

The Oregonian

Mayor Wheeler May Shake Up Portland Bureau Assignments

*By Gordon Friedman
June 25, 2018*

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler may soon shuffle the bureaus each city commissioner is assigned to oversee, a change that could have sweeping effects for the city and its sprawling bureaucracy.

As mayor, Wheeler has exclusive power to decree which bureaus each of the five elected commissioners is in charge of. Each commissioner-in-charge can wield significant control over the bureaus he or she is assigned, with the power to hire and fire agency leaders and direct program offerings.

Perhaps no deliberations within City Hall are more secretive than the mayor's thinking on bureau assignments.

But multiple City Hall sources said Wheeler is contemplating whether to take from Commissioner Chloe Eudaly the city permitting agency, the Bureau of Development Services, and assign it to himself. Complaints from developers about the time-consuming city permitting process sparked the discussions, said the sources, who spoke on background to discuss the mayor's deliberations.

Michael Cox, Wheeler's newly-named chief of staff and top spokesman, said the mayor has spoken with each commissioner's office about bureau assignments and gone so far as to convey that there will be "a meaningful reconfiguration" of assignments in this fall. Cox said no decisions have been finalized. Talks have centered on how to achieve "sound governance," he said.

Eudaly's chief of staff, Marshall Runkel, said Monday that reassignment discussions have taken the form of "a healthy dialogue" between Eudaly's office and the mayor, who is considering "a couple different reconfigurations" of bureau assignments. Runkel added, "Nothing is concrete."

Runkel also acknowledged rumors that Wheeler, in exchange for reassigning to himself the permitting agency, would allocate to first-termer Eudaly the Portland Bureau of Transportation. Eudaly's office is preparing for the possibility that she will take the reins of the transportation agency and its more than \$520 million annual budget, he said.

The current commissioner in charge of transportation, Dan Saltzman, is not seeking re-election and his term expires at year-end.

Like many city agencies, the Bureau of Transportation is undergoing a revolution of sorts in an effort to modernize and prepare for a bigger, denser Portland. And the bureau is one of eight without a permanent director, leaving open the chance for its commissioner-in-charge to leave an outsized mark by hiring a director who aligns with his or her vision for the city roads and transit systems.

Wheeler has kept bureau assignments mostly static throughout his 18-month tenure, making only one long-term change in reassigning the Office of Neighborhood Involvement from Commissioner Amanda Fritz to Eudaly. Yet Wheeler has given himself a heavy workload from the beginning, naming himself commissioner in charge of police, housing, development, management and finance, planning and a host of smaller city offices.

City Hall sources said Wheeler is considering more than just Eudaly's bureau portfolio, including mulling whether to bundle the city's public safety bureaus with a single commissioner, whether to allow Fritz to continue overseeing Portland Parks & Recreation and whether to keep Commissioner Nick Fish as head of the city utilities.

Fish's chief of staff, Sonia Schmanski, said the commissioner has not pitched the mayor on specific bureaus he would prefer to run should assignments be redone. But Schmanski said Fish, who previously oversaw the parks bureau, "loved his time with that bureau" and said it was a "terrific assignment."

Fritz's chief of staff, Tim Crail, said in an email, "There have been no in-depth conversations about the Mayor's thinking on bureau assignments." A spokesman for Saltzman declined to comment.

On top of Wheeler's considerations for the current commissioners, an election looms large. Whomever voters choose to fill Saltzman's seat in November – Jo Ann Hardesty or Loretta Smith – will also need Wheeler to assign them bureaus. He could assign the winner to oversee the same bureau or bureaus overseen by Saltzman, who is stepping down, but whether he will do so or seek further bureau changes is unclear.

Portland Air Pollution Authority Not Best Way to Clean the Air: Study

*By Rob Davis
June 25, 2018*

A new joint study from the city of Portland and Multnomah County throws cold water on the idea of creating a local air pollution district.

Such an agency would take power away from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and no longer subject Portland, the city with Oregon's dirtiest air, to the influence of conservative Salem lawmakers.

But creating a local authority could create as many problems as it solves, the study found, potentially exacerbating the state's existing air pollution permit backlog and delaying industrial inspections.

Instead, the \$120,000 study written by the Good Company and Eastern Research Group suggests that Portland and Multnomah County could fund work at the Department of Environmental Quality that state lawmakers won't. And they could undertake their own air monitoring and clean air projects.

