

The Oregonian

Portland Hikes Commercial Garbage Fees to Fund Homeless Camp Clean-Ups

*By Gordon Friedman
June 22, 2018*

Portland businesses will soon pay more to have trash collected and hauled away. The extra \$1 million the city will take in annually will be used to clean up debris left on public property by homeless people.

The City Council on Thursday raised the per-ton fee businesses pay to have their garbage hauled from \$9.60 to \$12.60. Increased costs take effect July 1.

City crews pick up tons of garbage left on public property by litterers, revelers or homeless people each year, and labor and disposal costs are rising, said Carmen Merlo, the city's deputy chief administrative officer. Workers have removed more than 2.3 million pounds of waste this fiscal year alone, she said.

Portland is all but certain to ban plastic straws after a City Council vote Wednesday.

Mayor Ted Wheeler said the increasing the garbage fee is a good move because it will help "maintain and expand clean-up of our city."

"When I first became mayor, the amount of trash on our streets, business districts and open space shocked me," Wheeler added during a hearing Wednesday.

Commissioners voted 4-0 to approve the ordinance, with Commissioner Nick Fish absent.

Zidell Family Suspends Development of South Waterfront Land

*By Elliot Njus
June 22, 2018*

Negotiations between Portland officials and the Zidell family over plans for the family's South Waterfront land appear to have collapsed, for now torpedoing a highly anticipated 33-acre development.

The family said Friday it was suspending development on the site, which would have linked the developed north and south ends of the South Waterfront. The Zidells' holdings extend from Tillikum Crossing to the Portland Aerial Tram.

At issue was the family's development agreement with the city, which would have outlined city investment in roads and infrastructure to support the new development. In exchange, the family was to provide land for parks and provide for the construction of affordable housing.

The family had negotiated with the city to extend its deadline to begin construction under an earlier agreement while it sought amendments to the deal. Affordable housing requirements had previously been a key sticking point. And the city's 2017 inclusionary zoning mandate, which requires rent-restricted units in large housing developments, had further complicated matters,

officials with Prosper Portland, the city economic development agency, previously told The Oregonian/OregonLive.

But ultimately, the cost of building a street grid, parks and other infrastructure might have proven too large. The city had in 2015 pledged \$23.7 million in public dollars to cover those costs, but recent negotiations had revealed "a gap," said Shawn Uhlman, a Prosper Portland spokesman.

"At this point, it was something that we were not willing to cover," Uhlman said.

Jay Zidell, who led the family's real-estate business, ZRZ Realty, blamed "the city's priorities" for the use of urban renewal funds in a statement, but did not elaborate further.

There are parcels where construction could proceed without an agreement with the city in place. The family also recently began marketing space in a 19-story, 500,000 square foot office building called One Gantry, a nod to the gantry crane used in the family's longtime barge-building business on the site.

The Zidell family until last year still built barges on the site, even as the South Waterfront's condominium towers loomed overhead. It had expressed plans to keep the business there for years to come, but reversed course in 2016.

The Portland Tribune

Leaders See Progress in Homelessness Crisis

By Zane Sparling

June 23, 2018

Mayor Ted Wheeler, Chair Deborah Kafoury speak at Portland Business Alliance forum on June 20.

You think Portland's problem is bad?

With more than 12,000 homeless people recorded in the county surrounding Seattle in 2018 — and some 55,000 living on the streets of Los Angeles County at the same time — Multnomah County's 4,000 unsheltered individuals is self-evidently much smaller in comparison.

And while local officials say the 2017 Point In Time Count numbers are almost certainly too low — with some believing the true figure is twice as high — they're still touting the 11 percent decline in unsheltered people counted year over year.

They say a cooperative effort by city and county has doubled the number of people receiving shelter service to 8,000 last year from 4,000.

Armed with loads of data points, Mayor Ted Wheeler, Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury and Joint Office of Homeless Services director Marc Jolin were whistling a somewhat optimistic tune during a Portland Business Alliance forum on Wednesday, June 20 at the Sentinel Hotel.

"We can not get fooled into believing that homelessness is solely a local issue," Wheeler said. "We need a Marshall Plan for American that acknowledges the upstream problems."

"Just like an emergency room, a shelter can be the difference between life and death for people living on the streets," Kafoury added. "But also like an emergency room, it doesn't really solve the problem."

