

The Oregonian

Portland officials have a plan to save the Alder Street food cart pod

*By Gordon Friedman
June 25, 2019*

Portland's famous food cart pod on Southwest Alder Street, which is facing eviction at the end of June to make way for construction of a Ritz-Carlton hotel, may have a new home along the North Park Blocks.

Aides to Commissioner Chloe Eudaly are hurriedly coordinating the potential move with the Pearl District neighborhood association, nonprofits and business leaders.

Eudaly's chief of staff, Marshall Runkel, said moving the carts to the blocks between West Burnside and Northwest Davis streets and Northwest Park and 8th avenues could bring new life to the under-used park space.

The move would "be a net positive" for the blocks said Runkel, who provided The Oregonian/OregonLive with mock-ups showing 37 carts may be relocated to streets around the park area.

He stressed the idea is in its early stages and nothing is finalized. Officials are working to iron out the details, including how to supply carts with electricity and what kind of permit to issue for their use in the public right-of-way. Officials in Portland Bureau of Transportation are studying potential meter revenue losses from carts being placed in parking spots.

The project could have hit umpteen stumbling blocks, Runkel said, but has been progressing smoothly with key players lining up to support the carts' move – or at least not stand in their way.

Stan Penkin, president of the Pearl District neighborhood association, said his group received a presentation on the would-be move and views it as "a very exciting concept."

"We are generally in favor of it and would like to see something happen," Penkin said. Having food carts along the North Park Blocks could push back against residents' perception of the greenspace as "a sketchy area," he said.

"The North Park Blocks are one of the most beautiful parks in the city, or anywhere for that matter," Penkin said. "But it's always sort of had an edge to it."

Alder Street cart owners have known for months their space was on the chopping block. But their forced move-out date comes just as summer tourism season begins in Portland, making the need for a new space that much more urgent.

"This is important. What's more Portland than food carts?" said Keith Jones, co-director of Friends of the Green Loop, an initiative to create a six-mile park through inner-city streets that includes the Park Blocks.

Jones has been working with cart owners on the move proposal. Several owners – including one who is expecting a baby – are desperate to find a place to do business, Jones said.

"It's got to be done by the end of the month," he said. "There's no wiggle room."

Jones said he views the North Park Blocks move as a temporary measure to help cart owners find stability as the city government and civic leaders work out the details of the Culinary Corridor, a plan to have food carts occupy curbside parking spaces in parts of downtown.

Runkel said it's a sad irony the food carts that helped make Portland a destination are becoming endangered as downtown property values skyrocket and parking lot owners redevelop. "We're kind of a victim of our own success," he said.

Greg Goodman, the real estate investor who owns the Alder Street lot, said its redevelopment is part of Portland's "natural progress." But Goodman is still a firm believer the carts ought to be saved.

"Portland defined the food cart scene," he said. "It's become a bigger than life deal. It's part of our identity as a city."

Jones, the greenway advocate, said the situation will only become more common as Portland grows.

"More of these lots are going to disappear," Jones said. "We need to start asking, 'Where do we want the carts to go?'"

City hires project director for new community group tasked with police oversight

By Maxine Bernstein

June 24, 2019

The city has hired Theodore Latta, 30, as project director for a community group created by the mayor's office to oversee federally mandated police reforms and help build trust between the public and police.

Latta has worked since December as youth program lead coordinator for the Native American Rehabilitation Association, managing grants, performing data analysis and leading cultural groups with youth, according to his resume.

He received a bachelor's degree in history at Warner Pacific College and recently pursued a master's degree in community psychology at Concordia University.

He also worked for the Beaverton School District as a Native American education program facilitator from September 2017 through December 2018.

He describes himself on his resume as "a father, constant learner, and effective communicator."

Latta, who grew up in California, has lived in Portland for 11 years and has a 5-year-old son. He said he seeks jobs that will help improve the future for his son and others.

Latta will be introduced to the members of the Portland Committee on Community-Based Policing at its next meeting Tuesday but officially starts his city job on July 1.

His role will be to provide support for the community group and its work, serving as its "principal administrator," according to the job listing. His salary will be \$70,000, according to the mayor's office.

