

The Oregonian

Portland mayor sets expectations for Inauguration Day marches: No blocking of freeways, MAX trains

By Maxine Bernstein

January 18, 2017

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler said he will rely on the police chief and his leadership for how best to respond to the anticipated mass of demonstrators expected to fill city streets before, on and after Inauguration Day, but he said the city won't tolerate violence and vandalism.

In stark contrast to his predecessor, Wheeler also made it clear that police won't allow marchers to gain access to freeways; will work to keep the regional mass transit, particularly MAX trains, from being blocked; and won't allow a limited number of people to cause damage to the city "under the cover" of otherwise peaceful protests.

"I want to make it clear that will not be something that we will tolerate as a community," the mayor said, standing with Chief Mike Marshman in the City Hall atrium Wednesday afternoon.

The mayor said he doesn't want the city to be defined by the violent footage that marred Election Night and post-Election Night protests in November and was "broadcast all around the planet," showing people smashing out car windshields or storefronts with bats, or setting newspaper stands or trash bins on fire.

"That's not who we are," the mayor said, raising both hands to punctuate his message. "We are an active and engaged and connected community ... We're not going to let people intent on violence or vandalism to define who we are."

Yet the mayor also urged the community to have reasonable expectations, noting the difficult task that law enforcement faces trying to balance the First Amendment rights of protesters yet avoid damage to property and ensure the public's safety.

"How do you separate the two? Where do you draw the line? There's no clear template. ... I'm not a police officer. I'm not an expert on crowd control. I will rely on the chief and his leadership," Wheeler said. "But I also want people to have a realistic expectation for what they're able to do."

Wheeler said he intends to be at the Portland Bureau of Emergency Communication, the command center during the protests. Patrol officers at the Police Bureau have undergone an additional four hours of crowd control training. Days off have been curtailed from Wednesday through the weekend, and officers' shifts have been changed from 10 hours to 12 hours.

The Police Bureau has been in close contact with the organizers' of Saturday's 44-block "Women's March on Portland," which is expected to start at the Morrison Bridge at noon and draw about 30,000 participants. Marshman said police have attempted to connect with organizers of events planned for Friday but "either had no response or not a helpful response."

"We will do our level best to make sure people have the freedom to move around and lawfully protest," the chief said.

The mayor also urged people protesting peacefully to alert police if they see others causing property damage or violence.

"Keep your eyes open. ... Call 'em out," Wheeler said. "Let police know."

Rebekah Brewis, executive legal director of PDX Trans Pride, a nonprofit group that is sponsoring the Women's March, said, "I personally think it's important for us to self-police."

The mayor said he's confident the police have learned from November's events. He believes his role, he said, is to set expectations and communicate them clearly to the public.

The mayor said he's received many calls, emails and text messages from members of the community, particularly from business owners, who are concerned and have some anxiety about the upcoming demonstrations.

"Vandalism hurts our community. Most businesses in Portland are in fact local businesses, and they are an integral part to our community," Wheeler said. "It's also our objective to keep our protesters safe."

Portland's response to snow and ice fell short, Mayor Ted Wheeler says

*By Jessica Floum
January 17, 2017*

Portland didn't do enough to keep roads cleared and businesses able to operate in the aftermath of last week's snowstorm, Mayor Ted Wheeler said Tuesday.

Striking an apologetic tone as ice lingered on city streets six days after the bulk of the snow fell, Wheeler said the city's storm response raised questions about its weather preparedness. He hopes to answer those questions in an evaluation to be completed once city officials are out of the throes of the emergency.

"I have been humbled by my first two weeks in office," Wheeler said during a press conference Tuesday. "If I were a better politician I would stand here and defend our response. We've experienced too many street closures. Schools have been closed day after day. Businesses have lost."

The mayor's concerns include whether the city has enough staff, the correct equipment, the right policies and effective public communication tactics to keep the city safely running in extreme weather conditions. He also plans to examine whether the city effectively collaborated with other agencies.

