bible and a Bible study book.

The suit, filed in U.S. District Court in August, alleges that Berge intentionally broke the couple's ignition key and the stop was motivated by racial discrimination. The driver responded

by calling 911 for another officer to respond. The suit alleges that Berge concocted excuses to justify the traffic stop and search before the couple was let go.

Internal affairs also investigated the April 2015 stop and exonerated Berge of any unlawful stop but Berge admitted he broke the couple's key. A supervisor also found Berge was discourteous.

The Portland Tribune

Sources Say: City Hall sees Seven Depart, \$659,000 in Payouts

*By Jim Redden
December 14, 2017*

Plus, not quite ready to impeach Trump and soda tax supporters must start over.

Portland government is losing leaders at a record pace. So far this year, seven bureau directors have left or announced they soon will leave city employment. The departures have cost \$659,000 in severance pay and contract payments.

Four of them led bureaus overseen by Mayor Ted Wheeler. They were former Police Chief Mike Marshman, Portland Housing Bureau Director Kurt Creager (who was paid \$97,000 to leave), Bureau of Human Resources Director Anna Kanwit (who received \$195,000) and Office of Equity and Human Rights Director Dante James, who announced he was moving to Denver, where his wife and son live.

Commissioner Chloe Euday dismissed two of the others. They were Bureau of Development Services Director Paul Scarlett (who was paid \$183,000) and Office of Neighborhood Involvement Director Amalia Alarcon de Morris (who was paid \$144,000).

In addition, Bureau of Emergency Communications Director Lisa Turley was paid an additional \$40,000 for an extra three months of work after quitting. Her former bureau was overseen by Commissioner Amanda Fritz at the time.

Scarlett, Turley and de Morris left after critical audits or internal surveys. Marshman was replaced by former Oakland Assistant Police Chief Danielle Outlaw after a national search that Wheeler promised to conduct when he ran for mayor.

Not quite ready to impeach Trump

Although they repeatedly have criticized Donald Trump since before he was elected president, all four Oregon Democratic members of the U.S. House voted against impeaching him last Thursday.

The impeachment measure introduced by Rep. Al Green, D-Texas, failed by a 364-to-58 margin, with no Republicans voting for it. Afterward, Portland-area Rep. Earl Blumenauer said the measure was "ill-considered and ill-timed," though he left the door open to supporting impeachment when the political climate is more favorable.

Despite the vote, U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Portland, called on Trump to resign the same day, because several women have accused him of sexually harassing or assaulting them. Not suprisingly, Trump didn't take Merkley's advice.

Soda tax supporters must start over

Multnomah County soda tax supporters wasted nearly \$1 million collecting signatures for a May 2018 ballot measure that has been delayed to November, at the earliest. Although the Coalition for Healthy Kids and Education claims to have collected more than enough voter signatures to place the \$28.4 million measure on the ballot, the petitions they circulated were only good for a May vote. Delaying the measure means they have to start over.

Most of the money was contributed by two billionaires: former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and John Arnold, a Houston-based former energy trader. Over half went to the Washington, D.C.-based Fieldworks campaign consulting firm and Portland's Brink Communications.

Shortly before the petitions were scheduled to be filed, those running the campaign decided that the November 2018 general election was a better bet than the May primary, mostly because more liberals are expected to vote to support Democratic Oregon Gov. Kate Brown against any Republican challenger.

Willamette Week

Portland Synagogue Opens a New Winter Homeless Shelter for Families

*By Rachel Monahan
December 13, 2017*

Meanwhile, a year-round shelter is planned for Southeast Foster Road.

As this city grapples with a shortage of beds for homeless families and a cold snap, a small new shelter opened last night at Beth Israel, a synagogue in Northwest Portland. It can hold about 25 families a night.

Earlier this month, Portland's homeless shelter for families had 74 families on its waiting list for shelter, 14 of them living on the streets.

Last month, Multnomah County's family shelter started turning people away as the number of people seeking shelter approached 500 a night.

"Congregation Beth Israel has decided that we cannot stand 'idly by' as these children suffer in cold and dangerous circumstances; sleeping in cars with their families, or being turned away from shelters already too full," reads the synagogue website. "This shelter, which we are calling 'Mitzvah House,' will house approximately 25 families during evening hours only."

The synagogue is providing the space and the joint office is covering the operating costs.