At the group's first public meeting in November, Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler told its members that he expected them to strengthen the Police Bureau, increase accountability and foster trust in local law enforcement.

Latta's appointment by the mayor's office comes two weeks after a federal judge denied the city's request to find that the new citizen panel has met the community engagement requirement in the city's settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice.

U.S. District Judge Michael H. Simon approved the settlement in 2014 after a federal investigation found Portland police officers too often used stun guns or excessive force against people experiencing a mental health crisis. The agreement called for significant changes to police policies, training and community oversight.

On June 6, Simon ordered the city and other parties to the settlement to return to his court in eight months to review the work of the community group.

Simon said he believed the committee has shown "tremendous promise" since it began monthly meetings in November. But the judge said he needed more assurance that the committee is effective, particularly since its predecessor fell apart amid inner turmoil and lack of support from the city and that nothing filled the gap for more than a year.

The last two chairs of the committee's predecessor, the Community Oversight Advisory Board, were veteran Oregon leaders - former Oregon Chief Justice Paul DeMuniz and civil rights leader Kathleen Saadat - but both ended up stepping aside as they faced significant challenges trying to lead the board.

The new committee has its own chair, Lakayana Drury, who is a volunteer member.

The Portland Tribune

Lloyd District park programs' demise triggers blame game

By Zane Sparling

June 24, 2019

Holladay Park Partnership ended after mall's owner, Cypress Equities, shifted priorities in Portland

For the past four years, summertime in the Lloyd District has meant story circles in the grass, sweaty workouts to a dancing beat, and dedicated patrols from the city's park rangers.

But the free programming and food — paid for by Cypress Equities, the Dallas, Texas-based investment company that purchased the Lloyd Center in 2013 — hasn't returned to Holladay Park this year.

"There's questions, and a bit of disappointment," said Kevin Modica, who retired as an assistant chief after 31 years with the Portland Police Bureau. "Why is this a quiet conversation?"

The theory goes like this: A park that is left unattended — say O'Bryant Square, at Southwest Washington Street and Park Avenue in downtown Portland — tends to attract a crowd that might cause trouble. But a park that is "curated," or filled with activities — think Director Park, at Southwest Taylor and Park — is too occupied for a criminal element to settle. Through an agreement with the city and Cypress Equities, Holladay Park became more "curated."

But mall managers say the Holladay Park Partnership was never intended to be permanent. The abrupt announcement this spring of the program's demise left civic leaders and local law enforcement struggling to bridge the gap.

The police bureau unveiled its new Holladay Park Safety Plan during a community meeting Wednesday, June 12, though a spokesman says the plan is "not a written plan." It appears to be aspirational in nature.

"Community involvement is the key piece to the success of it," said Capt. Anthony Passadore of the Portland Police Bureau. "We've asked all of our partners in the community to come together and to commit to being involved throughout the summer in this area of the city with pro-social activities."

As part of the plan, the Holladay Park Community Involvement group has been meeting weekly in order to lead walks and plan other activities.

Trouble brewing

There were 2,236 calls for service in the Lloyd District in 2018, according to PPB, with more than 1,000 classified as disturbance or disorder calls and about 650 involving property crimes.

"That number is probably pretty low," Passadore said.

In 2019, 761 calls for service were recorded through mid-May. Sounds of gunfire drew a police response to the park June 16.

Who pays?

Born of a handshake by City Hall and Cypress Equities, the death of the Holladay Park Partnership has left both sides pointing fingers.

Neither party agrees on how much the programming cost.

Bob Dye, who managed the mall from 2015 until May of this year, described their costs as a "million-dollar investment" that added up to \$150,000 to \$200,000 per year.

Mark Ross, a spokesman for Portland Parks & Recreation, priced the direct cost of programming at about \$100,000 annually, which included paying for seasonal staff and patrols by the city's park rangers.

While the Lloyd Center paid for all that, Ross said the bureau had to foot the bill for its full-time staff, who produced and coordinated the events and activities, such as Zumba classes.