"I can tell you this today: We can do more," Wheeler said.

Some major Portland roads -- and most minor ones -- remained rutted with ice and packed snow through mid-day Tuesday, when rain and a long-awaited thaw began to wash it away.

Transportation officials said the ice was virtually untouchable up to that point, given the equipment they had available and the chemicals they're willing to use.

John Brady, a spokesman for the Portland Bureau of Transportation, said city crews cleared what snow they could early in the storm, directing city's 55 snow plows to hit the most important 512 miles of the city's 2,000 miles of roadways.

But once the snow turned to ice, the plows had little effect.

"Once that hard-pack is established, then it's about breaking it up with chains or using deicer," he said.

City crews continued to spray liquid deicer on primary and secondary routes, then went back through with plows to scrape off whatever's melted, he said. The crews focused on routes frequented by transit and emergency services, Brady said.

The city purposefully leaves one inch of snow between the plow blade and the road to avoid damaging the roads and the plows, Brady said. The Oregon Department of Transportation also uses rubber-edged plows that leave a thin layer of snow.

In many places, the remaining layer of snow compacted into slick ice and hardened, ridged mounds after cars dragged chains and tires across it.

However, scraping clean the roads to prevent such ice build up is a gamble, roads officials said. Scraping down to the concrete can and has caused millions of dollars of road damage.

ODOT deployed plows that scrape all the way down to the concrete during 2008's storms that dumped 14.9 inches of snow in Portland in December. Spokesman Don Hamilton said they caused \$3 million in damage to the road, in particular by removing reflective lane markers and other markings.

"There's certainly a financial impact to that," he said.

ODOT reported freeways were cleared and dry on Tuesday, but other state-maintained roads were still ice-covered.

Portland deployed its full fleet of 55 snowplows, but it didn't use up its supplies of deicer and road sand, for which it budgeted \$300,000.

The city's resources fall short of cities that frequently deal with snow. Kansas City is roughly Portland's size, with fewer residents but more lane-miles of road, but gets four times as much snow on average. It boasts 180 snow plows and a snow removal budget of \$2.75 million.

Portland's reliance on liquid deicer might also contribute to the persistence of the ice sheets.

The liquid magnesium chloride solution it sprays on roads is an effective treatment before, during and after a storm, said Dale Keep, a snow removal consultant based in Walla Walla, Washington. But it's less effective for removing a layer of ice on the roadway than a solid product because it runs off, he said.

The city and state long ago decided not to use rock salt, which can melt ice already frozen on roadways, because it can contaminate groundwater and corrode roads and vehicles. The agencies' preferred deicer, the magnesium chloride solution mixed with an anti-rust agent, is believed to be less prone to lingering in groundwater.

Both the city and the state have decided to revisit their salt-averse policies in the metro area, and they've used it in limited applications during this storm. Neither agency has a significant supply of road salt available, however.

The Oregon transportation department said its limited use of salt has proven effective in clearing ice from slick slopes. The Portland transportation bureau said it applied salt side-by-side with its usual deicer and saw no significant difference in effectiveness.

Wheeler, however, said the transportation bureau will continue to evaluate whether to use salt on roads.

Transportation Commissioner Dan Saltzman agreed with Wheeler's assessment that the city needs to do more and also committed to assessing areas of improvement.

The bureau planned to start clearing school routes Wednesday morning, he said.

Saltzman commended the round-the-clock work of transportation maintenance workers. "They've been working under challenging, inclement weather to keep the arterials open," he said. "It may not be as smooth as people would like, but they're open."

Wheeler once again called on the community to help. He urged Portlanders to clear their gutters and any ice-clogged storm drains near their homes.

The mayor acknowledged that the city is responsible for clearing roads and storm drains, but said the city only has 300 employees to address its more than 50,000 drains. He encouraged people to help their elderly or disabled neighbors.

Few Portlanders heeded transportation officials' calls to clear the snow from their sidewalks following last week's record snowfall. Many sidewalks remain icy and hazardous as a result.