The report makes clear that city and county officials don't have to create an entire standalone bureaucracy -- equipped with new desks, new computers, new workers and new office space -- to make the region's air cleaner. Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler was the only local leader to have endorsed the idea.

Instead, they could:

- Require that public construction projects only use low-polluting, modern diesel equipment. Diesel soot is one of the most ubiquitous pollutants in the region's air and poses serious health risks.

- Create a grant program to create incentives for owners of diesel trucks and equipment used in the urban core to upgrade to cleaner-burning engines.
- Expand efforts to clean up wood stoves.
- Push TriMet to upgrade its fleet, which includes 207 diesel-burning buses built before 2007, when engines began burning cleaner.

Michael Cox, a spokesman for Wheeler, said the mayor is "examining the findings and working with Multnomah County and other partners to land on a solution that will be most beneficial to the residents of Portland."

Deborah Kafoury, chairwoman of the Multnomah County commission, said she anticipates continuing the county's push for statewide action to clean up dirty diesel engines across Oregon.

"Our job pushing the state to do the right thing is an important one," she said. "It is a role that we gladly play."

Portland had a local air district from 1967 to 1973. The idea was revived in 2017 after state legislators struggled to pass Gov. Kate Brown's proposed clean air overhaul.

Lawmakers did pass an industry-written version of Brown's plan in March. But it is a far cry from the major overhaul Brown promised in response to the 2016 crisis about toxic metals in Portland's air.

The Multnomah County Commission is scheduled to discuss the report Tuesday at 10 a.m.

[Document linked here.](#)

Feds Order Occupy ICE PDX Protesters to Abandon Camp on their Property or Face Arrest

By Shane Dixon Kavanaugh

June 25, 2018

Federal law enforcement officers on Monday notified demonstrators camped outside Portland's Immigration and Customs Enforcement headquarters that they must begin to vacate federal property.

"It is unlawful under federal law to obstruct the entrances, foyers, lobbies, corridors, offices and/or parking lots of federal facilities," reads the flyer Federal Protective Service agents distributed to protesters, who have blockaded the Southwest Macadam Avenue facility since last week.

Those who obstruct the entrance to the building, according to the flyer, face arrest and prosecution in federal court. However, officials acknowledged they had no authority over adjacent properties owned by other entities.

Activists have waged the round-the-clock occupation in opposition to the Trump administration's immigration crackdown, including its policy of separating migrant children from their parents at the U.S. border.

ICE officials suspended its operations at the building last Tuesday as the so-called Occupy ICE PDX movement grew in size.

The order to abandon camp comes hours after federal law enforcement agents entered the ICE building in the middle of the night to "secure government property," according to news release sent to media just after 3:30 a.m.

It may also lead to a showdown between federal authorities and a band of unwavering activists whose week-long protest has generated national headlines and inspired other demonstrations outside of ICE facilities around the country.

The tent community was mostly quiet through early Monday afternoon. Interspersed through tents lining the railroad tracks are places meant to serve different purposes: a quiet tent with a stocked bookshelf, a family tent for children filled with colorful toys, a pantry, a makeshift shower, an engineering tent, a medical station and a dishwashing station.

"There's something prophetic about this place," said Rabbi Ariel Stone, of Congregation Shir Tikvah in east Portland, who came out to support the encampment Monday morning. "The word of God comes most clearly from people who are crying out for justice."

Edith Gillis, 60, of Portland stood outside the main entrance waving at passersby with a sign around her neck that read, "Protect protesters who protect Portlanders."

Gillis, who said she's been joining the protest every day since the first Sunday, said as a Christian, taxpayer and mother, she disagrees with ICE immigration policy.

"Some sacrifice everything for their kids' safety and well-being only to be worse off," she said. "I've experienced that trauma."

Last week, Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler lambasted ICE in a series of tweets and announced he will not have city police break up the protest at the federal agency's Southwest Portland field office. A spokeswoman on Monday said Wheeler's stance hadn't changed and that Portland police won't be responding.

Wheeler is traveling Monday, the spokeswoman said, and isn't in Portland. City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, however, visited the camp and expressed her support for the protesters.

Billy J. Williams, U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon, said on Monday his office will be working to support ICE and Federal Protective Service agents.

"While demonstrators have a lawful right to assemble and voice their concerns, blocking the building's driveways or entrances is not permitted under federal law," Williams wrote in a news release.

This report will be updated.