At the same time, the city-county Joint Office of Homeless Services is looking to open a 100-person year-round shelter in a former Asian food market on Southeast Foster Rd. in the Mt. Scott-Arleta neighborhood.

During last winter's snow storms, community members in Mt. Scott volunteered to staff a temporary homeless shelter at the Mt. Scott Community Center — one indication that the homeless shelter may receive a warmer reception than in some parts of town.

A community meeting will be held next Monday evening with County Chair Deborah Kafoury and Mayor Ted Wheeler in attendance, according to a letter from the joint office.

The new year-round shelter may not result in an increased number of shelter beds, because ultimately the joint office is seeking to shut down the Hanson Place shelter.

The long-term lease on the Foster Road property will go before the county commission as soon as next month.

Over the past three nights, the joint office has opened shelters from cold weather.

The Portland Mercury

In the Latest Count, 80 Homeless People Died On City Streets Last Year

*By Dirk VanderHart
December 14, 2017*

Eighty homeless people died on the streets of Portland last year, a downtick from 2015's grim figure that nonetheless "should remove all doubt that homelessness is the challenge of our time," according to a report released by Multnomah County this morning.

The annual Domicile Unknown report tallies the deaths of people in Multnomah County who were either known to be homeless, or who's residence couldn't be identified. After researching 91 deaths in 2016 classified "domicile unknown" in medical examiner records, officials dug in and were able to confirm 80 people were homeless at the time they died.

The tally from last year is big—far larger than the 32 to 56 deaths on the streets in 2011 through 2014. But 80 is lower than the 88 people who died on the streets in 2015, the largest figure since Multnomah County began releasing this report.

The deaths most frequently occurred downtown, but came throughout the city of Portland, and were nearly split between colder (October through March) and warmer (April through September) months. A full 50 percent were caused or helped along by substance abuse, while no substance was identified in 40 of the deaths. The report classified 33 deaths as accidental, 32 as "natural", nine as suicides, three as homicides, and three as "unknown."

"These deaths reveal some hard truths," says an impassioned introduction from Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury and Israel Bayer, outgoing executive director of Street Roots. "The housing crisis is now claiming lives in every geographic quadrant of our county. Secondly, a growing number of the suspicious deaths the Medical Examiner's Office investigates every year are among people experiencing homelessness. Finally, these neighbors are literally dying right in front of us, with 32 people passing in a public space."

In the face of a homeless population that has risen 10 percent in the last two years, officials have spent millions scrambling to find new shelter space, assist with rents, and rapidly re-house people who've recently fallen into homelessness. As a result, the most recent point-in-time homeless count found fewer people were unsheltered in Multnomah County during a night earlier this year than a night two years before (but more people were in shelter).

Hall Monitor: Crossing Columbia

*By Dirk VanderHart
December 13, 2017*

Mayor Ted Wheeler's Office Has Been Quietly Looking to Expand Sidewalk Regulations for Months, an Aide Says

THE INTRIGUE burned white-hot on Twitter Monday night, warming us all in the cozy glow of potential scandal.

The Guardian had just released a report about the ongoing saga of Columbia Sportswear CEO Tim Boyle's threats to pull out of downtown Portland, and the ensuing response—in the form of police patrols and “no-sit zones”—from Mayor Ted Wheeler.

The piece, written by Mercury contributor Thacher Schmid, contained a juicy morsel: Boyle, the paper reported, had suggested that he'd penned an op-ed in the Oregonian at Wheeler's request.

The Machiavellian possibilities were tantalizing. The Mayor of Portland asking a high-profile businessman to threaten to leave downtown in a callous bid to strong-arm the public into supporting an increased police presence? Devious. Terrible.

And almost certainly not true. As I joined others on Twitter in scrutinizing what Boyle had actually said in a recent interview with OPB, there was an unmistakable ambiguity. Sure, the CEO explained that Wheeler was prioritizing more cops, and that he had told the mayor he'd help with that (Wheeler got council approval to “over-hire” officers in preparation for coming vacancies last month). But Boyle never said outright that Wheeler had asked for the op-ed.

In an indignant email sent to the Guardian on Tuesday, Wheeler's Deputy Chief of Staff Michael Cox flatly denied that the mayor had, and demanded a retraction to the claim. The paper updated its story to better reflect the matter. But the Columbia situation is still intriguing—for reasons entirely unrelated to the disputed story.