The city itself also failed to clear residential sidewalks along some of the many park properties it owns. About 130 full-time Portland Parks and Recreation bureau employees attempted to clear stairs and paths to community centers and in high-use parks, said bureau spokesman Mark Ross. But days city workers were told to stay home and limited road access constrained the city's ability to clear all its sidewalks, he said.

"This storm illustrated the point that we have a long way to go," Wheeler said. "My head is still in the game ... I think we can do better, and I'll be transparent about how we can do better."

With a new mayor, Portland should kickstart police reforms to help those with mental illness (Opinion)

*By Guest Columnists Jenny Westberg and Jason Renaud
January 19, 2017*

As Portland shifts leadership from Charlie Hales to Ted Wheeler, it's important to remember one Hales administration failure that continues to threaten the most vulnerable among us.

After more than four years of attempted compliance with legally-prescribed reforms, and despite new hires, media hand-wringing and millions spent on consultants and public process, the city's police have yet to reduce their use of force against people with mental illness.

Force data summary reports now available on the Portland Police Bureau website show that, from spring 2015 through last fall, the number of use-of-force incidents involving persons with mental illness has remained flat, if not slightly increasing.

This apparent lack of improvement could reflect changes in how such incidents are counted and reported. But we suspect there's more going on.

Foremost, the chronic underfunding and anemic management of the public mental health system leaves many people unable to get effective care when it would actually do some good: before the crisis, before the escalation, before the bullets.

Insisting mental health is not city business, Hales failed to engage county and state administrators in any relevant discussion about the problem as it relates to the city. He maintained the "It's not my job" stance, arguing care for people with mental illness is the province of state and county, not city. But thoughtful observers note people with mental illness are patiently petitioning city bureaus, including housing, the Independent Police Review, police and fire; they're giving testimony at City Council, participating in committees, and when they get hurt or killed, filing complaints.

The welfare of the sick and suffering is everyone's business.

Instead, Hales waged a campaign to diminish and deny findings by the Department of Justice that the Portland Police Bureau had a "pattern and practice" of harming people with mental illness. He directed the city attorney to file petty appeals, thereby delaying reform. He refused to meet with a public oversight committee as required by a settlement agreement and failed to support it as members quit in frustration.

People so ill they need police engagement don't respect clearly defined governmental boundaries. They hop from state to county to city to another state or county. This is a well-documented, well-understood consequence of not providing access to mental health care, so wholly a responsibility of all governments. As former County Chair, Wheeler has the experience to understand this consequence, and skills to bring all parties to the discussion.

We need police who are well-trained, well-resourced and accountable, who serve and protect, who treat all Portlanders with compassion and dignity, who don't harm people for being different. Mayor Wheeler can do a lot to move us toward such a future and he should start now.

The Portland Tribune

Portland region's economy fueled by tax dollars

*By Shasta Kearns Moore
January 19, 2017*

A table buried in Portland Public Schools' annual financial report displays some interesting facts about how dependent the region's employment is on government dollars.

Seven out of 10 of the region's largest employers are either government agencies or health care systems. Health care, according to a report released last January from the American Journal of Public Health, also is funded largely by government. (Though it can vary by entity, only a third of the industry as a whole is funded by consumers and other private dollars.)

Tom Potiowsky, the former state economist now chairing the Economics Department at Portland State University, says this is not too different from comparable cities such as Denver, Seattle and San Francisco. The largest employers in many urban areas are governments, health care systems or universities.

One in 10 of the 1 million employees in the Portland area work for one of the region's top 10 employers. This is more than in 2007, when about 7.5 percent did.

Asked what it means in the region for so many people to work for large employers and have their salaries reliant on tax revenue, Potiowsky sort of shrugs.

"In some respects, government employment tends to be more stable than from private companies," he says. But, he cautions, "These issues are always more complex than they seem."

According to a Metro regional government Snapshot report, government accounts for 13 percent of the region's jobs, with another 14 percent in the education and health care category.