But with the parks bureau overspending its \$94 million budget by \$6.3 million, the cost apparently became untenable.

"(The bureau) did discuss with HPP the option of contributing additional funds to cover a greater portion of the costs of the program, but please know this was not presented as a condition of continuing the program," Ross said.

Dye relayed a different version of the discussion.

"The City said, 'We want you to pay \$40,000 towards our administrative costs, or we're not going to provide any manpower for the programs,'" Dye told the Business Tribune, sister publication of the Tribune. "That was the frosting on the cake. We decided to discontinue funding and reallocate those resources to the mall."

Despite the lack of programming, Parks & Rec officials say the rangers' patrols will continue.

Bull Run Watershed land swap to be considered

*By Jim Redden
June 23, 2019*

City Council will discuss swapping thousands of acres of lands owned by Portland and the federal government within the watershed on Wednesday

The City Council will consider a land swap within the Bull Run Watershed intended to consolidate ownership of the properties and continue protecting Portland's primary water source on Wednesday, June 26.

The swap has been years in the making and does not allow for logging or other human activities in the watershed. It would swap 2,201 acres of city-owned land managed by the Portland Water Bureau and 2,888 acres of national forest land managed by the Mt. Hood National Forest. Both land amounts are valued at \$51 million each.

According to the ordinance authorizing the swap, the current ownership pattern dates to the 1890s and is inconsistent within the watershed. The idea of swapping land to better consolidate the city's holdings around the Bull Run Reservoir and its water distribution facilities has been discussed since the 1970s.

According to the impact statement that accompanies the ordinance, "From November 2018 through May 2019, Water Bureau staff met with a variety of community stakeholders to share the status of the formal federal exchange process and note the proposed Council action to approve the exchange agreement. These stakeholders included the Oregon Chapter of the Physicians for Social Responsibility, the Portland Utility Review Board, the Citizens Utility Board, Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, the Sandy River Basin Watershed Council, and the Bull Run Community Association."

You can read the ordinance [here](#).

The Portland Mercury

Hall Monitor: Camera Shy

*By Alex Zielinski
June 20, 2019*

For the past four years, \$1.6 million reserved for Portland Police Bureau's (PPB) inaugural body camera program has sat untouched in the city's coffers.

Each year, Portlanders have been told that PPB is still researching how to roll out the project—and each year, Portland City Council has kept those funds cordoned off in its annual budget. Recent police budget concerns, however, have propelled the body camera discussion back into the spotlight, leaving the city poised for a mid-summer debate over a head-scratching question: Does sticking cameras on police officers really improve police accountability?

Portland's body camera program was introduced by then-Mayor Charlie Hales in 2014, on the recommendation of a federal judge overseeing PPB's use-of-force reforms. At the time, body cameras were seen as the silver bullet to reforming trigger-happy officers, serving as a way to gather evidence in police shootings and, ideally, improve community trust in law enforcement. Five years later, that perspective has changed.

According to national criminal justice experts, it's clear the accountability tool isn't living up to its outsized expectations.

In a March 2019 report by the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy at George Mason University, researchers surveyed 70 different studies on police departments that rely on body cameras.

The results? There was no major change in officers' decisions to use force against civilians, no increase in prosecutions against officers who use undue force, and no increase in trust between citizens and officers.

"Overall," the report concluded, "effects from [body cameras] have been overestimated."

Most damningly, the technology doesn't even seem to help in situations where video evidence should clearly help indict an officer. A 2015 trial against a South Carolina cop—whose body camera footage showed him shooting eight bullets into the back of an unarmed man running from the officer—resulted in a hung jury. The shiny new technology, it seems, does little to sway much of society's entrenched bias in favor of law enforcement.

Or, as the George Mason report put it: "The unintended consequences frequently seen from technology are often the result of technology being filtered through the existing values, systems, and cultures of the organization, not hoped-for ones."

These recent revelations around body cameras serve as a crucial backdrop to Portland City Council's reignited conversation around its body camera program.

City Commissioner and police-accountability advocate Jo Ann Hardesty is the council's strongest opponent to the cameras. Hardesty's raised concerns that body camera footage will simply help officers get their story straight after using force against a member of the public. Other commissioners have been hesitant to embrace the costly program without research that firmly demonstrates its effectiveness.