The Portland Tribune

City Hall Update: Expungement Pilot Program Approved

By Jim Redden

June 25, 2018

Plus, Mayor Ted Wheeler names longtime aide Michael Cox as his new chief of staff.

The City Council approved a pilot project for the Portland Housing Bureau to expunge convictions in criminal records that are potentially preventing some people from renting.

The program, introduced by Mayor Ted Wheeler, is expected to cost \$50,000 for a one-year contract with the Metropolitan Defenders Office, to reach about 300 households.

State law allows misdemeanors and low-level felonies to be expunged from records after 10 years without another conviction, although prosecutors and victims are allowed to object.

The mayor's office says the policy is consistent with Wheeler's goals of increasing renter protections, affordable housing production, and housing preservation. Home Forward, Multnomah County's housing authority, has had a similar program for about a year.

Wheeler names new chief of staff

Mayor Ted Wheeler named longtime aide Michael Cox as his next chief of staff last Monday. Cox will replace Maurice Henderson, who is leaving to become TriMet's chief operating officer.

Cox first began working for then-State Treasurer Ted Wheeler in 2014. He served as the spokesman for Wheeler's successful 2016 race for mayor and had the same responsibility during the transition after that year's May primary election. Cox then became the communications director for the mayor's office in January 2017.

Cox will assume his new duties after Henderson leaves July 7. Henderson previously served as an assistant director of the Portland Bureau of Transportation, beginning in 2015.

Portland Tolls: Price First, Add Capacity Later

By Paris Achen

June 25, 2018

A tolling policy advisory committee's draft recommendation would toll all lanes of Interstate 5 in Portland and the Abernathy Bridge on Interstate 205 to test efficacy for a larger tolling network.

A state policy advisory committee plans to recommend tolling all lanes of Interstate 5 and the Abernathy Bridge on Interstate 205 in the metro area as a strategy to reduce traffic congestion and raise revenue to build a third lane on the bridge.

Tolls on I-5 would extend from North Going/Alberta Street to Multnomah Boulevard and be variable depending on levels of congestion.

"What congestion pricing does ... is it actually reduces the number of people on the road during peak period travel, gets the through traffic that we're looking for, that we thought we needed with increased road space, but we actually get it with the pricing," said committee member Chris Hagerbaumer of the Oregon Environmental Council. "...This is the cheapest way to get new 'capacity.'"

The tolls would be launched as a pilot program to prove to the public the efficacy of congestion-priced tolls in reducing traffic congestion. The second part of the recommendation calls for analyzing the results of the tolls and possibly developing a subsequent, comprehensive plan for tolling other highways in the Portland area.

Several committee members asked that increased transit services be a condition of imposing any tolls to help mitigate the impact the tolls could take on low-income commuters.

"It's hard to price people for something when we cannot provide them with other options," said committee member Craig Dirksen of the Metro Council. "We need to include transit access from the very beginning."

The 25 members of the committee failed to reach consensus on every aspect of the plan they'll recommend. Each has an opportunity to write an explanation for their support or opposition of the plan in the final draft of the recommendation.

Representatives for environmental and trucking interests clashed over whether the pilot should include raising revenue to build another lane on I-205. Environmental representatives want to encourage transit, carpooling and other alternative modes of transportation to decrease demand on the roadways rather than increase space for more vehicles.

Jana Jarvis of the Oregon Trucking Association said she would support a plan only if it included raising revenue for additional lanes.

"Congestion" or "value pricing" refers to the practice of changing the toll price for a freeway or a lane based on how much congestion is on the roadway during that time. During the rush-hour periods, the price would be higher, and at some times at night, there might be no cost to use the same road.

A \$5.3 billion transportation-funding bill passed last year requires the state transportation commission to consider tolling in the Portland metro area but does not mandate it.

A final version of the recommendation is scheduled to be presented to the Oregon Transportation Commission July 12.

Transportation commissioners have until December to send a proposal to the Federal Highway Administration, which would need to approve any plan.

It would take several years to implement the tolling plan, according to state transportation officials.

Here We Go Again: Centennial Mills Buyer Plans Housing, Park

*By Joseph Gallivan
June 26, 2018*

This isn't the first time a development firm has trumped big plans for the waterfront site.

Members of The Lynd Co., the latest developer to tackle the empty Centennial Mills waterfront site, were in town last week to meet the locals.