While these agencies do have large numbers of employees, they do a lot of different things. If each elementary school, for example, was an independent agency, they would be a tiny employer, Potiowsky says.

"We throw everything in one big pot," he says.

Intel Corp. is the region's largest employer with 18,600 employees. It also was the largest in 2007, with 16,740 employees.

Major health providers Providence Health & Services, Oregon Health & Science University, Kaiser Permanente Northwest, and Legacy Health System round out the top six employers — with grocery giant Fred Meyer interloping at No. 5.

Nike Inc., at seventh, is the only other private company on the Top Ten list.

Portland Public Schools, Multnomah County and the city of Portland rank eighth, ninth and 10th, respectively.

The heads of these organizations tend to make dramatically different amounts of money — Intel CEO Brian Krzanich's salary in 2015 was \$1.1 million, with \$13 million more in other compensation. PPS Interim Superintendent Bob McKean, albeit with a third of the employees in a very different sector, makes less than a quarter of that salary at \$243,600 — and no stock options at schools.

But Potiowsky also doesn't believe salary has a connection to quality management.

"The CEO of Wells Fargo got paid a lot, and his management wasn't all that great, it turns out," he says, referring to an account scandal that led John Stumpf to resign. "To have a lot of employees doesn't have a one-to-one connection with how well they are managed."

Why so few Airbnb permits? Could tax avoidance be a reason?

By Steve Law

January 19, 2017

When Michael Bednarek read a recent Portland Tribune article noting only one in five Airbnb and other short-term rental hosts bothered to get city permits — two years after a city ordinance required them to do so — he got to wondering why.

After all, getting a city permit to rent out spare bedrooms for the night is relatively simple, requiring a \$178 fee and a bare-bones home inspection. The fee can be recouped via a couple days' rent from tourists, and inspectors only check for basic safety requirements: smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors and ways to exit bedrooms during a fire.

Bednarek figures some laggard hosts are trying to stay under the radar to avoid paying state and federal income taxes on their rental earnings.

"These people are earning thousands upon thousands of dollars in income from Airbnb," he says. "I am guessing that if almost none of them are getting the permits, they certainly don't think they have to pay taxes on the income.

"I would bet you dollars to donuts that the compliance rate is in the single digits on people paying taxes on all that income."

That is pure speculation, and tax matters are confidential so it's impossible to know for certain.

But it may partly explain why some 2,500 short-term rental hosts had failed to seek permits to operate legally in Portland as of late November — despite claims by Airbnb, the dominant operator here, that it encourages hosts to get the permits.

Do as we say, not as we do

San Francisco-based Airbnb declined interview requests on the issue raised by Bednarek, instead submitting a two-sentence response via email.

"We expect all of our hosts to follow local laws and have invested significant resources into helping them register, including holding 29 registration workshops and calling 2,000 of our most active hosts," wrote Laura Rillos, the company's press secretary for Portland.

"We've heard from many discouraged hosts that the city's registration process is too complicated," Rillos wrote, "and we remain committed to working with the city to streamline registration and increase compliance."

Yet Airbnb itself does not follow local laws in Portland.

Along with most other short-term rental companies operating here, it ignores a city ordinance requiring it to only list hosts' properties on its website once hosts get permitted.

(As of mid-November, the only company heeding the ordinance was Vacasa, which is based in Portland. But Airbnb also operates a sizable operation here, with more than 350 employees working in Old Town.)

Airbnb, along with a handful of other short-term rental companies, does collect lodging taxes from its Portland listings and delivers the proceeds to the city, Multnomah County and state.

Anecdotal evidence

Kathy Peterman, an Airbnb host in Southeast Portland, hears of many hosts who avoid the permit process for fear of what city inspectors might find, especially in older homes.

"I know a lot of hosts and none of them would ever think that income can't be claimed," Peterman says. "We have talks from H&R Block at our host events. We consult with one another and with Airbnb as hosts to try to do the right thing in regards to permitting. No one that I'm aware of has ever hinted at not claiming their Airbnb income."

