

The Portland Tribune

Barbara Walker Crossing opens

By KOIN 6 News
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New pedestrian bridge over West Burnside opened with a party Sunday morning that included a tribal blessing

A street party with all-you-can-eat pancakes commemorated the grand opening of the Barbara Walker Crossing early Sunday, Oct. 27.

The party was scheduled to last until 11:30 a.m.

The Barbara Walker Crossing is a brand new bridge over West Burnside that connects Forest Park and Washington Park through the Wildwood Trail — bridging the gap between safety and adventure.

The party began at 8:30 a.m. with a parade to the bridge from Northwest 24th Place and Burnside. The event had food, music, a tribal blessing, and a performance by local dance troupe Bodyvox.

There were also free commemorative t-shirts to the first 300 who cross through the new bridge's gates.

Construction on the Barbara Walker Crossing was completed by Oct. 13. It ensures a safe crossing of West Burnside Street for walkers, hikers and runners on the Wildwood Trail.

The trail is 30 miles long and connects pedestrians to destinations like the Hoyt Arboretum, Washington Park and the Pittock Mansion, making them more accessible.

The long-anticipated crossing cost \$4 million and took four years to complete. The nonprofit Portland Parks Foundation spearheaded the project and the fundraising. More than 60% of the total cost was paid for by private donors with government entities, including the parks bureau, footing the rest of the bill.

Designed by Ed Carpenter, the Barbara Walker Crossing is a study in the marriage of art and practicality, with forms along the side of the bridge mirroring the shape of native sword ferns.

It's an elegant piece of architecture to be sure — but safety was the main priority.

Before now, pedestrians had to dash across a curvy West Burnside (one of Portland's busiest roads with an estimated 20,000 daily drivers) to continue on the forest path.

"It's been an accident waiting to happen and we're really lucky that nobody's ever been killed here," said Carpenter.

"It's a gateway to the city," said Randy Gragg with the Portland Parks Foundation. "It will be the first thing you see as you come into the city."

The bridge is named for one of Portland's leading green space activists. Barbara Walker successfully fought against a big development in her Southwest Portland neighborhood, then helped drive the creation of public spaces including Tom McCall Waterfront Park and the Springwater Corridor.

Walker died crossing Burnside in 2014 at the age of 79.

"That vision for a connected park system was hers and this is a critical connection within that system," said Gragg.

From today on, the Barbara Walker Crossing will offer safe passage for all who tread the shaded path through the country's largest urban forest.

"To be able to live in a city — a thriving metropolis — at the same time that we have access to solitude and to nature uninterrupted like this is an incredible gift," Carpenter said.

And now the tranquility that awaits along the Wildwood Trail is complete.

Council may buy 'mansion' for water filtration plant project

October 27, 2019

Some East Multnomah County neighbors oppose both the plant and the purchase of the large house

The City Council is scheduled to vote whether to purchase a large luxury home across the street from where the Portland Water Bureau is planning to build a federally-required filtration plant for \$800,000 on Wednesday, Nov. 30.

According to the ordinance before the council, the house sits on 1.87 acres of property where large pipelines from the Bull Run Reservoir to the plant could run. The owners listed the house in rural East Multnomah County for sale earlier this year for \$799,000.

The house is located at 35319 S.E. Carpenter Lane and has frontage on Southeast Dodge Park Boulevard, where plan alternatives suggest pipelines may connect.

Some neighbors oppose the plant. They have formed a groups called Citizens for Peaceful Rural Living. Thirteen of the opponents testified against the purchase during the first hearing on it last Wednesday. Many called the house a "mansion" and questioned whether the property will actually be needed.

The Oregon Health Authority is requiring the bureau to treat Bull Run water to remove or kill Cryptosporidium, a potential disease-causing organism. The council agreed to build a plant that will filter the water through a granular media that will also remove other contaminants. The cost was originally estimated at \$500 million, but was recently increased to \$850 million or more.

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

Willamette Week

New Portland Rules Could Abolish Free Hot Soup for Homeless People in Director Park

By Kelsey Harnisch

October 25, 2019

Parks officials say they don't want to end the food handouts—just make sure they follow rules.

New regulations from Portland city officials could effectively cancel a volunteer program that hands out hot meals to homeless people on weeknights in Director Park.

Last week, officials from Portland Parks & Recreation began handing out flyers informing social-service groups that without a city permit they would no longer be able to operate in Director Park. Those organizations include Free Hot Soup, a group of volunteers who provide hot food for homeless people in downtown five nights a week.

The new permits would only allow one social service to occur each week in any Portland park. The new requirements would also require volunteer organizations to obtain insurance, get other permits like food handlers cards and provide amenities like dumpsters and security.

Because of the way Free Hot Soup operates, without hierarchical leadership, its volunteers say these new regulations will put an end to the service that's been in operation for six years.

"We're simply folks who are volunteering who are providing, sharing foods with people who don't have food security and it's something the government's not doing," said Mohamed Osman, who has been volunteering with Free Hot Soup for the last three years.

Parks officials say they don't want to end the food handouts—just make sure they follow rules.

