

The Oregonian

Portland Leaders Denounce Federal Stance on Marijuana in Letter to Oregon's Top Prosecutor

*By Jessica Floum
January 10, 2018*

All five Portland city commissioners sent a letter Monday to U.S. Attorney for Oregon Billy Williams, opposing the U.S. Department of Justice's reversal of the Obama administration's hands-off approach to the legal marijuana market in Oregon and other states.

"We strongly oppose any action from the Justice Department on cannabis enforcement that would subvert the will of voters in Oregon and other states," said the letter signed Mayor Ted Wheeler and the other commissioners.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions said in a Jan. 4 memo that the Obama administration position, outlined in a well-known Cole Memo, undermined "the rule of law." Sessions wrote that the Justice Department will instead let federal prosecutors decide how to enforce federal marijuana law.

The city commissioners wrote that they were "cautiously encouraged" by Williams' comments on his plans for enforcement. In his first public comments on the subject, Williams told The Oregonian/OregonLive that he plans to be "methodical and thoughtful" about putting the new federal policy into action. He said he was troubled, however, by overproduction of marijuana in Oregon that he said leads to black market exports to other states. And he questioned why Oregon hasn't limited the number of licenses it issues to contain marijuana production.

The Portland commissioners expressed concern over the potential disproportionately negative impact of marijuana enforcement on communities of color.

"We know that cannabis prohibition has failed," they wrote. "It has failed to keep our children safe, it has failed law enforcement, and it has especially failed communities of color disproportionately targeted and prosecuted for low-level drug offenses."

Commissioners said the prospect of federal overreach into Oregon's marijuana market and the harm it would cause to the local business community concerned them. There are hundreds of marijuana producers, retailers, processors and wholesalers in Portland alone, they wrote.

They are "woven into the fabric of our business community, contributing thousands of well-paying jobs and millions of dollars of economic activity."

The commissioners wrote that state and local oversight can ensure the safe consumption of cannabis for consumers and that marijuana products stay out of the hands of children.

"The cannabis business community contributes to our state and local economy," the letter said. "The city of Portland will continue to stand with our cannabis business community."

The Portland Tribune

City Plans to Repave, Reconfigure SW Naito

By KOIN 6 News
January 10, 2018

Open house on the major street project is scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 10 in downtown Portland.

Portland has big plans to improve Southwest Naito Parkway.

Officials plan to repave and reconfigure the busy street on the south end from the I-405 overpass to the Hawthorne Bridge. The Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) said there will be safety improvements for drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians. Currently there are no bike lanes on that section of Naito.

"We are going to add a two-way bike path and pedestrian path separated from car traffic it's going to make it safer and more comfortable for everyone to access the waterfront," PBOT spokesman Dylan Rivera said.

The changes will also allow for a connection to the "Better Naito" project in the summer, which closes down a lane for access to Tom McCall Waterfront Park.

In addition to rebuilding the street, the section of Naito from Southwest Harrison to Jefferson foresees:

- New traffic signals, including a dedicated signal for vehicles accessing the Hawthorne Bridge and a pedestrian crossing signal to access Pettygrove Park, the Lovejoy Fountain, and the Halprin Blocks.
- New bicycle and pedestrian facilities on the east side of the street, including a new path and sidewalk. Currently, no bicycle or pedestrian facilities exist on the east side of SW Naito.
- Updated signal timing to improve traffic operations through the corridor.

Improved crossings at major intersections to improve safety.

According to PBOT, funding for the project comes from several sources, including: Transportation System Development Charges, which are fees paid by developers to help manage population growth; the Fixing Our Streets program, funded by a local gas tax approved by Portland voters in May 2016 and a heavy vehicle use tax; and the Oregon Department of Transportation.

There will be an open house from 4:30 to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 10., at Portland Center University's Center for Executive and Professional Education, 1500 S.W, 1st Suite 100.

You can learn more about the project at www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/75403?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery.

Sources Say: Not Filing for City Races Didn't Limit Fundraising

*By Jim Redden
January 11, 2017*

Plus, women likely to dominate Portland government in 2019, with a majority on the City Council and in the City Auditor's Office.