Peterman's home inspection took five minutes. But she says hosts with older homes might be required to modify their windows or other parts of their home.

Those could be required for fire-safety reasons.

Airbnb role in income taxes

Airbnb offers a "quick reference guide" for prospective Portland hosts on its website, essentially a checklist to get started. It mentions they need to file for a city business license, notify neighbors, file a permit application and get an inspection.

Another Airbnb web page notes lodging taxes must be paid to Portland, Multnomah County and the state. It makes no reference to state or federal income taxes on earnings. However, a separate Airbnb handout on taxes encourages hosts to consult a tax professional for reporting their income.

Airbnb, as required by the IRS, does send hosts federal Form 1099-Ks each year if their properties grossed more than \$20,000 and they had more than 200 room bookings, Rillos confirmed. Copies are sent to the IRS.

But many hosts, including Peterman, say they don't reach both of those thresholds. Still, she says, hosts can easily determine their annual earnings from Airbnb to submit to their tax preparers.

From side businesses to livelihoods

For some Portland hosts, renting short-term rentals is a nice little side business. For others, it's a lucrative livelihood.

Portland Airbnb hosts averaged \$10,769 in rent collections the past 12 months, says Sara Dupre of Airdna, an independent company that provides data analyzing Airbnb's worldwide operations. Hosts who rent out multiple sites would average that amount for each site.

A recent Airdna report found the top 10 Portland hosts renting out just one bedroom collected amounts ranging from \$41,564 to \$47,468 in the past year. Top hosts renting multiple rooms or full homes, which is common, earned much more.

State compliance question

The short-term rental industry is fairly new here, so it's not clear yet if there's a problem with people not paying income taxes to the state, says Bob Estabrook, state Department of Revenue spokesman. "We're not ready to say this is a problem or this isn't a problem," Estabrook says.

"It's not just the state who's going to care whether you've got income to report from a short-term rental; it's also the IRS who's going to care," he says.

Hosts who rent out their properties at least 15 days a year must report the income to the IRS. Generally that's reported on Schedule E federal tax forms, which Oregon uses to determine taxable income owed to the state.

The Oregon Department of Revenue does not like to divulge its enforcement methods for assuring compliance with its tax rules. But when people have home listings on the internet, or individual ads on Craigslist, it's not too hard to track them down, Estabrook says. And the state has more tools at its disposal than the city to assure compliance.

Mike Liefeld, enforcement program manager for the city Bureau of Development Services, is frustrated by the lack of compliance among Airbnb and other hosts in seeking permits and heeding other city requirements. His bureau received 324 complaints from residents about short-term rentals from September 2014 to September 2016, which Liefeld called a "very high number."

Yet he has never heard any talk that people avoiding permits might be trying to duck income taxes.

"I would be shocked that people would take that amount of risk," he says.

Airbnb enforcement action delayed

On Nov. 10, the city Revenue Division sent a letter to Airbnb demanding the names and addresses of all of its estimated 3,200 Portland hosts. Airbnb, which has strongly resisted sharing that information in the past, was given until Dec. 12 to comply or face a \$1.6 million fine — \$500 per listing.

But Airbnb asked the city for an extension until Feb. 1, "to prepare a proposal for the city," says Thomas Lannom, Revenue Division director. "We granted their request."

Protest City gears up for weekend of rallies, marches

*By Kevin Harden
January 18, 2017*

Welcome to Protestlandia.

Get ready for a few days of marching, shouting and, Portland police hope, peaceful demonstrations beginning Friday, as Washington, D.C.'s inauguration ceremony takes place, and continuing into the weekend.

Mayor Ted Wheeler and Police Chief Mike Marshman both said Wednesday that city officials would support peaceful demonstrations, but would keep a lid on violence, like the smashing of store windows and damage to vehicles that happened in late November following the presidential election.

