

Security Increases in Downtown Parks

Riverfront safety drives action

Responding to the growing numbers of visitors at Portland's riverfront, Portland Parks & Recreation is taking steps to make Tom McCall Waterfront Park and Vera Katz East Bank Esplanade safer and more accessible for those who want to use them.

The plan is to add two security officers patrolling the river walkways, as well as Couch Park in Northwest Portland.

The two security officers would patrol the parks from 7 a.m. to midnight and have backup help available if necessary. One of the officers will be armed.

The security personnel will be provided by Portland Patrol Inc, which is under contract with the Portland Business Alliance.

"The livability of downtown is at a critical juncture, and we must continue to maintain the highest level of safety and cleanliness in our parks," said Commissioner Dan Saltzman.

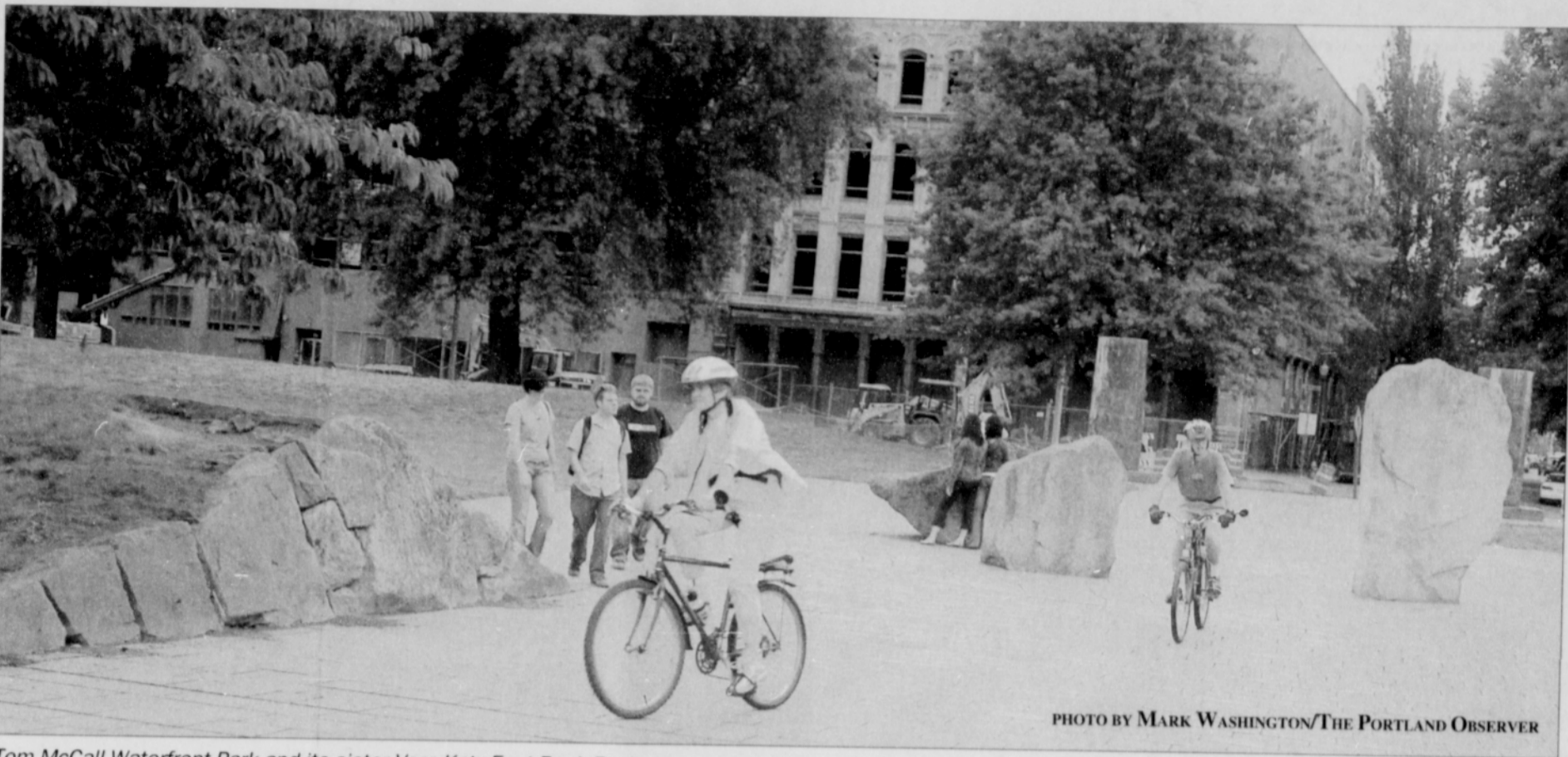


PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Tom McCall Waterfront Park and its sister Vera Katz East Bank Esplanade are recreational epicenters for jogging, cycling and relaxation. Both river walkways have gained visitors, calling for increased security.

Last fall, the parks bureau added nine armed security officers to downtown, bringing the total of security officers to 22.

"We are being reactive and pro-active in providing security at our parks," said Lydia Kowalski, a senior manager for

the parks bureau. "We are concerned enough about the safety and cleanliness in our parks to propose these additional mea-

sures." Recently, more graffiti and vandalism has sprung up at the East Bank Esplanade and

Waterfront Park, which parks officials say could lead to a decrease in park visits among casual users.

Jefferson Community Breakfast Saturday

Support for area school cultivated

All families, neighbors and business people in the Jefferson cluster are invited to join Portland Public Schools and Jefferson High School leaders for a free Community Breakfast from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Sept. 23 in the school cafeteria at 5210 N. Kerby.