Two potential candidates who did not officially announce or file for the City Council raised more money last year than those who did.

The top fundraiser was Portland architect Stuart Emmons, who says he will decide this month whether to run for the seat being vacated by Commissioner Dan Saltzman or the one held by Commissioner Nick Fish, who is battling cancer. Even without committing, Emmons received \$80,175 in cash contributions last year.

In second place was Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith, who raised \$57,820 to run for Saltzman's seat, even though she did not officially announce and file until after the first of the year, to avoid having to resign her current position.

Oregon Secretary of State Dennis Richardson declared Smith a candidate anyway and fined her \$250 for not updating her campaign committee filing.

In third place was NAACP Portland chapter President Jo Ann Hardesty, who raised \$56,365 last year to run for Saltzman's seat. Just behind her was Fish, who collected \$56,075. He has filed for re-election.

Final figures, deadlines

The remaining City Council candidates trailed badly in their fundraising efforts last year. The others running for Commissioner Dan Saltzman's seat are Mayor Ted Wheeler staffer Andrea Valderrama, who raised \$15,733, and Northwest Portland neighborhood activist Felica Williams, who raised \$8,803 but also received a \$20,000 loan.

Fish's only opponent so far, environmentalist Julia DeGraw, raised the least in 2017, just \$6,246.

The 2018 primary election will be held Tuesday, May 15. Until March 3, contributions must be reported within 30 days of being received. From March 4 through April 2, contributions must be reported by April 10. After that, they must be reported within seven days, until the election.

Women likely to dominate next City Council

At this point in the 2018 elections, there's a strong possibility that women will make up a majority of the five-member City Council next year for the first time.

The two women on the council, commissioners Chloe Eudaly and Amanda Fritz, are not up for re-election this year. The four candidates currently running for Commissioner Dan Saltzman's seat are women. Three are minorities. The only man who filed for it so far, former Oregon Public Broadcasting newscaster Raymond Spencer, dropped out after being criticized for running against them.

Even if Stuart Emmons enters the race, he has lost to a woman in a council race before. Emmons received 14 percent of the vote when he ran against Commissioner Steve Novick in the 2016 May primary election. That was one point less than bookstore owner Chloe Eudaly, who finished second but went on to defeat Novick in a November runoff.

And the Portland City Auditor will most likely remain a woman. No one has yet filed against incumbent Mary Hull Caballero.

The Portland Mercury

Northwest Portland Has Begun Denying Parking Permits to Some Apartment Residents

*By Dirk VanderHart
January 10, 2018*

And Similar Policies Could Soon Spread to Other Areas

IN LATE 2016, Portland City Council let parking policy in the city's densest neighborhood off its leash.

For decades, parking permits in the city had been held at relatively low costs, and available to those who lived or worked within a permitted zone. But in bustling Northwest Portland, where transportation officials have at times issued more than two permits for each available parking space, it was no longer enough. Permits in the district are known as "hunting licenses" for the length of time residents and area employees spend trolling for a rarefied free spot.

So on its last day of work in 2016, the city council took action. In a little-heralded move, it gave the Northwest district permission to take up stronger tools for managing its limited on-street spaces. The only problem? Critics say the scheme the city wound up approving is discriminatory, letting homeowners have as many permits as they want while withholding them from some tenants of large buildings.

Now, as the city council prepares to consider spreading similar policies, fans of parking management are scratching their heads at Northwest's new regulations, and landlords are hinting at a lawsuit.

The Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) "has adopted a program in Northwest that has a very discriminatory effect," attorney Michael Lilly told the city council recently, speaking on behalf of landlord group Multifamily Northwest (MFNW). "It's also, by the way, not legal."

The city of Portland currently has 18 permit "zones," where visitors are limited in how long they can park on the street, but residents or employees with permits can remain as long as they please. The zones were designed to address the issue of commuters parking in a neighborhood all day and traveling elsewhere, but many say Portland's outgrown that model. Stronger parking regulations have long been pushed by planning wonks, who say setting a higher price on street parking can cut congestion, increase use of mass transit and other transportation options, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions—to say nothing of making it easier to find a free spot.

