

## **The Oregonian**

# **Judge Grants Final Approval to Portland's Plan to Make Sidewalks Accessible to Wheelchair Users**

*By Maxine Bernstein  
September 24, 2018*

A federal judge Monday gave final approval to a \$113 million settlement the city forged, agreeing to install or fix 18,000 curb ramps on Portland streets over the next 12 years.

Under the negotiated agreement, the city will install or fix about 1,500 curb ramps a year – doubling the nearly 750 ramps worked on annually now.

"This is a substantial commitment by the city," said Linda M. Dardarian, who represented the plaintiffs in the case.

Three plaintiffs with mobility disabilities sought equal access to public rights-of-way for those who use wheelchairs, scooters, canes or walkers.

Dardarian said the settlement will give tens of thousands of people who now face restrictions "the freedom to move around the city."

She praised the terms and the city's cooperative effort to reach the agreement, avoiding protracted and expensive litigation. Los Angeles, for example, agreed in 2009 to pay \$1.9 billion over 30 years to repair and improve its sidewalks, on top of paying several millions of dollars to cover plaintiffs' legal fees. Last year, Seattle agreed to fix or install 22,500 curb ramps over the next 18 years to settle a federal class action lawsuit, costing nearly \$300 million.

Portland's case stems from a demand letter plaintiffs sent to the city in July 2016 that alleged it lacked adequate curb ramps that complied with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act.

The city will create ramps where there are none when it does construction or alterations on roads or sidewalks, and upgrade other curb ramps that aren't accessible. The city also has agreed to maintain ADA technical advisors in its Bureau of Transportation, and allow residents to provide input on locations that need improvement.

J. Scott Moede, deputy city attorney, and Eva Huntsinger, a senior engineering supervisor in the city's Bureau of Transportation, said the negotiations over 18 months were sometimes contentious, but all parties had the same goals: Ensuring those who rely on wheelchairs or electric scooters to get around town aren't left stranded in the street because they can't get past a curb, and doing so without incurring millions of dollars in litigation costs.

The city's curb ramp installation will dramatically increase under the agreement. From 2010 to 2015, for example, the city constructed about 744 ramps a year. Under this plan, the city will more than double that number each year. The City Council approved the funding for the project in May.

Curb ramps will be of higher priority at government offices and schools, hospitals, medical facilities or assisted living homes, residential neighborhoods and other public places.

The city must report its progress by the end of the second quarter of each year in an annual report.

U.S. District Judge Marco H. Hernandez said he found the settlement fair and reasonable but asked that the annual report be sent to him as well so he can monitor the city's progress.

The city will pay each of the three plaintiffs in the case \$5,000. The city also will pay the plaintiffs' \$334,666 in attorney fees.

According to court records, about 35,000 people living in Portland have a mobility disability.

Timothy Fox, one of the lawyers representing the plaintiffs is from the Colorado-based non-profit Civil Rights Education and Enforcement Center, known as CREEC, which brought similar legal actions against Denver and Seattle.

Several city transportation engineers and inspectors, wearing their fluorescent yellow vests in court Monday, watched as the judge approved the agreement. They'll be doing the work, and already have been dubbed "The CREEC Squad," referencing the civil rights center. The city is adding four engineers, more maintenance crews and contractors to help make the improvements, Huntsinger said.

Portland's agreement follows a settlement that Oregon's Department of Transportation reached in court in March 2017. The state transportation department agreed to put \$23 million toward upgrading curb ramps in 2017 and 2018, and upgrade all of the inadequate ramps by the end of 2032.

## **Portland Officials Pause Effort to Regulate Security Deposits, Tenant Crime Checks**

*By Gordon Friedman  
September 24, 2018*

Portland officials are pausing their drive to limit how landlords may vet potential tenants for past crimes and financial stability.

Commissioner Chloe Eudaly originally sought to have the City Council vote on an ordinance limiting the information landlords could use to turn away potential renters – including convictions for a long list of crimes, some of them violent. The day Eudaly projected the council would vote on such a proposal, September 20, came and went with no action.

