

## Portland budget focuses on 'basic needs of the city'

Posted by [acarpent](#) May 01, 2009 06:00AM

Some unexpected revenue and cuts elsewhere will allow Portland to keep open a fire station targeted for closure, maintain police services and retain some neighborhood programs, including the popular abandoned car haul-away service.

At least that's what Mayor Sam Adams hopes in releasing his budget for 2009-10. He will release the spending plan today.

"I would describe this budget as focused on the basic needs of the city," Adams said in an interview Thursday.

The mayor's budget will increase some park fees, raise parking rates and increase water and sewer rates. But the city's general fund would be cut \$8.8 million from the \$375.7 million needed to provide all general fund services at their current levels.

The budget slices 159 positions, but because of attrition and a hiring freeze, that probably will mean only about 40 city workers will lose jobs.

Adams said an infusion of \$12.3 million in unexpected revenue will allow the city to save some programs that had been on the chopping block. They include housing programs and neighborhood livability programs such as graffiti eradication.

The additional money comes from three sources: higher-than-expected business license revenue, lower bond interest rates and spending cuts in the current budget that led to a higher starting balance for next year.

Money from the federal stimulus package, administrative savings and the switch from five to three police precincts will allow the Police Bureau to escape major cuts, Adams said. There will be no cuts to mounted patrol, the juvenile response unit or neighborhood response teams.

At the same time, Adams wants to transfer \$1.8 million that the Police Bureau has set aside for hiring new officers to the general fund contingency.

He proposed that the city hire four new 9-1-1 operators to handle the increased radio traffic that would result from cutting precincts.

The Fire Bureau wouldn't have to close one station as had been proposed, and one-time money would restore cuts to two rescue units.

Citing an 11 percent increase in homelessness and expected cuts in county and state social services, Adams focused a big chunk of the extra one-time money on housing programs, such as shelters and job services.

### What's next

**Hearing:** The City Council has scheduled a hearing on the mayor's proposed budget for 6 p.m. May 21 at Mt. Tabor Middle School, 5800 S.E. Ash St.

**Schedule:** The council must approve a budget by the beginning of the fiscal year, July 1.

"I expect a lot more misery related to homelessness," he said.

Adams proposed spending one-time money to pursue his campaign to lower the area's high school dropout rate, in part through a job program for at-risk youths.

He can't fill an expected \$75 million funding gap for schools in Multnomah County, Adams said, but he proposed spending \$265,000 for a program to boost jobs for 5,500 young people.

"This summer, we will see the highest youth unemployment rate ever recorded," he said.

On transportation, Adams said if the state provides at least \$15 million to the city, he would propose spending \$8 million for replacing the county-owned Sellwood Bridge as the local match to make the project eligible for federal money.

"The Sellwood Bridge is my highest roadway and vehicle priority," he said.

The mayor proposed raising city parking fees by 25 cents an hour, but he dropped an earlier plan to extend parking meters by two hours from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. He did propose charging for parking on Sunday afternoons, however.

He proposed a \$500,000 bicycle infrastructure improvement fund, to be paid for with utility franchise fees.

His budget also keeps the city's abandoned-auto program, which had been slated for elimination. Cars parked on city streets that are unregistered or appear to be junked can be tagged and then towed if not moved in 24 hours.

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### JeanAlice says...

Where is all the money for Merritt Paulson and his soccer deal?

Posted on 05/01/09 at 7:55AM

### torridjoe says...

It was never part of the general fund budget, JeanAlice. It's in the form of bonds, paid back through increased property tax revenues over time.

Posted on 05/01/09 at 9:40AM

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