"The Jefferson PTSA (Parent Teacher Student Association) wants this Community Breakfast to continue the dialogue among all of us who love Jefferson and want the best learning environment and class offerings for the youth in our neighborhood," said Glenda Walker, PTSA president.

"We're reaching out to the community to hear their dreams for Jefferson and to build partnerships with feeder schools and the business community," said Harris.

Also greeting guests will be Superintendent Vicki Phillips, and Jefferson's new principal Leon Dudley who will make a brief "Focus on Jefferson" presentation.

The major part of the morning will be small group conversations around tables where every person can share his or her dreams and visions for Jefferson. Results of these conversations will be collected to guide Jefferson and PPS staff in decisions and recommendations regarding the future of

Jefferson. In addition to Jefferson High School, schools in the cluster are Beach, Chief Joseph, Faubion, Humboldt, King, Vernon, Woodlawn, Ockley Green and Tubman.

"We invite all families and friends of Jefferson to march with us in the parade to return Jefferson to its tradition of excellence in academics, arts and athletics," Dudley said in urging people to attend the Community Breakfast.

Minimum Wage Increase Coming

A 30-cents-per-hour increase to Oregon's minimum wage will go into effect at the beginning of the New Year in January.

The cost-of-living adjustment was announced Friday by Oregon Labor Commissioner Dan Gardner. It means Oregon's minimum wage will rise from \$7.50 per hour to \$7.80 per hour.

"The rising cost of living makes a serious dent in many workers' paychecks, but it hits the lowest paid in the worst

way," Gardner said. "Oregon's minimum wage law makes sure these workers' wages keep pace with rising costs."

In November 2002, Oregon voters passed a law that annually adjusts the minimum wage for inflation based on increases in the Consumer Price Index.

Recently, California raised its minimum wage to \$8 an hour starting in 2008. The federal minimum wage is \$5.15 an hour and hasn't increased since 1997.

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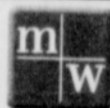
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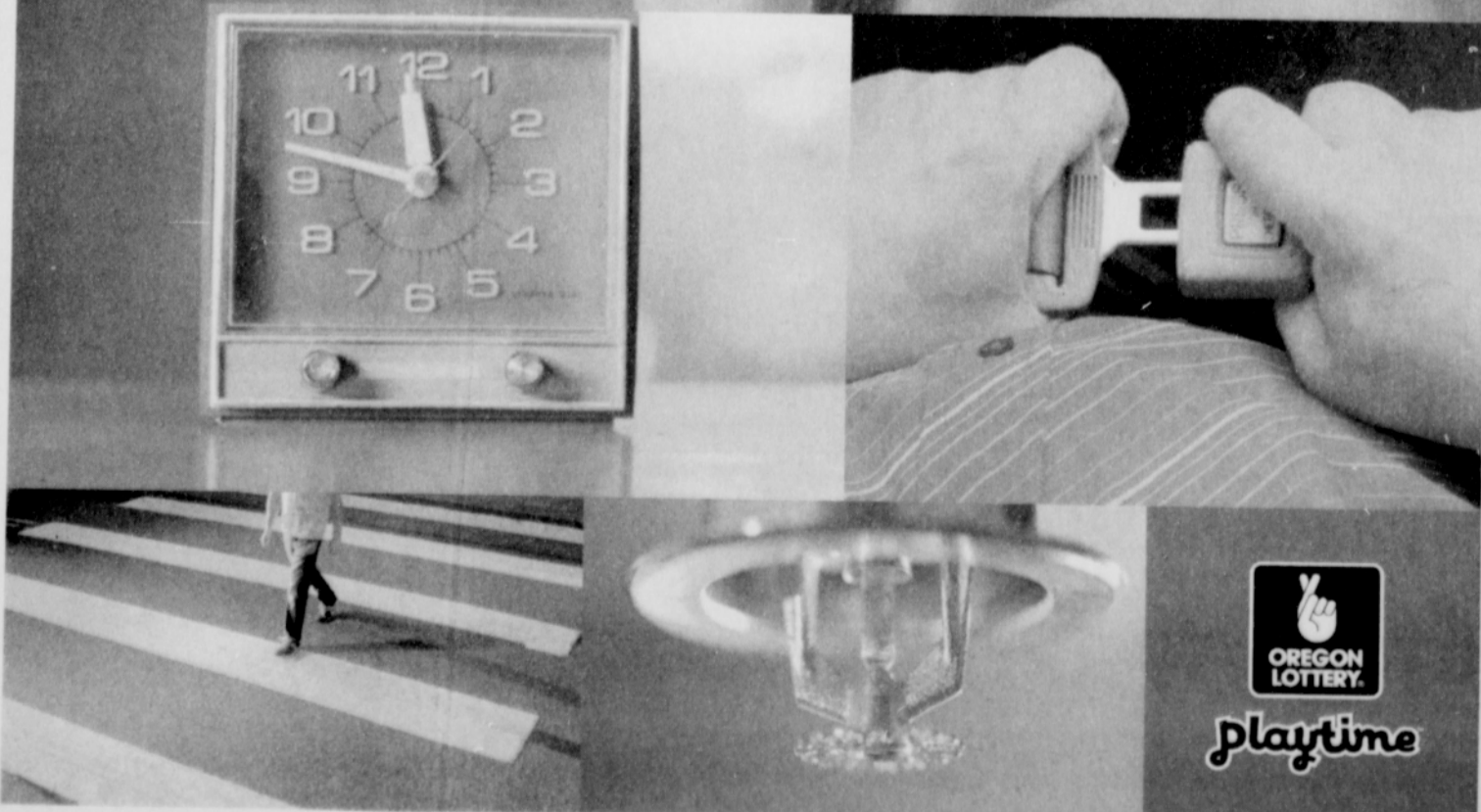
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