Eudaly's chief of staff, Marshall Runkel, said the commissioner pulled back on the concept in light of "obvious concerns from key constituents."

Alarmed by the potential new rules, some landlords and developers, including usual city allies such as the builders who construct affordable housing, have opposed Eudaly's tenant-screening concept, according to Willamette Week. Fearing such a proposal, Oregon landlord industry groups joined forces to raise more than \$2 million to fight any restrictions they say will undermine their businesses.

Runkel said Eudaly's office intends to continue developing the proposal with relevant interest groups and bring an ordinance to the council once it's ready.

"I feel confident there's a pathway to do that," Runkel said. He added, "We're more interested in getting this policy right than getting it done tomorrow."

# Portland Police Union, Feds Object to Mental Health Alliance's Push for Stronger Input on Reform Settlement

*By Maxine Bernstein  
September 24, 2018*

A lawyer for the Portland police union and federal attorneys are urging a judge to reject the Mental Health Alliance's request to have a seat at the table in the court's review of the city's four-year-old settlement with federal Justice officials on police reforms.

Anil Karia, representing the Portland Police Association, called the alliance's move a "last-ditch attempt to put its own stamp on this case" that comes "five and a half years too late."

Lawyers for the U.S. Department of Justice said the government doesn't object to the alliance's input in the case to help the court better understand issues of public interest, but they called its push for "enhanced amicus curiae" unnecessary and way too late. They argue that the alliance's interests already are adequately represented by federal Justice officials.

The alliance was formed in July and is made up of Disability Rights Oregon, the Mental Health Association of Portland and Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare. The groups cite their experience and expertise as direct service providers to people with mental illness.

Karia challenged the alliance's representation as a new group, noting comprises three, long-standing organizations that have actively participated in prior court hearings or with the police bureau in working to improve police responses to people suffering from mental illness.

The union lawyer argues that each of the agencies already has been represented by the Albina Ministerial Alliance's Coalition for Justice and Police Reform and by federal government lawyers.

"It borders on fiction for MHA to assert that it needs enhanced amicus status for its voice to be heard," Karia wrote in a court filing Sunday.

The city's settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice called for reforms to police training, policies and oversight after a 2012 federal investigation found Portland police engaged in excessive force against people who have or are perceived to have a mental illness. Investigators also found that police improperly used stun guns against suspects. A federal judge approved the agreement in 2014.

In its recent petition to the court, the alliance cited ongoing police shootings of people with mental illness since the 2014 settlement was approved, the lack of sufficient drop-off or walk-in centers for people in crisis, and the absence for more than a year of meaningful community oversight as evidence the settlement reforms haven't been embraced.

The alliance had highlighted the April police fatal shooting of John A. Elifritz in a Southeast Portland homeless shelter as the latest example of excessive force used by police against a person in a mental health crisis.

Despite Elifritz demonstrating clear signs of mental distress, at no point in the day or night of his encounters with officers did police have a specially trained officer from its Enhanced Crisis Intervention Team respond, the alliance noted.

The union lawyer countered that Elifritz was high on methamphetamine, refused to drop his knife and put men in the homeless shelter at harm.

"What is substantiated by the investigation is that Mr. Elifritz, a self-avowed white supremacist, engaged in a day-long crime spree that included carjacking a Portlander; committing road rage and threatening motorists; holding a knife to a person's throat; jeopardizing the personal safety of many people who were simply seeking refuge in a homeless shelter; stabbing himself repeatedly in the neck to the point of gushing blood, which did not appear to faze him, and then charging at police officers while wielding a knife after refusing to comply with multiple police commands, all the while under the influence of methamphetamine," Karia wrote.

Federal Justice attorneys noted that many of the concerns the alliance raised – the shooting of Elifritz to the safety concerns at the Unity Center for Behavioral Health – are well-known to the government and the parties of the settlement agreement. The alliance isn't barred from sharing its concerns with the judge through testimony presented in court, federal Justice lawyers and the police union lawyer wrote in separate responses.