"Why would we spend millions of dollars for a tool that is sold to the public as an accountability tool, when the [first] people that have access are the police?" Hardesty told the Mercury in May.

These are the same concerns raised by the city's Independent Police Review in 2016, after Hales made his initial pitch for body cameras. Neither the PPB nor its vocal union have clamored for body cameras, and neither have local police accountability groups. But Mayor Ted Wheeler—who insisted on keeping the body camera funding next year's budget—is eager to bring the conversation to the public square at an upcoming City Council work session.

Let's hope he's done his research.

The Portland Business Journal

City eyes North Park blocks as a potential home for the Alder Street food carts

By Jon Bell

June 24, 2019

The popular food carts at Southwest 10th and Alder have to be off the block by Sunday to make way for construction of a 35-story tower.

But City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly is working with the cart owners and other interested parties to find them a new home, which could be the North Park Blocks.

As first reported by the Oregonian, representatives from Eudaly's office are working with various stakeholders to potentially relocate the carts to a two-block stretch of Northwest Eighth Avenue between West Burnside and Northwest Davis Street and also a block of Northwest Ninth between Northwest Couch and Davis.

The plan would utilize the public right-of-way, meaning the streets would be closed to traffic.

Local architecture firm Hennebery Eddy Architects came up with a few different design ideas as to how the nearly 40 carts could be arrayed around the blocks.

Marshall Runkel, chief of staff for Eudaly, said one of the biggest hurdles would be the cost of bringing electricity to the site. He was expecting a bid to come in for that early this week.

Potable water and gray water would have to be trucked in and out of the site.

The Portland Bureau of Transportation is looking into how much revenue could be at stake from parking meters that would be out of service if the carts moved in. Additionally, Runkel said there could be some added security costs. The blocks have a reputation for being a little rough around the edges.

"I think security is something that everybody's got on their mind," Runkel said, "but I'm not sure this would be any better or worse than their current situation."

While getting all the details hammered out by July 1 is a little too ambitious, Runkel said the goal is to get something worked out as soon as possible so the cart owners can still tap into the busy months of summer. If the carts do move to the North Park Blocks, Runkel said it would be permitted as a temporary event and run likely through October.

The city also sized up other potential sites for the carts, including Ankeny Square and a parking lot at the Post Office property that Prosper Portland owns. The location of latter site, which is a little farther out of the downtown core, wasn't all that appealing to cart owners.

Earlier this month, some of the cart owners had already found other locations to move to, while some were still on the hunt.

The temporary move could give proponents of a "culinary corridor" concept more time to firm up that idea. That plan would find the carts lining Southwest Ninth Avenue and Southwest Park Avenue between O'Bryant Square and Director Park.

OPB

Where Will Portland's Alder Street Food Carts Go? City Looks To The North Park Blocks.

*By Erica Morrison
June 24, 2019*

With a Ritz-Carlton hotel poised to arrive in Portland, city officials are scrambling to try to relocate the Alder Street food cart pod to the North Park Blocks. Marriott International announced that the luxury hotel will be built where the food carts are now, at Southwest 10th Avenue and Alder Street.

Now, City Commissioner Chole Eudaly's office is looking to move the eateries.

Eudaly's chief of staff, Marshall Runkel, says the biggest challenge with moving the carts is access to electricity. Currently, the North Park Blocks are a serene part of the city canopied by trees and spotted with park benches and sculptures. Runkel says 37 food carts would move to the blocks between West Burnside and Northwest Davis Streets and Southwest Park and Eighth Avenues. Eudaly's office is working on how to pay for electricity and garbage service for the food carts. Another issue is the loss of revenue from putting food carts where metered parking spaces are now.

Travel Portland is assisting food cart owners and Friends of the Green Loop to launch an online fundraiser to support the move.

The 35-story Ritz-Carlton will feature more than 250 hotel rooms, 100 residential units and office, retail and restaurant spaces. Construction will begin later this year and the hotel is expected to open in early 2023.