



# CITY OF PORTLAND

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Portland Completes the Next Step in Gresham Land-Use Process for Public Safety Communications Tower**

Portland, OR – The cities of Gresham and Portland have reached the next phase of the land-use process for the upgrade to the public safety and emergency communications microwave transmission tower on Walter's Hill in Gresham. This is a regional radio communications tower used by emergency service providers.

On Friday, the City of Portland will provide additional information for the project, per the request last fall by the City of Gresham.

The tower would provide microwave transmissions for emergency responders throughout the region, including cities such as Fairview, Gresham, Portland and Sandy; Multnomah County; east county school districts; and AMR ambulance services.

Gresham Mayor Shane Bemis has opposed the emergency communications tower, which would be visible from downtown Gresham.

Mayor Charlie Hales and Mayor Bemis met this week to discuss a variety of issues, including this one. They also spoke last week at the U.S. Conference of Mayors in Washington, D.C.

"While the land-use process continues, we hope to work with Gresham staff to see if we can find a way to meet all interests. I'm optimistic that we can find some common ground," Hales said.

The tower is part of a larger regional radio network serving the metropolitan region. While this particular tower serves east Multnomah County, the entire region will benefit from the increased radio communication capabilities.

The initial land use application was filed with Gresham officials in August. After reviewing the application, Gresham asked for additional information, which will be submitted Friday. Upon receipt, the entire application will be reviewed for completeness. If Gresham staff determine the application to be complete, there will be a comment period, followed by a staff decision.

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At the request of Gresham officials, Portland conducted an independent assessment to determine if alternate sites would provide equal benefit. While the land-use process proceeds, Portland staff will continue to share results of the assessment and all other research with the Gresham staff to ensure all options are explored.

“Upgrades to the larger public safety radio communications network are dependent on the capabilities this tower will provide,” said Ben Berry, Chief Technology Officer for Portland. “Locations are limited for a tower that will provide the needed coverage and increased capabilities in a disaster or large-scale event requiring emergency response. We are open to other ideas, but so far, our assessments have shown this to be the best option.”

Mayor Hales said he appreciates the position of Gresham leaders on this issue. “The beauty of Walters Hill is a very real issue for Gresham, and we respect that,” Hales said. “Making sure our emergency communications are robust enough to handle emergencies is a region-wide issue, and the city’s of Gresham and Portland will continue to work together – with all our partner cities, counties and first-responders – to come up with the best plan to protect the region.”

Regional public safety radio network partners include:

- Gresham Fire and Emergency Services
- Gresham Police
- Gresham Environmental Services
- American Medical Response (AMR)
- Multnomah Education Service District
- Multnomah County Emergency Management
- Multnomah County Parole and Probation
- Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office
- Troutdale Police
- Fairview Police
- Clackamas County Sheriff
- Portland Fire and Rescue
- Portland Police Bureau
- Oregon State Police
- Boring Fire
- Federal Bureau of Investigations
- Alcohol Tobacco & Firearms
- Drug Enforcement Agency
- Federal Protective Services
- David Douglas School District
- Parkrose School District
- Centennial School District
- Reynolds School District
- Mount Hood Community College
- Other Public Safety agencies that travel into or through East County

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