"They've been operating without permits along with several other valuable social services providers but that doesn't mean they've been operating without the need for a permit," said Mark Ross, a Portland Parks & Recreation spokesman.

Requirements for social-service organizations to obtain permits to feed the homeless in public parks have faced legal challenges elsewhere.

In 2018 the Fort Lauderdale, Fla. chapter of Food Not Bombs sued the city after it similarly tried to require permits to serve food to the homeless. A judge ruled in that case that providing food for the homeless is protected under the First Amendment as it is "expressive conduct."

Volunteers with Free Hot Soup say they are ready to challenge the city of Portland if PPR continues to move forward with these new regulations.

Update, 3 pm: City Commissioner Nick Fish, who oversees parks, says in a statement that he's "committed to helping everyone who's providing social services in our parks continue to do so." His statement indicates, however, that Portland Parks & Recreation will move forward with permit requirements.

The permit is free, Fish says, and contends that regulation will help park rangers point people to social services.

"There are a variety of downtown park spaces that are a good fit for meals," Fish says, "and a single service provider will still be able to provide convenient, accessible, nightly meal service in the downtown core in multiple locations."

OPB

Metro Approves Guidelines To Diversify Who's Building Government Projects

*By Rebecca Ellis
October 25, 2019*

Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington counties are developing fast. Metro, the regional government for the three counties, has estimated public agencies in the area have more than 80 major construction projects in the works.

But there are equity gaps. A 2018 study commissioned by Metro and the city of Portland found the pool of construction workers set to carry out this development is largely white and male. One-fifth of the people working nonresidential construction jobs in the region were people of color. Just 4% were women.

On Thursday, the Metro Council unanimously voted to approve guidelines they hope will change these numbers by benefiting women and people of color who want to enter the construction industry.

“We have had a system of institutional racism and sexism in our construction trade for generation after generation after generation,” Councilor Sam Chase said. “This is an opportunity to make sure that there’s a level playing field. To make sure that folks have the support that will allow them to be successful on their own in joining the workforce.”

The guidelines lay out a series of goals that Metro will aim to move toward with future construction projects. These goals include offering work site harassment training and ensuring a minimum of 14% of total work hours are performed by women, a quarter by people of color, and one-fifth by apprentices. Metro intends to monitor its progress through a software system that will track metrics such as demographics, wages and hours worked.

Raahi Reddy, the director of Metro’s diversity, equity and inclusion program, said she expects these goals to become a reality on construction sites over a seven-year ramp-up period.

“Tomorrow we can’t have 14% of all work hours done by women. The market and workforce doesn’t bear that right now,” she said. “In seven years, that’s where we want to get to. Then we configure our goals for the next period.”

Metro hopes 14 other agencies will join them in approving these goals in the coming months. These partners are all part of a work group that aims to figure out how to retain women and people of color in the construction trades.

Reddi said Prosper Portland, Portland’s urban renewal agency and a member of the work group, has already passed the framework. She said the other 14 agencies — the city of Beaverton, the Beaverton School District, Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries, Home Forward, Multnomah County, North Clackamas School District, Oregon Department of Transportation, Oregon Health Science University, Port of Portland, City of Portland, Portland Community College, Portland Public Schools, Portland State University and TriMet — are all in the process of discussing the goals.

The hope, Reddi said, is that all these jurisdictions will adopt the framework by the year’s end. The agencies who have adopted the guidelines will then come together to form a regional collaborative.

Reddi said it's unprecedented in the United States to have different jurisdictions walking in lockstep to tackle construction workforce equity.

"Even if we have four agencies working together at the same time on this, it would be huge," she said. "If we're all doing this together, we're going to create a norm."

All jurisdictions would be working off the same framework. But Reddi said different jurisdictions will have different "cost thresholds" for when the project becomes subject to the diversity goals.

Metro will not apply the guidelines to projects that cost between \$50,000 and \$200,000, though workforce diversity will still be tracked. Projects costing between \$200,000 and \$5 million will trigger a portion of the guidelines. Those costing more than \$5 million will trigger all the provisions.

Cryptosporidium Found Again In Portland Water

*By Courtney Sherwood
October 25, 2019*

Portland's water bureau is warning that residents who have weakened immune systems should talk to their doctors before drinking city tap water, after tests from the Bull Run Watershed found two units of cryptosporidium in a 50-liter water sample Tuesday.

Water bureau officials said drinking from the tap should be safe for most people. There's a small risk of diarrhea, vomiting and other stomach problems, but people with healthy immune systems should recover without medical treatment.

People with AIDS, cancer or other immune conditions could be at risk of life-threatening gastrointestinal illness if they ingest the water. The water bureau suggests they should consult with medical professionals about whether it is safe for them.

The warning extends beyond Portland city limits to other communities that obtain all or some of their drinking water from Bull Run, including Sandy, Tualatin, Gresham and surrounding water districts that collectively serve close to a million people.

Portland is under state and federal orders to start treating water, and has plans to build a treatment system by 2027 at an estimated cost of about \$850 million.

Correction: An earlier version of this story incorrectly identified cryptosporidium as a bacteria. OPB regrets the error.