As the Mercury has been reporting, Wheeler recently prohibited sitting outside of the downtown Columbia Store and other buildings by using a loophole of sorts in the city's transportation laws governing sidewalks.

That move came shortly after Boyle voiced concerns about downtown activity, and it seemed logical to conclude that Wheeler was reacting only to the CEO's gripes. That is, until Wheeler's office said differently.

Last week, in the face of questions, a Wheeler aide named Seraphie Allen suggested that the mayor's new sidewalk changes were part of a larger strategy that has been shaping up for much of his term to date.

“The sidewalk management plan is something that we've been working on and looking at for a long time,” Allen told the coordinating board for A Home for Everyone, a task force working to eliminate homelessness in Multnomah County. “We view this as another tool—as a way to help business with continuing traffic in certain areas.”

Allen had been working on the policy “since March,” she said, adding that the mayor's office has been looking at expanding the sidewalk management laws.

What expansion might be in the works, and what had prompted this long look into the city's controversial sidewalk policies? Days after we posed the questions to Wheeler's staff, we were finally told by email that the mayor's office is still ironing out the specifics.

What is clear, though, is that when Tim Boyle complained, the Mayor's office was ready to help—and that it appears to be prepared to help with other, similar complaints in the future.

A Cop Lied to Get a Portland Activist to Stop Filming

*By Doug Brown
December 13, 2017*

The Police Bureau Says That's Completely Fine

The Portland Police Bureau (PPB) has a high threshold for what constitutes a threat when it comes to statements made by one of its own.

So when one sergeant policing a protest on a public sidewalk last November approached an activist who was legally filming cops and said, incorrectly, that the man “could be arrested,” the PPB determined the sergeant didn't actually “threaten” to arrest him.

“‘Could be arrested’ is not sufficient enough to cross the line into an actual threat,” Traffic Division Captain Mike Crebs told a civilian oversight board last week, explaining his decision to clear the sergeant of an allegation, filed by activist Ben Kerensa, that the cop had made an improper threat. “I felt there had to be some kind of declaration that, ‘You're going to be arrested if you don't stop filming.’ That never occurred.”

The Citizen Review Committee (CRC)—the civilian board which, among other duties, hears appeals from people who are unhappy with the results of their complaints against cops—unanimously disagreed with Crebs' viewpoint.

“This is like an old-school mafia tactic,” CRC member Daniel Schwartz said.

The scenario sets up what could be Police Chief Danielle Outlaw's first decision to side either with the civilian board, which believes a cop violated policy, or with her own command staff. The CRC previously challenged a finding during Outlaw's tenure, which began in early October, but the new chief sent the case back for more investigation before making a decision, says CRC Chair Kristin Malone.

After the CRC challenges the bureau's clearance of an officer, the police chief typically makes a final call. The chief can side with CRC and punish the cop, or head to a future CRC meeting to try to convince the board to see it her way. If the CRC and chief still disagree, the case is settled by the Portland City Council—a rare occurrence. Earlier this year, the council heard the first CRC-involved case in more than 12 years.

The recent CRC saga is another example of the PPB's troubles with citizens who film cops in public, a legal activity under state and federal law.

The incident took place on November 30, 2016, as Kerensa and others were protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) near the Phillips 66 terminal in industrial Northwest Portland. A month before, the PPB had adopted a new policy and training procedures regarding citizens' right to film police—a response to an ACLU of Oregon lawsuit on behalf of a woman who was wrongfully arrested for recording officers. The DAPL protest came just weeks after raucous anti-Trump protests that put cops and activists at odds with each other.

Kerensa filed two complaints from the November 30 action. The first, based on an earlier encounter, was that it was improper for a cop to tell him that he couldn't film police activity. The

bureau agreed with that complaint, but did not concede that a sergeant, in another confrontation, had threatened Kerensa with arrest for wielding his camera.

According to last Wednesday's CRC meeting, the sergeant told investigators he purposefully lied to Kerensa "about whether he was going to be arrested or not" to try to get him to stop filming. Crebs, the sergeant's boss, didn't have a problem with the sergeant lying, noting it's acceptable for cops to lie to people when undercover or while dealing with a hostage negotiation.

ACLU of Oregon Legal Director Mat dos Santos, who showed up to the Wednesday night meeting, disagreed.