Wheeler thanked the merchants and executives in attendance for supporting his proposed increase of the city's Business License Tax to 2.6 percent, which was approved on June 13. He said the general fund dollars will be used in a number of ways, including:

- Funding a community health care manager at the Portland Fire Bureau, who can monitor frequent callers and connect them with services
- Hiring a homeless liaison at the Portland Police Bureau and creating two new behavioral response teams that pair officers with mental health clinicians.
- Adding five more park rangers who will patrol the waterfront, Old Town/Chinatown as well as the East Side.
- Increasing graffiti clean-up funding by \$400,000 this year (on top of a \$600,000 boost last year).
- Earmarking another \$3 million for transitioning people from streets or a shelter to permanent housing, with the money supporting at least 240 placements a year.
- Creating an emergency manager position at the joint office to coordinate sheltering efforts during the coldest winter months.
- Doubling the number of treatment beds at Central City Concern from 6 to 12

Practically the only topic that wasn't on the agenda was the recently-sold Wapato Jail, with Kafoury dismissing the matter as something "we don't need to talk about" anymore.

"The county has sold the property. We're still hoping that it goes back on the tax rolls and returns value to the taxpayers," she said in a follow-up interview after the 90-minute event.

Jolin, who heads the joint office, said no one was eager to return to the bad old days before 2016, when the city housing bureau served homeless singles while the county focused on families, youths and those fleeing domestic violence — leading to numerous inefficiencies.

"We are in fact much better organized," Jolin said of the present moment, with the caveat that "there are so many people out there that we don't have the resources to serve."

As for a regional approach to ending homelessness, Kafoury said most hopes are pinned on the \$625.8 million affordable housing bond Metro will place on the November 2018 ballot. Kafoury has already chipped in \$10,000 from her surplus campaign funds to support the political action committee boosting the bond.

Portland Protesters Speak at City Hall: 'Abolish ICE'

*By Zane Sparling
June 24, 2018*

Occupy ICE hits one-week anniversary at anti-U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement rally.

Can Portland's people power melt ICE?

Hundreds were willing to give it a try, at least, rallying against U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the hard-nosed policies of President Donald Trump during a protest on the steps of City Hall on Sunday, June 24 in downtown Portland.

"Thank you for coming, and standing in the heat, to put heat on this administration," said State Sen. Michael Dembrow, D-Portland, in a speech praising Oregon's status as a sanctuary state and referring to ICE as a "cancer."

The demonstration marks the one-week anniversary of the occupation occurring outside the Portland office of the federal agency, which said it suspended operations at its Southwest Macadam Avenue facility on June 20.

Mayor Ted Wheeler has signaled that Portland Police officers will not clear the encampment that now includes barricades made of wooden pallets, portable toilets and dozens of tents in front of the building and stretching along a nearby bike path.

The demonstrators say they won't leave until ICE shutters — permanently.

"I have a five-year-old. The thought of (my child) being ripped out of my arms if I was trying to find a safe place to live just broke my heart," said Robyn Bruun while carrying a sign wrapped in rainbow tape reading "Families belong together."

"We need to be providing asylum to these people. We need to stop arresting people," the 34-year-old Hillsboro resident added. "I would like to see a clearer path to citizenship."

The 1 p.m. protest was originally slated to take place outside the ICE outpost at 4310 S.W. Macadam Avenue, but was relocated to City Hall because of safety and space concerns. A speaker from the International Socialist Organization said the occupiers especially need donations of canopies, chairs, tables and hummus, but not the brand made by an Israeli company.

Wearing a shirt reading "Racial and youth and birth and gender and labor and immigrant and reproductive justice," State Rep. Diego Hernandez, D-Portland, was one of several speakers to chant "abolish ICE."

"Remember that the War on Drugs had a supervillain," Hernandez said, explaining how both political parties were to blame and highlighting the cash and lobbying power of private prisons on Capitol Hill. "They're portraying them to look like me."

Congressman Earl Blumenauer, while not in attendance on Sunday, has also demanded the obliteration of the national law enforcement agency, which has 20,000 employees and was established in the wake of 9/11 as a part of the Department of Homeland Security.

President Trump signed on June 20 an executive order ending the separation of migrant parents and children caught illegally crossing the border — a policy which drew outrage from some and galvanized Portland's "Occupy ICE" movement that has subsequently spread to other cities.

The policy change hasn't let protestor Lindsay Tenes let her guard down. The 23-year-old Portland resident told the Tribune it's important to welcome everyone fleeing "violence and persecution."

"I welcome any kind of protest and demonstration right now," she said. "We still need to keep showing up because the issues haven't gone away."

Tenes was carrying a sign quoting poet Warsan Shire: "You have to understand that no one puts their children on a boat unless the water is safer than the land."

Don Morris of North Portland said he saw similarities between contemporary America and '30s-era Germany.

"Go after anyone who's hiring the illegals and shut them down," he said. "Pretty soon the problem will go away."

Zidells and City Shelve Massive South Waterfront Development

*By Joseph Gallivan
June 5, 2018*

Patriarch blames 'city's priorities on how it intends to use urban renewal funds'

There'll be no barge-themed towers near OHSU, for a few more years.