Juan Chavez, a lawyer with the Oregon Justice Resource Center's civil rights project representing the alliance, said the alliance would like to be at the table, providing oral arguments and be present during any mediation sessions in the ongoing agreement. Bob Joondeph, executive director of Disability Rights Oregon, said the judge seemed open to considering extra involvement, and the alliance wants to provide that.

The city also is expected to oppose the alliance's request.

All parties to the agreement are set to return before U.S. District Judge Michael H. Simon at 9 a.m. Oct. 4 for a status conference.

## **Latest to Endorse I-5 Bridge Talks: Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler**

*By Gordon Friedman  
September 25, 2018*

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler said Monday that regional officials should renew talks about replacing the Interstate Bridge, making him the latest of many officials to endorse a new round of discussions.

"I think we should talk about it," Wheeler said. "I think we should engage."

The mayor stopped short of endorsing any particular plan.

House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, said last week that it is her goal for Oregon and Washington officials to begin talks in 2019.

The Port of Vancouver commissioners voted earlier this month for a resolution asking Washington Gov. Jay Inslee and the state's Legislature to "provide adequate funding" to "materially advance project development for an Interstate 5 bridge replacement project." And the Vancouver City Council unanimously endorsed a restart to talks.

Vancouver's mayor is repeatedly apologizing for Washington's role in killing the bi-state Columbia River Crossing project after nearly \$200 million in planning costs. Now, Washington leaders increasingly sound like partners trying to win back a former lover -- Oregon.

The about-face by Washington officials comes five years after politicians there backed out of financing the state's share of the Columbia River Crossing project. That sparked a lasting

bitterness toward Oregon's northern neighbors by several powerful politicians, including Peter Courtney, president of the Oregon Senate.

Yet as The Oregonian/OregonLive has reported, the change of heart by Vancouver officials led Courtney to say the states should "put the history on this project behind us and begin working together again.

## **The Portland Tribune**

### **City Hall Update: New and Improved Kenton Park Opens**

*By Jim Redden*

*September 25, 2018*

**Plus, African-Americans' opinions sought on transportation projects and City Council OKs 32 more affordable housing units.**

A grand reopening celebration for the renovated Kenton Park is set for Saturday, Sept. 29. It will be held from 1-3 p.m. at 8417 N. Brandon Ave.

The renovation is the latest city Parks Replacement Bond project. Community input influenced natural themes, including wooden play elements such as a fort and balance beams, an accessible play surface, new park benches and picnic tables, a new drinking fountain, paved paths, and playground swings designed for a variety of abilities and ages.

"Portlanders are rightfully proud of our world-class park system. And thanks to the overwhelming support of voters for the Parks Replacement Bond, we're able to make much-needed upgrades," says Portland Parks Commissioner Nick Fish. "Kenton Park's new playground and amenities make it one of our flagship parks."

#### **African-Americans' opinions sought on transportation**

The Portland Housing Bureau is inviting members of the African-American community to participate in three upcoming transportation-related focus groups.

Topics to be discussed include developing a neighborhood greenway from the Lloyd to Woodlawn neighborhoods, the electric scooter pilot program, and transportation incentives for affordable housing residents.

Those wishing to participate can learn more and sign up at [tinyurl.com/yacbxhru](http://tinyurl.com/yacbxhru).

#### **Council OKs 32 more affordable housing units**

The City Council has approved 10-year property tax exemptions to support 32 units of affordable housing in three projects.

The exemptions are available through the Multiple-Unit Limited Tax Exemption Program (MULTE). It is available to developments complying with the city's Inclusionary Housing Program, which requires 99 years of affordability.

The approvals include: two units affordable to households earning more than 60 percent of the area median family income (MFI) in Division Two, 3249 S.E. Division St.; all 30 units affordable to households earning no more than 60 percent of the Median Family Income in the Ellis Apartments, 5603 S.E. Milwaukie Ave.; and one unit affordable to households earning now more than 60 percent of the MFI in the Multnomah Station Apartments, 7654 S.W. 32nd Ave.