Will Thier, who has been Prosper Portland's project manager on Centennial Mills for four years, said the city urban renewal agency met with five interested buyers of the site last fall and chose the San Antonio-based Lynd Co. in April. It's not a done deal yet, but both sides expect a sale to go through this summer.

The agency's last deal, with local developer Jordan Schnitzer, fell apart in 2014 when Schnitzer wanted more public subsidies than the city was willing to provide.

Selective demolition of Centennial Mills, located on Northwest Naito Parkway and Ninth Avenue, began in 2015. Now the main historic flour mill with the water tower on its roof stands out among remaining structures.

This is Lynd's first foray into the Portland market. The company has managed apartments and built luxury condos in Miami and Chicago, among other projects.

The final mix for the site will probably be condos and apartments. There could also be retail, senior living and affordable housing. They won't know until the master plan is done.

Milestones

There will be five opportunities for public input, Thier said. After the purchase agreement is signed this summer, from 2018-2019 there will be coordination with the state Department of Environmental Quality to clean the site.

Since Centennial Mills has been on the market for 15 years, it has been cleaned before, so they estimate it will not be a large time or money expense. Lynd hopes to break ground in 2020.

At a meet-and-greet session with Lynd representatives, there were inevitable questions from residents about tall buildings blocking the view of the river and the eastern skyline. The architect and developer punted that question, saying they wouldn't know the massing of any new building until after the master plan is complete in four months.

"We're really interested in listening more than talking," said Scott Brymer, Lynd executive vice president.

The SERA architect firm will work on a master plan. SERA will have design options and renderings ready later this year that meet the criteria of the city-adopted framework plan, and the public can weigh in at a series of open houses.

More Texans

"We came to Portland and fell in the love with the city. We're going to make a bet on the city and this community," Brymer said.

Portland has "enormous challenges with how constrained the city is," and where workforce housing can go, he said. "We truly don't want to get into anything controversial about the site or do anything that makes us unwelcome. That's why we're doing the master plan."

Locals can be forgiven for being skeptical of seeing anything built at Centennial Mills. In 2000, the Portland Development Commission, as Prosper Portland was then known, bought the site from ADM for \$7.7 million. They spent more than \$20 million in demolition and cleanup. On two different occasions, the city was close to a development deal, with LAB Holdings and Schnitzer's Harsch Investment Properties.

The terms of any deal with Lynd will not be released until the next Prosper Portland board meeting, later this summer.

Local architecture critic Randy Gragg asked if the new buildings would be exceptional.

"We've seen a period of extremely bland, generic development in Portland over the current boom. Could you single out a couple of developments you think represent the most responsive development you've done, that really responded to what was there?"

Brymer replied that they have not developed a seven-acre tract in any big city. The Centennial Mills site is a rare find, to be so large and so close to a downtown.

He then cited a high-rise Lynd developed in 2008 in Chicago called Envy, on about half an acre. It won High Rise of the Year from an industry group, he said.

Lynd sold it with the highest price-per-unit in the history of Chicago.

"We pay attention to demographics, who the users are, what the personality of the city is ... We'll take the river into consideration. I don't know if that answers it, but we've been successful in every market we've been in because we pay attention to what the customer wants."

Bridge over railroad

One resident asked about freight train traffic delays, and if the city was going to address it with perhaps a bridge.

SERA principal Kurt Schultz said the idea of a bridge came up in the preconference meeting with Portland Bureau of Transportation, and said it would be part of the master planning process. Paying for a pedestrian bridge over the train tracks might be beyond the developer's means, but perhaps the Local Improvement District (public funds) could cover it.

Peggy Moretti of Restore Oregon, which works for historic preservation, said she hoped success would not be measured in just profit, and that "telling the story of this very historic site, which has been mismanaged," was important.

She then suggested she had a historic carousel that would fit in with the horse theme of the former Mounted Police Unit paddock on the site.

Jeramie Shane, a principal at the landscape architect Mayer/Reed, said he was confident they could do good work along the waterfront, as they had on the Vera Katz Eastbank Promenade.

The water tower

Another audience member asked if the iconic water tower would be retained in the final design.

"The framework plan does not say the buildings have to be preserved," Schultz said. However, the water tower is often cited as an example of the type of historical detail that should remain.

Schultz said if the flour mill can be saved, it will have an addition to it. "It's very small, it's tiny. It could be condos or retail or office ..."

The other new buildings on site will be a mix of sizes. The maximum height they can build to on the river's edge is 250 feet, which is about 22 stories tall.