ZRZ Realty and Prosper Portland have axed their development agreement for the Zidell family's 33 acres of South Waterfront.

In a joint press release released Friday June 22, both sides said they are "mutually terminating the development agreement for Zidell Yards, which will not move forward with development plans."

The Zidells got out of the barge building business earlier this year and went all-in with real estate, planning to build 2,200 residences, 200 hotel rooms and 1.5 million square feet of office space, including a 19-story tower called one Gantry Plaza at Southwest Moody and Grover. They also talked up their plans for 10 acres of public parks including the area under the Ross Island Bridge.

In the 2015 development agreement Prosper Portland was supposed to invest \$23.7 million for infrastructure and economic development.

"While the termination of the agreement is significant, it does not signal the end of development work in South Waterfront," said Mayor Ted Wheeler.

Jay Zidell, ZRZ Realty's president and no fan of bureaucracy, said in the media release, "Unfortunately, given the costs of developing on the site and the city's priorities on how it intends to use urban renewal funds, we are not currently able to move forward on this development."

Tree Census Continues in Portland's Public Parks

*By Zane Sparling
June 23, 2018*

Tree Inventory Project heads to Gabriel Park on Saturday, June 23 in the Multnomah Village area.

Every tree counts.

From sky-high conifers to the smallest saplings — recording the hard data on Portland's trees is crucial for mapping the future of the Rose City's parks and green spaces, officials say.

About 40 volunteer data collectors and several Parks & Rec employees massed on Saturday, June 23 to tabulate the timber at Gabriel Park, a 90-acre sprawl located off Southwest 45th Avenue in the Multnomah Village neighborhood.

"We know that trees benefit people in all sorts of ways, from mental and physical health to the environment," explained Botanics Specialist Jeff Ramsey. "These are public assets. Just like a building or a bridge, we want to know what it's worth."

The count of public park trees, which began last year, is an extension of the larger Tree Inventory Project that collected data on 218,000 street trees lining the city's boulevards and sidewalks between 2010 and 2016.

Ramsey says the information allows planners to calculate the amount of carbon scrubbed from the air by trees or how much runoff is naturally filtered before it reaches the city's groundwater. By comparing the data over time, foresters can tell where trees are thriving — or need extra help.

For the volunteers armed with measuring wheels and clinometers, the event is a chance to get out under the clouds with their fellow nature lovers.

"I get up early and get to hear the birds sing — you can't beat that," said Anjeanette Brown.

A member of the city's Urban Forestry Commission, the Rockwood resident says she was inspired to volunteer after watching trees taste the axe in her own neighborhood.

"I was really upset," she noted. "(My son said) there's no point in crying if you're not going to do anything."

"We can't survive without what the trees provide in terms of oxygen, in terms of habit and just in terms of beauty," added Denise Magnus, a resident of Sellwood-Moreland who was participating for her first time.

Volunteers in the field measure the width of the tree's trunk, its height, the size of its canopy and record a general classification of its health and species. That data is inputted into an online map of the park using a computer tablet, and when the information is finalized it's released to the public on the Parks and Recreation Department's website.

Meara Gordanier — who was recently highlighted in a Tribune article about tree-scaling arborists — has received an internship via Portland Community College to collect tree data at smaller parks for the city.

The habitual volunteer says the numbers from Portland's 200-plus parks are important for a long-term outlook.

The "first thing to improving a canopy is knowing what's in it," she said. "These trees are going to outlive us."

Ready to volunteer?

Upcoming tree counts are planned at Peninsula Park, Willamette Park, Kenton Park, Laurelhurst Park, Fernhill Park and many others. For more information, [click here](#).

The Portland Mercury

Oregon Lawmakers Call on Feds to Abolish ICE

By Kelly Kenoyer

June 24, 2018

A week after protesters began their campout in front of a US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) office building in Portland, Oregon lawmakers called on the federal government to eliminate ICE altogether.

"[ICE] frames immigration issues as national security issues instead of human rights issues," said Representative Diego Hernandez before a crowd of supporters in front of Portland City Hall this afternoon. "They scoop up people in apartments, courthouses, hospitals, schools, workplaces, separating families every day. We need to abolish ICE. Si, se puede"

"ABOLISH ICE!" the crowd shouted back. Hernandez was joined at the "Not in Portland" rally against the Trump Administration's "zero tolerance" immigration policy by fellow state Representatives Rob Nosse, Sheri Malstrom, and state Senator Michael Dembrow.

Several hundred people showed up in the midday heat to hear the legislators speak, despite a the event being moved last-minute to the city hall steps.

Sen. Dembrow compared the modern detention of immigrants with historic internment camps of Japanese Americans during World War II. "This is not a one-off for this administration... This is just the logical extension of the immorality of this administration," he said.

