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Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission

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April 12, 2018

Mayor Ted Wheeler and Members of Portland City Council
Portland City Hall
1221 SW Fourth Ave
Portland, OR 97204

Dear Mayor Wheeler and City Commissioners:

On December 14, 2017, the Planning and Sustainability Commission (PSC) received a staff briefing on the South Portland Addressing Project. The current project originated with the South Portal project, with residents of South Waterfront complaining of difficulties of wayfinding and deliveries due to “leading zero” addresses. Because of the eastward curvature of the Willamette River, it is necessary to use a leading zero to differentiate addresses east and west of this dividing line, which generally follows SW Naito Parkway and SW View Point Terrace. Additional background that was presented at the briefing follows our recommendation in this letter on page 2.

The PSC then held a public hearing on the South Portland Addressing Project on March 13, 2018, and voted unanimously (9-0) in favor of the sixth quadrant.

In recommending the project, however, PSC members asked staff to continue to work on four outstanding issues:

1. Work with the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) and other entities (utilities, driver’s licenses, etc.) with whom property owners transact business to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Following the PSC hearing, staff confirmed with USPS that the postal service creates “aliases” in their system for multiple versions of street names including historical names and maintains these in perpetuity, exceeding the five-year transition period specified in Chapter 17.93 of Portland City Code.

2. Prepare a helpful mailed guide to property owners reminding them of entities with whom they should update their addresses, and post this guide on line as well.

This guide will be published on the project website at www.sixthsextant.com, which will be up through May 2025, when the Southwest street signs and addresses are retired.

3. Provide adequate advance lead time of the addressing changes.

The new addresses and street names will not be effective until May 2020, and an additional notification of the final addresses will be made in early 2020.



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4. PBOT should make addressing changes beyond removing the leading zero and changing Southwest to South in response to property owners' individual concerns about wayfinding issues that will not be solved solely with removal of leading zero and changing Southwest to South.

As background, staff provided the following information for PSC members that may also be helpful for Council members in making your decision about this project:

- The leading zero addressing is a significant issue for 9-1-1 dispatching. Recent testing of an upgrade to the telephone dispatch system found that calls from leading zero addresses failed testing. Even when the system works as intended, the leading zero still requires a validation step by 9-1-1 dispatchers to ascertain a caller's correct location, and that a caller is not confused and actually east of the dividing line instead of west of the dividing line. In addition to poor customer service, this results in additional 9-1-1- dispatching time, which can contribute to 9-1-1 calls being on hold; it also requires training of 9-1-1 dispatchers and all emergency response personnel, despite that very few calls actually originate from the leading zero addressing area. Training these personnel and having to program technology workarounds is not an efficient use of City resources. The 9-1-1 system currently has a functioning interim workaround to make the system work, but it still leaves the process of address validation, which is subject to human error.
- No addresses will be changed before May 2020, which provides time for businesses to use up printed material, and for internal City testing to be done on City databases, such as the water and sewer billing system, permit system, police citation system, etc. The exact date of the physical switchover of street names by street will vary according to Maintenance Operations crews' availability, and this will be communicated in early 2020 just prior to the change.
- PBOT is planning to reach out to utilities and other providers with an address correspondence database well before the May 2020 final implementation date to enable global updating of addresses. The new corporate geographic information system (CGIS) centerline that is "pushed out" on an annual basis will incorporate the new South Portland addressing, and that will be reiterated during the 5-year transition period. We can't force providers to use it, so we will try to reach out to Google, Amazon, etc., but it is very unlikely the most major providers wouldn't already be taking advantage of the published annual map updates.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the review of this project and for considering our recommendations.

Sincerely,



Katherine Schultz
Chair