# If Bond Passes, Metro Wants to Spend Money ASAP

*By Jim Redden*

*September 25, 2018*

**Multnomah County could get \$254 million for affordable housing projects if bond passes at Nov. 6 general election.**

Without coming right out and saying it, Metro is working to avoid a problem with Portland's affordable housing bond if its own measure passes at the Nov. 6 general election.

The Metro Council wants to spend as much of its proposed \$652.8 million bond money as soon as possible, and not immediately get bogged down by bureaucratic procedures instead.

The Metro Council held a work session on the process for spending the bond funds on Sept. 18, almost two months before voters in the urbanized portions of Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington counties will decide whether to approve Measure 26-199. Although that may seem premature, discussions between staff members from Metro and those governments that could receive the bond funds actually started before the council referred the measure to the ballot.

But, despite the extensive discussions, critical questions remain to be answered. They include how Metro will ensure that the 2,400 to 3,900 units will all be completed. As discussed at the work session, much will depend on the intergovernmental agreements to be signed between the elected regional governments and its partners if the measure is approved.

"It will be a collaborative process," Metro Chief Operating Officer Martha Bennett said in response to a question from Councilor Kathryn Harrington.

Also up in the air is exactly where the projects will be located. Metro says the funds raised through the measure will be returned to the counties in proportion to their share of the assessed value within its service district, minus some administrative costs and property purchases for future transit-rated projects. Under that arrangement, Multnomah County would receive the largest share of the funds, 45.5 percent. Washington County would follow at 33.7 percent, and Clackamas County would receive 20.8 percent.

The split is intended to guarantee 1,091 units are built in Multnomah County, 810 are built in Washington County, and 500 are built in Clackamas County. The totals would increase proportionally if Measure 102, a proposed amendment to the Oregon Constitution on the same ballot, also passes, allowing businesses to partner on the projects.

But where the projects will be located within each county is still being studied. The advocacy group Housing Oregon has identified 26 potential locations with enough capacity for 1,600 units in the region through its affiliated organizations. They include sites in all three counties, ranging from some where properties are still under negotiation to others whose state and local funding applications are complete but not yet approved.

"This is really an unprecedented opportunity for the region," said Central City Concern Chief Housing Strategist Sean Hubert, who helped compile the list, which is confidential because some potential projects are in very early stages.

No one at the work session criticized Portland for its handling of the \$258 million affordable housing bond approved by city voters at the November 2016 general election. But the issue has loomed over Metro's measure. Its opponents, including Washington County Chair Andy Duyck,

have repeatedly cited what they call "delays" in the city's spending to demonstrate governmental inefficiency.

Portland officials have repeatedly said they are well underway to producing the 1,300 units of affordable housing promised if the measure passed. But anyone who followed the process knows that Mayor Ted Wheeler paused it after he took office in January 2017 and appointed an advisory board to recommend a framework for spending the money. It took many months of meetings to produce the proposal finally approved by the council last October, nearly a year after the measure was approved.

In contrast, Metro is trying to establishing its spending framework before the measure passes, which has been challenging because it is much more complicated. The city's bond money is being spent by one of its own agencies, the Portland Housing Bureau. But Metro is not a housing agency and so will have to distribute most of its bond funds to other governments. They will be the public housing authorities in all three counties and four cities eligible to receive federal Housing and Urban Development block grants, which are Beaverton, Gresham, Hillsboro and Portland.

The housing authorities have the ability to build projects anywhere within their counties, so some will likely go into non-block grant cities, like Oregon City. But Metro has set some minimum requirements. Among other things, the sites must be zoned for such developments and be large enough to accommodate 50 units. Lake Oswego Mayor Kent Studebaker, who opposes the measure, says there is no such available land in his city.

Metro has also set 10 percent of the funds aside to purchase property along current and future transit lines for affordable housing projects. Although no locations have been announced, it is assumed some will be in the Southwest Corridor between Portland and Tualatin, where TriMet is planning to build its next MAX line.

And, up to 5 percent has been set aside for administration and contingencies, with Metro and the counties each set to receive as much as 2 percent for operations related to the bond program.