Representative Diego Hernandez, who represents East Portland, demanded that Democrats to recall their bipartisan involvement in the founding the country's prison industrial complex—specifically pointing to former President Bill Clinton's hand in spurring the so-called "war on drugs" in Latin America. "Prison corporations are the biggest lobbying group in Washington, and nobody is talking about it," Hernandez said.

Rep. Malstrom echoed Hernandez' cry to abolish ICE. .

"If this administration will snatch a breastfeeding infant from her mother and put her in a camp, there are few limitations as to what they will not do. And this will not end with immigrants and asylum seekers. This will be remembered as a stain on our country, and I will not be silent," she said.

But after they spoke, lawmakers were admonished by some community members for not speaking sooner.

"I'm really glad you're angry. It took you a while, though," said an unidentified speaker, who said she was undocumented immigrant. She pointed out that ICE has existed since 2003. "Listen to our voices and our leadership. That's how we are going to abolish ICE. We've been asking for it for 15 years."

Maria Garcia, head of Don't Shoot Portland said, "Our families are being separated, you have no idea the pain they're going through. The kids are hungry. The kids are suffering, they're going to lose their parents, they're going to lose their language, they're going to lose everything," she yelled, her voice breaking with emotion.

An hour later, activists with Occupy ICE PDX—an amorphous group which has camped out in front of the Southwest Portland ICE building since Sunday, June 17—shared their own criticisms

of the politicians' remarks at a separate press conference at their camp. Activist Gregory McKelvey called the speakers at city hall "corporate Democrats," spurring boos from the crowd.

McKelvey also called out Mayor Ted Wheeler and Governor Kate Brown, suggesting that they should shut down the roads around the ICE building if they truly want to be a sanctuary city or a sanctuary state.

"When it's popular they want to come out here and be part of the resistance, but they're not the resistance, we are. They need us, we do not need them," he said.

But a growing number of lawmakers have joined the state legislator's call. Even US Congressman Earl Blumenauer has weighed in, publishing a blog post today titled: "It's time we abolish ICE."

At today's rally, Rep. Malstrom reminded the crowd that the path to abolishing ICE starts at the ballot box. She urged everyone to vote during the midterm elections. "[Vote] as if our democracy depends on it, because it might."

The Portland Business Journal

Unable to Come to Terms, Portland and the Zidells Bail on South Waterfront Development

By Jon Bell

June 22, 2018

Though the deal is dead in the water, Mayor Wheeler says this is not the end of development work in the South Waterfront.

In a surprise turn of events on one of the city's most prominent development opportunities, ZRZ Realty — the real estate arm of the Zidell family business — and the city of Portland have terminated a development agreement that would have paved the way for a massive amount of development in the South Waterfront.

A joint news release issued by ZRZ and the city noted that all parties involved are "mutually terminating the development agreement for Zidell Yards, which will not move forward with development plans."

The Zidell family, which owns 33 acres of prime property along the Willamette River, had planned an expansive development that one day could have topped 1.5 million square feet of Class A office space, 2,200 residential units, 200,000 square feet of retail space, 200 hotel rooms and more than 10 acres of public parks, plazas and green space.

Earlier this year, ZRZ had hired GBD Architects and San Francisco architects SCB to design the first project for the development. Even more recently, renderings from GBD and a marketing brochure showed that the first office building was designed for a lot at Southwest Moody Avenue and Southwest Grover Street. Known as One Gantry Plaza, the building was set to be 19 stories and offer 500,000 square feet of space plus a ground-floor grocery.

ZRZ and Prosper Portland, the city's economic development arm, had entered into a development agreement in 2015 which called for Prosper Portland — then known as the Portland Development Commission — to invest an estimated \$23.7 million for infrastructure, transportation, economic development, greenway and open space improvements at the site.

With the development agreement a no-go, however, that is all tabled. The 2015 development agreement noted that without the public investment, development would be “unlikely” as the private partner would have to bear all of those costs alone.

“We appreciate the hard work the city of Portland and Prosper Portland have put into this and know they share our vision for this land,” Jay Zidell, president of ZRZ Realty, said in the release. “Unfortunately, given the costs of developing on the site and the city’s priorities on how it intends to use urban renewal funds, we are not currently able to move forward on this development.”

Mayor Ted Wheeler, however, said termination of the agreement "does not signal the end of development work in South Waterfront."

“We continue to share the vision of a vibrant, equitable and active neighborhood," Wheeler said in the news release. "I commend the Zidell family for their decades-long commitment to both South Waterfront and the city overall, and I firmly believe Prosper Portland, ZRZ, and the city will collaborate in the future to deliver on this vision.”