In Northwest, the stiffer regulations council okayed took a number of forms. Beginning September 1, permit holders in Zone M—the permitting area that stretches from I-405 to the foot of the West Hills, and from West Burnside to Northwest Vaughn—can now receive subsidized TriMet fares and Biketown memberships if they relinquish their parking pass. Permits now cost \$180, up from \$60, a raise some hoped would spur people to opt out

But the changes also pick on residents of large apartment complexes. While homeowners or people in small buildings are guaranteed a parking pass (or even multiple passes), the policy says only 60 percent of units in buildings of 30 or more units can get a permit. And any future

buildings constructed with 30 units or more would be held to a stricter standard: Just 40 percent of units will be eligible for a pass.

It's yet another example of Portland's struggle with rapid growth. For years, residents near the city's fastest expanding commercial centers have complained that large new apartment complexes are bringing in car owners who eat up formerly available parking spaces. The outcry was so intense in 2013 that City Council wound up requiring buildings of 30 units or more to provide some off-street parking. The council has since rescinded that requirement, fearing it adds to rising rents in a housing crisis, but the neighborhood angst remains.

The new rules in Northwest have so far had a relatively minor effect. According to PBOT, there are only eight people on waiting lists for parking permits.

Even so, most people the Mercury talked to criticized the new regulations.

"It's hard to make an argument that people in those buildings shouldn't have the same access everyone else does," says Tony Jordan, who founded the group Portlanders for Parking Reform and who frequently presses for more and better parking regulation. "You should find a way to fairly distribute that parking to anyone who's in the area who wants it."

Even Rick Michaelson, chair of a parking stakeholder advisory committee that recommended the new regulations, says they're not great. He concedes it's not fair that a 29-unit building, for instance, is eligible for 29 parking permits, while a 30-unit building is eligible for just 18.

"That's just a mistake," Michaelson said recently. "There is room for improvement in the way it was done."

And while Michaelson believes his neighborhood will eventually make the regulations more palatable—say, by creating a sliding scale for limiting apartment buildings' permits—he's hesitant to speculate on specifics.

Northwest Portland's experience matters. On January 24, the city council is scheduled to take up a resolution that could expand the bolstered parking tools to other parts of the city—and there are plenty hoping to enact stricter rules. In the last year, at least eight neighborhoods have written city officials urging permissions to use new parking tools.

"Parking availability for our residents and businesses has become scarcer with each new building," said an April 2017 letter [PDF] from the Boise Neighborhood Association to Mayor Ted Wheeler, "and we believe that applying some of [the] tools in the kit can help ensure that Boise remains a vibrant place to live, work, and play."

Sam Noble helped write a similar letter [PDF] on behalf of the Buckman Community Association, which he co-chairs. The letter raised the familiar specter of "70 percent of apartment dwellers who have cars, but don't have a place to keep them except on the street," but in Noble's opinion, parking in the neighborhood is underpriced, and all residents and employees should have an equal shot at paying more for it. He's just not entirely confident many in the neighborhood will agree.

"I don't doubt for a second that someone will find a way to try to discriminate" if the city enables stricter parking rules, Noble told the Mercury. "I don't doubt that that will happen as quickly as it possibly could."

City officials, by the way, appear perfectly at ease with Northwest Portland's new rules.

Since last August, MFNW lawyer Lilly has argued that the new permit policy violates the Oregon Constitution, which prohibits laws that grant privileges to one class of citizens and not another.

Lilly says a letter to Transportation Commissioner Dan Saltzman sent before the policy went into effect was largely ignored, and that transportation officials downplayed his concerns in a meeting. He's been trying to set up meetings with individual city commissioners since last week, he says, but hasn't heard anything back.

Asked whether its new rules are constitutional, PBOT only responded that the program "has been reviewed by city attorneys." Saltzman's office says the commissioner plans to meet with Lilly and city attorneys to discuss the issue.

If nothing changes, it's not hard to suspect that a lawsuit could be in the works. After all, Lilly's clients at MFNW have not been shy about taking the city to court over its policies.

But when asked about the possibility, Lilly only said, "Instead of just dodging it, I'm going to tell you that I'm not going to answer your question... In almost 40 years of practicing law, I have discovered that threats of lawsuits are usually worthless. You either do it or you don't do it."