"That the sergeant also admits that he's employing his tactic to make [Kerensa] stop filming should further bolster the finding of an improper threat," dos Santos said to the board. "If the officers are allowed to simply wordsmith their threats to avoid internal accountability, then officers will be permitted to suppress First Amendment rights with impunity."

During her vote to challenge Crebs' finding, Malone called the sergeant's tactics "abhorrent."

"If you do it in a situation where somebody knows their rights, that's extremely terrible, but let's say you do it in a situation with somebody who doesn't know their rights," she said. "Maybe it's not the First Amendment, maybe it's Fourth Amendment. Maybe it's an 'I can come into your apartment'—it's not something we want to be doing."

After the CRC voted to challenge Crebs' decision to clear the sergeant, the traffic division captain disregarded some CRC members' calls for the bureau to conduct more training regarding not lying to citizens about their constitutional rights.

"This is the first time I've seen an officer lie in a circumstance like this," he said. "I think this is a one-off."

The Daily Journal of Commerce

A Chat with BDS' New Director

*By Chuck Slothower
December 13, 2017*

Rebecca Esau took over as director of the Portland Bureau of Development Services in April, succeeding Paul Scarlett.

Esau had spent the previous 14 years as manager of the bureau's Land Use Services Division, where city planners, architects and landscape architects are responsible for administering the city's zoning code.

Initially named interim director by Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, Esau was appointed permanent director in October. Eudaly opted against a national search, saying the best candidate was already on the job.

Esau was raised in central California in a family of farmers, and later studied landscape architecture at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. She joined what was then the Bureau of Planning in 1996 as an entry-level planner.

Esau comes to leadership at a critical time for BDS, which has faced criticism for processing building permits too slowly. In recent years, the bureau has been plagued by low staff morale.

Staffing levels have surged and receded at the bureau along with the economy, and the slowdown in new multifamily developments could cut the bureau's revenue.

The DJC spoke with Esau at BDS' office in south downtown. The interview has been edited for clarity and condensed.

DJC: I wanted to ask about permit times. What permit times are you seeing for design review, and how long is it taking for projects to go through, and how can that be improved?

Rebecca Esau: It's taking too long in many cases. It's largely dependent on how well-prepared the applicant is, and the quality of the submittal we get. For a well-prepared applicant, it can go really quite fast.

So for permits for new houses, they range anywhere from 1.5 months to – we had another one that took 12 months, but it was the applicant who was inactive in dealing with it for seven of those months. It's a very iterative sort of process, working with the applicant back and forth to get the information that's needed to be able to approve the plans.

For commercial permits, the span from the quickest to the longest is much broader: seven to 12 months for most projects.

DJC: Commissioner Eudaly and Mayor Wheeler have discussed a project to get all of the permitting agencies working together. Is there any progress on that?

Esau: Since taking this position, I've started meeting with the development directors group; (that) is what I'm calling it. Prior to this, they had not met regularly. So those directors are from PBOT, BDS, Water, Parks and Fire. Those are the key ones that have staff who are involved in the permitting process.

So we're at the beginning stages of starting those meetings and developing our work plan. We've heard from the Development Review Advisory Committee (DRAC) – they obviously want things faster. They want when we raise our fees, for example, or another bureau raises its fees, for City Council to look at those holistically so you can take a look at what's the cumulative effect of fees and SDC charges on a development and it penciling out at all, rather than taking them in silos, which is what's gone on in the past. So that'll be one of the projects I'll be working with the directors on is putting a combined package together for City Council when any of us want to increase fees so that it's presented together and the cumulative impacts of those fees are explained to City Council so it's not death by a thousand cuts for the developers.

DJC: I'm sure you hear this a lot, but with construction costs as high as they are now, time is money.

Esau: Absolutely, and we're not at all at this point able to deliver the services as quickly as we'd like to. We have a lot of vacancies. And I'm working with those directors also on getting the sufficient staff they need to deal with the workload and deliver the services in a more timely way.

DJC: How are staffing levels at BDS now? Do you continue to be understaffed?

Esau: We have about 50 vacancies currently. It's incredibly difficult in this economy to find candidates for these jobs we have that are so technical. We're in competition with surrounding cities and one of the union contracts has just been negotiated. We have a tentative agreement now. Part of the problem has been we have not been able to offer competitive wages compared to some of the surrounding cities for things like building examiners and plans inspectors. So it's difficult to attract, much less retain, qualified people to do the work – especially when everyone else is busy as we are. Maybe on a smaller scale in surrounding cities, but everybody's busy.

