



January 29, 2010

To: Joseph Gray, City Manager; Nicholas Mavodones, Mayor; Michael Bobinsky, Public Services; James Craig, Police Chief; Fred LaMontagne, Fire Chief; John Peverada, Parking Manager; Kevin Donaghue, District 1 Councilor

Re: FY2011 Budget Request Input

As outlined in Article IV, Chapter 9 of the Portland City Code, the Peaks Island Council was established in order to provide the residents of Peaks Island a different method of gathering input from its residents as to issues of concern to them and to provide such input to the members of the City Council. In this, the start of our third year of existence, we will be attempting to put into one single document a clear outline of what we perceive to be the major issues and needs confronting Peaks Island in the year ahead.

In our initial two years of existence we learned how to marshal our facts, hopefully apply some logic and approach that department of the city that could resolve our needs. What we are attempting to do this year is to inject our issues and needs into the budget process for Fiscal Year 2011 and attempt to get in front of the process rather than interact with a department after its budget has been established.

We are acutely aware of the financial issues currently facing all of us with the numerous cutbacks in state funding. To assist you, as the decision makers, the Island Council prioritized the eleven funding requests as to what we believe are the most important issues facing Peaks Island. This prioritized list is outlined on Page 2 of this document.

On the following pages, we've attached a summary outline and estimated costs broken down between the various departments as well as a summary outline prioritized by the Peaks Island Council. We've also outlined and estimated the costs for two major areas that do not specifically fall within a single department we've labeled as "Parking and Transportation Issues" and "Community Sustainability Issues". Following the summary outlines is a more detailed explanation of why we believe these issues need to be addressed in the current budget process.

We are available for answering any questions we've raised with these issues.

Sincerely,

Michael Richards, Chair, Peaks Island Council
Cc Mike Murray, Islands Liaison and City Council Finance Committee Members

Parking & Transportation Issues (Formerly titled the \$50K Program)

-Continue the funding of existing summer passes for middle and high school students, the funding of transportation for private middle and high school students to the mainland and year round resident vouchers for Cliff Island and Great Diamond Island at a cost of \$5,000

-Continue the funding of summer passes for the middle and high school students from Peaks Island at an estimated cost of \$12,000

-Continue the funding of transportation for private middle and high school students to the mainland only at an estimated cost of \$10,000

-Continue to assist in the funding of low income/elderly/handicapped transportation on the ITS (Island Transportation Service) at an estimated cost of \$5,000

-Initiate a one year only subsidy program of \$20 per month for 100 year round city islanders to park in the new Ocean Gateway Garage. This would have a cost of \$24,000 and would be funded by the reduction in monthly payments by the City for unfilled parking spaces in the new garage. In short, for one year, the monthly cost would be \$110 and after one year the normal parking rate would apply. A two month sign up period only would be offered to city island residents. This would act as a stimulus to remove the city as soon as possible from the additional amounts paid the garage developer and free up the usage of surrounding surface lot potential parking areas. Based on the current lease agreement, Portland is paying the developer \$100 per space per month for up to 310 spaces for five years. This proposed program has a definitive end date and could result in significant savings if successful.

Community Sustainability Issues

-Initiate a municipal property tax rebate program. This program would reimburse any city resident who had applied for and received a property tax rebate from the State Circuit Breaker Program. The amount would be equal to 20% of the amount received from the State. It would apply only to property tax rebates and not rental rebates. Based on data received from the State, an average of \$2.8 million in property tax rebates were distributed to an average of 3,700 Portland households for the 2004 through 2007 tax years. 20% of this would result in an additional \$560,000 of property tax assistance to residential property owners in Portland. It would be a straight line item allocation in the City Budget. This program's intention is to create an investment in the residents of Portland in order to maintain the presence of a family oriented middle class diversified community. Peaks Island has averaged 130 households over this time which would represent approximately \$20,000 out of the \$560,000 total cost.

-Initiate a subsidy to Casco Bay Lines in an amount equal to the property taxes collected from the City islands on behalf of the METRO. Based on the most recent property tax bill, 1.7% was for the METRO. With Peaks Island paying in over \$5.4 million in property taxes, over \$92,000 was for the METRO. Taking into account the property taxes collected from Cliff Island and the Diamonds, a figure of \$125,000 can be seen as a reasonable request for a small portion of the property taxes collected from the City

islands which can and should be appropriated to meet the public transportation needs of year round City island residents similar to the mainland residents use of METRO. Based on public information provided by the Assessor's Office to the Island Institute in mid 2008 for an economic study, the taxable land residential parcels on Peaks Island totaled \$306,245,330. Based on a mil rate of \$17.74, \$5,432,792 was paid by Peaks Island residents in property taxes for FY2009.

Public Service Needs

-In the CIP budget, continue road work on existing paved sections of the island needing repairs at a maximum cost of \$100,000 and continue annual grading operations on unpaved island roads

Restore a full time position to the Peaks Island Public Service Operation. This position would be responsible for maintaining the down front area, maintaining a swap shed at the Transfer Station and operating an ongoing chipping operation.

-Increase the attention to the recreational needs of middle/high school students. In the January, 2010 issue of the Peaks Island Star, the newsletter of the island's service agencies & other community news, the Portland Recreational and Facilities Management individual fills a page of activities sponsored by the Recreation Department. Not one activity was for our young adults. This is an area that needs attention.

Public Safety Needs

-Reinstate the previous policy of coverage 24/7/365 of two triple trained public safety officers being stationed on Peaks Island.

-Fully restore the amounts necessary to ensure Peaks Island of coverage of two EMT certified police personnel with fire training at all times at a cost of approximately \$20-30,000. \$15,000 was previously restored in the FY2010 budget.

-Add the position of paramedic to the regularly scheduled professionals on the island. This position could be filled in time by a current officer on Peaks Island who was willing to complete the rigorous training required for the certification and who, once completing their certification, would receive equal compensation to mainland paramedics.