After the deductions, governments in Multnomah County are expected to receive around \$254 million for housing projects. Those in Washington County would receive \$188 million and those in Clackamas County would receive \$116 million.

Although many organizations have endorsed the measure, the complexity prompted the Clackamas County Chamber of Commerce and the East Metro Economic Alliance to remain neutral.

## **Willamette Week**

### **Jordan Schnitzer Says Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler Could Save Wapato Jail From the Wrecking Ball**

*By Anna Del Savio  
September 25, 2018*

**The new owner of Wapato plans to tear it down—even though he thinks the empty jail should be a homeless shelter.**

Jordan Schnitzer says Wapato Jail has weeks to live—unless the Portland mayor steps in.

For years, the empty jail built by Multnomah County has been suggested as a potential solution for people sleeping on Portland's streets. Schnitzer, a real estate tycoon and philanthropist, bought the place in April for \$5 million. Last week, he made one final plea to local officials that they rent the building from him and use it as a homeless shelter.

But he also included a threat: If he doesn't receive a proposal by Oct. 1, he'll seek permits to demolish Wapato.

If Schnitzer follows through, the demolition would close a long and contentious chapter in Portland history. Wapato was a \$58 million albatross around the county's neck, a jailhouse that never held a single inmate. Then it became a mantra for business interests who felt local governments should use it as an alternative to homeless people sleeping in doorways.

WW spoke to Schnitzer this week about the building's fate. Minutes before press deadlines, he called back—and said Mayor Ted Wheeler had reopened negotiations.

### **WW: Why did you buy Wapato?**

Jordan Schnitzer: We bought it at a price that, as a backup plan, we could always tear it down and build a warehouse. But our intent first was to work with [real estate developer] Homer Williams and anyone else who had ideas of how to repurpose the building for public benefit—meaning all the way from incarceration to transitional housing to drug rehab, alcohol rehab, abused women's shelters, whatever came first that made sense. It seemed like there was excitement about it.

### **Why the time pressure?**

It's costing \$50,000 a month just to hold the building, and I'm not seeing anything come forward that begins letting us even negotiate on a dream of how it might be used.

One of the long-standing arguments against using this project as a shelter is that people who need housing don't want to live in a jail. What do homeless people and advocates tell you?

Well, it's not a jail. I think the people that don't like the project refer to it as a jail to rev up the negative attitudes toward it. As to why the city and county don't want to use it, call them up and get more quotes. They don't seem to want to use it. Maybe I should have recognized that to begin with and not been optimistic. Every citizen I've taken out there has been aghast at why this hasn't been used.

### **If homeless people don't want to go, should they be sent there anyway?**

I don't know how to answer that. I mean, how fair is it for downtown merchants to have homeless people sleeping on their doorsteps? How fair is it that the symphony now has a number of people canceling their subscriptions because they're afraid to come downtown and be hassled by what's getting to be very aggressive homeless people? How fair is it that people in neighborhoods have houses across the road from tent camps that bring down the value of their property? I think there's a balance of what's fair.

Most of us would recognize not enough is being done. We've got families that through a set of unfortunate circumstances find themselves out of their apartment, out of their home, living in their car. They need some transitional help to get back to [being] productive members of society that they want to be. We've also got a number of people, young and old, that like being on the street. And if you put them up in the Hilton hotel, they'll probably want to go back to being on the street. So it's not that one size fits all in terms of approaching the homeless problem.



## **Do you consider the fact that Wapato remains vacant a failure of leadership by Mayor Ted Wheeler and County Chairwoman Deborah Kafoury?**

Oh, that's too pointed of a statement. If the facility gets torn down, which it looks like it will, I think it's a failure of a lot of us. Maybe Deborah Kafoury and other leaders of the county are right. Either it's the right facility in the wrong place, or the wrong facility. I'm not an expert in this field. All I know is that everyone I've taken out there is stunned that it's been sitting there while we have all these people on the streets.

### **What happened today?**

The mayor called and said, "I have a new idea." I said, "Have you been through it?" and he said, "Jordan, more times than you want to know." So there may be some new headlines. Maybe there's a glimmer of hope.