DJC: It's been my impression that when the economy is good and when people are building, BDS tends to need to staff up, and that when the economy's slower, there can be layoffs. Is that a challenge to let employees go and then rehire when things heat up?

Esau: It's incredibly inefficient to be in that cycle and to lay employees off – trained, skilled employees – during a downturn. I went through the last downturn, where we lost half of our bureau. Some people you can get back when it picks back up again; other people, they leave town, they move onto other jobs, other careers, and you never get them back.

To groom new people and get them trained is labor-intensive. It takes a long time. You hire a new employee here, whether it's a city planner or plans examiner or an inspector, it takes nine months to a year to get up to speed. It's a long learning curve.

So our bureau is tightly connected to the economy and what's going on. That's why it's important that we have reserves set aside to help us survive those downturns and not lose staff.

DJC: So are you trying to set some revenue aside as reserves?

Esau: Yes, we do set revenue aside and we're closely watching the economy. We're just starting our budget planning process for this next fiscal year, and so we work with a team of economists that we bring in. We had our first meeting (in late November). We're tapping their expertise as to what's on the horizon and how long this busy building season is going to be. It's looking like a year and a half, two years. Although we've also met with some of our larger industry customers. We've met with OHSU, TriMet, the Port of Portland – all of which have huge, multimillion-dollar projects coming in the next five years. So we need to be able to handle those and to be able to deliver the service to them.

In the last downturn, even though some of the private projects dropped off, there were a lot of institutions that continued on and kept going through the recession. So it's a question of what will drop off first, and what will continue through the next recession and how deep will the recession be and how long it will last.

DJC: Inclusionary housing has been a huge topic among developers. It seems like since that passed there has been a big slowdown in large multifamily applications coming in. What impact are you seeing?

Esau: We're having a few projects come in. We knew that there would be a drop-off right after Feb. 1 when it went into effect. And there has been a drop-off. A lot of people rushed the dates, got their projects in and got them vested under the old code so they didn't have to comply with the new requirements.

So those projects are in the pipeline working their way through the system. But we have had some projects, a couple of them were in under the old code that decided to abandon their vesting and apply under the new code because they wanted the trade-off of not having to provide parking. Because the code allows if you're within a certain distance from a transit corridor then you don't have to provide parking under the new code. So they wanted to take advantage of that, and go ahead and provide that required affordable housing. That was worth it to them.

There's been six or seven projects that have come in since the code changed. I continue to hear that we're just not going to see, that we've gone over the cliff and we're not going to see more apartment mixed-use development. As a result of that, the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, who wrote the code that we're administering, are paying close attention to that. They're giving it some time to see if it plays out, what everybody is predicting. But we continue to hear that the faucet has turned off.

DJC: You work under Commissioner Eudaly and Mayor Wheeler. What have they told you about what they would like to see out of BDS?

Esau: Where to begin? POPS, our technology project, is a huge priority. That's probably no. 1. It needs to be delivered on time and on budget, and it needs to work. So I'm working with the project manager on that. The POPS (Portland Online Permitting System) project is not just an upgrade to our computer permitting system. It's a transition from paper plans to digital.

There's a lot of changes. It will be easier for our larger commercial-permit customers who already have electronic plans, compared to somebody who wants to do a 200-square-foot kitchen addition and has drawn it on a napkin.

So we have to set up a system that accommodates all ranges of customers and their resources and their ability to provide digital plans.

It is horribly inefficient to work with paper plans. I wish that we would have done it years ago. But we're doing it now.

Other priorities: Obviously, the housing crisis that we're in. That's a huge concern, as well as affordable housing. We have been working with the Portland Housing Bureau to do expedited reviews and working closely with them to do early assistance to make sure those projects go through quickly and seamlessly. That's been going well.

But, yeah, I have concerns about the inclusionary housing situation and what that does to the supply and what that does ultimately to affordability.