Afterwards, Jarrad Thierath of Lynd said they had fallen in love with the lifestyle in Portland.

"We wouldn't do anything ultramodern like in Miami, because that's not how Portland is. We try to get a really good feel for each market before we finish designing and break ground. As unique as possible but with a local flair."

This is their first historic property. It's now known yet if they will try to retain the flour mill at the site.

"If not the mill then at least the water tower. We've been talking about a park and maybe we move the water power down there, or maybe keep it there with a new sign. Either the mill or the water tower or both. It's a toss-up."

Thierath said the company has been told of the previous failed attempts to develop the site. "I know this is not their first rodeo. Prosper Portland stressed that to us."

Framework for the Centennial Mills site

City-approved principles outlined in 2006 spell out what any buyer must abide by in redeveloping Centennial Mills:

- Capture history

- Strengthen connections
- Provide open space
- Embrace sustainability
- Define a community focal point

They would have to maximize equity opportunities by allocating contracts to minority- and women-owned businesses and apprentices, not require any more money from the city, include affordable housing and invite public input.

Willamette Week

State Advisory Group Votes for Tolls on Portions of I-5 and I-205 in Portland

By Frankie Benitez

June 25, 2018

It's the first step in a long process for approving tolls in the metro area.

An advisory committee voted today to recommend a plan to add tolls on a portion of Interstate 5 as well as on the Abernethy Bridge on I-205.

That's a slight revision from a consultant's recommendation last month for a toll on all I-5 lanes from the Northeast Going and Alberta Street exit to Southwest Multnomah Boulevard.

The Abernethy Bridge toll was added as a strategy to fund the construction of a third lane on I-205 between 99E and Stafford Road.

The committee supported the more limited tolling plan as a pilot project but also recommended eventually adding tolls on all of I-5 and I-205 from the Columbia River to West Linn.

North Portland residents were not happy with the plan that moved forward today, fearing that drivers avoiding tolls would cause traffic in the Overlook neighborhood, among others.

A majority of the committee favored starting with the pilot project. The idea of skipping the pilot program and going straight for tolling the whole region was only slightly less popular with the committee, supported and opposed by an equal number of committee members.

The city of Portland has pushed for the full tolling plan immediately.

The recommendation is just a small step in what promises to be a very complicated project. Before the tolls are up and running, they must be approved by the federal government. The state will also need to come up with a system for tolling the roads as well as improving public transit and other approaches.

The Portland Business Journal

Advisory Committee Favors Limited I-5, I-205 Tolls to Start

By Pete Danko

June 25, 2018

In its final meeting Monday, an Oregon Department of Transportation advisory committee leaned toward kicking off freeway tolling in the region with pilot tolls on all lanes of a portion of Interstate 5 through Portland and on a new Abernethy Bridge on Interstate 205.

It'll be up to the Oregon Transportation Commission, though, to put together an actual "value pricing" proposal to federal regulators. Under the \$5.3 billion transportation bill passed a year ago, that proposal is due by the end of the year.

"This is intended just to get points of views from major stakeholders who could be impacted by this," Commissioner Sean O'Hollaren said as the meeting got underway. "We're not looking for a consensus."

Still, the committee did try to convey a sense of where it stood on broad questions, with members saying whether they supported, accepted or opposed a series of questions.

The option to start with limited tolls on I-5 and I-205 was at least acceptable to 16 of 18 committee members. On a separate question of linking the pilot projects explicitly to a second round of larger-scale tolls on the two freeways, 13 members said that was at least acceptable.

A third option was pushed by the Street Trust, a bicycle advocacy, which wanted to bypass the smaller pilot projects and go straight to the larger-scale tolls. Nine members found that at least acceptable.

Many members were eager to express more nuanced views. For example, the issue of the endpoints for the I-5 pilot project came up; the concept in play, recommended by a consultant hired to evaluate a handful of proposals, has southbound tolls beginning at North Going Street/Alberta Street in North Portland, which has some Overlook residents and the city concerned about toll-avoiders overwhelming the neighborhood.

To get at that issue and others, members were encouraged to submit written comments, due by Friday at noon.

The fast turnaround is needed to get the final committee report ready for a special Oregon Transportation Commission public comment session on July 12.

A little over a month later, the commission is scheduled to make a decision on the proposal to the Federal Highway Administration, and give direction to the Department of Transportation for drafting a proposal. The commission aims to consider a draft proposal at a Nov. 16 meeting.