## **Two Journalists Filed Complaints About Portland Police Using Force on Them During a Protest**

*By Katie Shepherd*

*September 26, 2018*

### **City watchdogs said they couldn't figure out which officer did it.**

More than three dozen people have filed complaints with Portland's Independent Police Review about how riot cops dispersed a crowd of antifascist protesters on Aug. 4.

Among them: two journalists covering the street violence. WW obtained the complaints this month after the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office ruled they were public records. Here are the journalists who complained about police actions, and what investigators decided.

Complainant: Donovan Farley, a freelance reporter who covers protests for Vice and Paste, says police hit him multiple times with batons.

Result: Farley tells WW that IPR closed his complaint without investigation because the agency could not identify any specific officers involved in the incident.

Complainant: Ric Peavyhouse, a photojournalist who works for WW's news partner KATU, says police shot him with a rubber bullet fired from a 44 mm rifle. Peavyhouse told IPR the pain was an 8 out of 10, or "what he imagines a baseball bat would feel like."

Result: IPR sent Peavyhouse a letter Sept. 12 saying it was closing his case because "IPR was unable to identify an involved officer."

## **The Portland Mercury**

# **City, Feds, and Police Union Reject Mental Health Alliance's Request to Join Police Reform Talks**

*By Alex Zielinski  
September 25, 2018*

The city, the feds, and the police union all agree: It's too late to give a new alliance of mental health advocates special standing in the court process that reviews Portland's federally-mandated police reforms.

"The Mental Health Alliance (MHA) is playing fast and loose with the law," writes Anil Karia, an attorney representing the Portland Police Association (PPA), in a response filed in federal court on September 23. "MHA's motion is five-and-a-half years too late."

PPA's response was echoed (with a little less zeal) in court documents submitted by attorneys representing the City of Portland and the US Department of Justice (DOJ), who are the main players in the lawsuit this court process is tied to.

In 2012, the DOJ sued the city after a federal investigation found that Portland police officers disproportionately used deadly force against people experiencing a mental health crisis. The resulting settlement agreement between the city and the feds came with a long list of promised reforms—like the creation of a civilian oversight group, new use-of-force policies within the Portland Police Bureau (PPB), and new mental health training for all officers. To guarantee the city and PPB stuck to this agreement, the settlement included mandatory check-ins with US District Judge Michael Simon to evaluate the reform process.

From the very beginning, PPA and the Albina Ministerial Alliance Coalition for Justice and Police Reform (or AMAC, a faith-based civil rights organization) have been allowed to participate in the evaluation process—PPA as a part of the defense and AMAC as an independent "friend of the court," allowed to submit written court briefings and present oral arguments during court check-ins. The idea at the time was for AMAC to represent advocates in the police accountability and mental health communities in the court proceedings.

Earlier this month, the newly-formed MHA submitted a formal request to Judge Simon, asking to be granted the same kind of access to this review process as AMAC. In the request, MHA's attorney Juan Chavez argued: "There is no focused voice from the mental health community currently in these proceedings, and without this community's participation... the current arrangement will continue to victimize Portlanders with mental illness when they interact with the Portland Police Bureau."

As evidence that the current court review process isn't working, Chavez points to the April death of John Elifritz, a man who was fatally shot by police officers after stabbing himself with a knife in a homeless shelter and then appearing to lunge towards a line of armed officers. Portland police were aware that Elifritz was having some type of mental health crisis when they shot him.

But the city, DOJ, and PPA all believe that the mental health community is already well-represented in the review process. City Attorney Tracey Reeve points out that two of the three organizations that formed MHA—Disability Rights Oregon and the Mental Health Association of Portland—are already members of AMAC, meaning they already have the kind of legal power they're requesting.

"Thus, the MHA would not present any more of a unique voice that its individual member organizations," writes Reeve in the city's response, adding that the request comes far too late in the review process.

PPA's explanation comes across a bit more vindictively, suggesting that MHA has some hidden, malicious agenda behind its request.