Equity is a big priority and serving all members of the community. So we're going to be developing a new program to work with small businesses and provide a liaison to them. Say you want to open a coffee shop that was a record store before and maybe you don't know what you're doing as far as permitting. For the people who don't and need some help, we'd like to have a single point of contact to help walk them through the process so it goes quickly and easily and provides the resources they need to get through the permitting process. It's a complicated and intimidating process to a lot of people. We don't want people to be so intimidated and reluctant to apply that they go do work without permit, and things are unsafe or just not built properly. We want things to be safe.

DJC: I'm sure in your 14 years you worked under a number of directors. What did you learn from your predecessors, and how do you approach your leadership style?

Esau: When the planners first came over to what was the Bureau of Buildings, Margaret Mahoney was the director. As far as I know, she was the first female director of the city's building bureau. It's very much a man's world. She, for me, is a role model as to how to navigate in this environment. We're dealing with contractors, developers, people in the trades – and there are some preconceived notions about women oftentimes, even in 2017. So it exists today and I encounter (it). My female employees encounter it. So that's an issue in trying to break that down. We've done a lot of gender-equity training at the bureau as well as equity training to raise awareness and change the culture.

The Portland Business Journal

Portland Art Museum Gets Council's Blessing for \$50M Expansion

By Jon Bell

December 13, 2017

City Council OKs \$50M Portland Art Museum expansion after agreement to maintain public passageway through property

What's currently an open public plaza with a sculpture garden between the two buildings of the Portland Art Museum could eventually be an enclosed pavilion that links the two structures.

But rather than close off access to what is currently that public plaza, museum officials say the \$50 million Rothko Pavilion project would not only preserve the existing access, but actually increase the accessibility of the entire museum.

"Our ultimate goal," said Brian Ferriso, museum director and chief curator, "is to be one of the most accessible museums on the West Coast, if not the United States."

A majority of Portland City Commissioners supported the museum's ambitions Wednesday by tweaking a unique city ordinance to allow the museum to enclose the plaza, so long as it maintains a public passage through the pavilion.

The tweak came as the result of an ordinance first adopted by the city council in 1968. That ordinance vacated the portion of Southwest Madison Street that ran between the two museum buildings so the museum could use it as a public plaza. The original ordinance directed that the space not be used for anything other than an open mall. An amendment adopted in 1984 allowed the museum to close the space between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. on an as-needed basis.

Enclosing the plaza with a structure, which the city council's decision allowed, would render the space no longer an open mall, a prospect that some in the community opposed. During initial council testimony last week, those against letting the museum enclose the space criticized the proposal as one that would limit access, make it harder for nearby residents to access a streetcar stop on Southwest 10th and deprive the public of the existing sculpture garden.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz, the only vote against the ordinance change, said she was disappointed that it would essentially allow the art museum to create another "super block" downtown and make it harder to find the streetcar stop.

"I appreciate the stated intent to make this enclosed space welcoming, but the current space is welcoming," she said. "I'm disappointed that this is another . . . cut that takes away from the street right of way."

But Ferriso said the museum's plans will actually maintain and increase accessibility. While designs are far from final, the pavilion would likely include a ground-floor passage that would be open to the public and allow pedestrians and people with pets and bikes to pass through from east to west or vice-versa. It would also include restricted entry into the museum for paying patrons or those taking advantage of the museum's free nights or other no-charge options. The passageway would likely be closed between midnight and 5:30 a.m.

"This would be an open space that could be entered and moved throughout," Ferriso said, adding that such public passageways have been incorporated successfully into other museums, such as the Museum of Modern Art in Manhattan.

In addition, Ferriso said the new pavilion would help better connect and align the two museum buildings. The project would also raise the floor of the Jubitz Center building by four feet to create one continuous floorplate at the ground level.

“This will allow us to knit together the second and third floor and connect the main building all the way across the campus,” Ferriso said.

The entire project would also address access issues by making elevators more visible and reconfiguring ramps, stairs and other features to make sure the entire museum is accessible to all visitors. The loading dock, which is now located in the public plaza space, would also be relocated.

With the council’s approval granted, Ferriso and the museum will now push forward on its fundraising efforts for the project. So far, \$30 million has been pledged and Ferriso hopes to raise the remaining \$20 million over the next two years. He said the museum will also be hiring a local architecture firm — early renderings were done by Vinci Hamp Architects of Chicago — while “working with the community to evolve our plans.”

“This has been a good opportunity for the museum to reach out to the community,” he said, “and to have deeper discussions about the role we play and how we can better serve the community.”