"We should not allow ourselves to be fooled by MHA's sleight of hand," writes Karia in the court filing. He notes that only after the DOJ and city have spent "thousands of hours and millions of dollars" working to reform the police bureau, does MHA wish to "inject itself" into the process.

Karia goes on to question MHA's suggestion that Elifritz' death was the result of subpar policing. Instead, Karia argues, Elifritz was a "self-avowed white supremacist" on a "drug-fueled crime spree," and (It's important to note that PPB was not aware of Elifritz' past membership with the European Kindred, a local white supremacist group, at the time of his death.)

Chavez, the attorney representing MHA, says this response only underscores the court's need for a stronger voice representing the mental health community.

"If that's how PPA needs to defend themselves, clearly there is still a divide in how the bureau views itself in relation to mental health crises," says Chavez. "That just makes our input that much more important."

The next court check-in with Judge Simon is October 4. Chavez intends on filing a response to the PPA, DOJ and city responses soon, in hopes of getting a court ruling on MHA's status before next week's hearing.

## **The Portland Business Journal**

### **City of Portland puts resources into streamlining business and employment processes**

*By Serilda Summers-McGee and Rebecca Essau  
September 19, 2018*

Many people don't understand just how much the city of Portland does, and how many services the city offers. For instance, did you know:

- The city is responsible for more than 200 parks and natural areas and has a summertime workforce of almost 3,000 housed in Portland Parks & Recreation. Throughout the summer we offer hundreds of summer programs for kids and youth.
- The transportation bureau doesn't just maintain streets, it is also responsible for trimming roadside trees and shrubs and for installing and maintaining street lights and traffic signals.
- The city issues approximately 1,000 building permits and other development-related permits per month, with just over half of those permits issued the same day the application is received. Permitted projects range in scale from a small kitchen remodel to high-rise office towers.
- There are more than 6,000 employees that make up the 26 bureaus that provide emergency services and infrastructure support to the entire city.

And these are only a few of the things we do to keep the city moving forward. Our workforce is the engine behind all that we do at the city of Portland. As the city's population continues to expand, so does our need to create faster processes and adopt innovative technologies to meet the demands of our growing community. At the Bureau of Human Resources, we are working hard to ensure the city can compete for the best talent by simplifying our pathways for advancement and ensuring our benefits are competitive. We are procuring new software to create performance measures citywide, and we are enhancing our recruitment approaches to find and on-board new employees more quickly.

The city is working to merge business principles into government practices. We view the community as our customers and are making systems changes to meet customer needs. We are exploring best practices to make our workforce and workplace a model today and in the future.

To illustrate the city's efforts to meet our customers' needs, the Bureau of Development Services (BDS) is engaging in new programs with new resources.

To keep pace with the increase in development activity in Portland, since 2010, BDS has grown from 147 to 408 employees, and since July 2017 BDS has filled 124 positions. As an example of the boom in construction, since July 2017, BDS has completed over 191,000 construction inspections (including inspections of permitted building, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical work). The volume of permits and inspections this past year is unprecedented in Portland's history.

To efficiently manage the workload, BDS and the other bureaus involved in the permitting process are coordinating with building permit applicants to transition from paper plan submittals to digital plans using new digital plan review software. This will allow an unlimited number of reviewers to access the plans simultaneously, rather than sharing plans between as many as 20 different review groups. It will also save applicants time and money by not having to make multiple sets of paper plans and physically deliver them to the Development Services Center and, instead, allow them to just submit them digitally from their home or office.

BDS is also developing a number of additional systems to better serve our customers, including creating an online public portal so applicants can pay for permits and access other services online, creating a Mobile Contractor App to allow contractors to track permit inspections through an app on their phone or mobile device, and creating a Mobile Inspector App to allow inspectors to update the online permitting system with the results of inspections right from the field so that this information is available to the customer immediately.

And this is only a few of the new initiatives happening inside BDS.

The city has big challenges we are solving and with our esteemed leadership and staff driving our innovation, we are sure we can get there. We look forward to serving you.