"Everybody understands with the inauguration this Friday it comes with a degree of uncertainty and anxiety for our city," Wheeler told reporters during a City Hall press conference. "Peaceful protest is a bedrock of our society. We also understand that sometimes a limited number of people might seek the cover of these peaceful protest to commit acts of violence."

"The police bureau will do our level best to make sure people have the freedom to move around and protest," Marshman told reporters. "Unfortunately there are people out there who want to do damage."

Trump supporters plan an inauguration cocktail party Friday evening in Vancouver, Wash.

Rallies planned downtown

Friday and Saturday will be busy for local groups planning to demonstrate around the city. At about 9 a.m. Jan. 20 (Pacific Time), Republican Donald J. Trump will be inaugurated as the 45th president. By Friday afternoon, Portland-area activists plan to rally and march through the city to protest Trump's rise to power.

Marshman estimated that on Friday there could be between 5,000 and 8,000 people involved in marches and rallies downtown. On Saturday, Jan. 21, more than 30,000 people are expected to take part in the Women's March, a local version of a national protest.

A handful of the rallies and marches have received permits from the city, Marshman said. The police bureau is trying to talk with organizers of all the expected protests, and would be willing to issue permits on the spot, he said.

On Friday, the Direct Action Alliance plans an anti-Trump inauguration day rally beginning at 3 p.m. at Pioneer Courthouse Square with performances by artists and speeches. A march

starting at 5 p.m. will wind through downtown, with the group returning to the square at about 8:30 p.m.

Direct Action Alliance organizers said about 10,000 people plan to attend the event.

"RISE UP and Resist Fascism is being planned to provide a safe and peaceful means for Portlanders to stand together, in solidarity against Trump," said Jacob Bureros of Direct Action Alliance.

"Our message is that this is not Trump's America, this is our city, we will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our neighbors and defend our communities."

Organizers have asked that people attending the event bring donations for the homeless, including blankets, sleeping bags, jackets, socks and gloves.

On Saturday, before the Women's March begins at noon, union members will host their own rally and march from 10 to 11:30 a.m. at Shemanski Park on Southwest Park Avenue. The group plans to join the Women's March after its rally.

'Not who we are'

Wheeler said he hoped the rallies and marches would show the rest of the nation that Portland was an active community that rejected violence and vandalism that marked protests early this winter.

More than 70 people were arrested in mid-November during two days of protests and vandalism that rattled local businesses and property owners. Some people used peaceful marches as a cover to smash store windows, block highways and public transit, and smash windshields on vehicles trying to get around the march, Wheeler told reporters.

"We support the First Amendment right to peaceful protest, and we want everyone who comes out to be able to peacefully protest," he said. "But, we're not going to allow people to go onto the freeways and we will do our best to keep people from blocking public transit."

Wheeler said his goal was "to make sure that the tens of thousands of people who would like to express their points of view can do so in an environment that is safe."

"Violence is not who we are," he said. "We're going to draw some hard lines when it comes to protecting personal property and businesses. If there is vandalism and if there is violence in this community, we're going to step in to stop it."

Columbia Shelter downtown sleeps 78 people on first night

By Lyndsey Hewitt

January 18, 2017

City and county officials announced on Tuesday, Jan. 17, the opening a new homeless shelter, the Columbia Shelter, 401 S.W. Washington St., a temporary shelter with 100 beds. It began operation that night and slept 78 people.

Its opening follows the loss of hundreds of emergency shelter beds that open only when triggered by severe weather events. Most of those shelters don't plan to reopen again on Wednesday, Jan. 18. On Tuesday, 611 people slept at emergency shelters, according to numbers reported by 211info.org.

The Columbia Shelter opened in another public-private partnership with the Menashe family, a Portland real estate family that previously donated the space for homeless to sleep at the Washington Center building last year.

"Severe weather has illustrated a couple things, first of all that we as a community need to find innovative and compassionate responses and second of all the government can't do everything on its own," said Mayor Ted Wheeler at a Tuesday press conference. "We need the private sector to step forward."

The shelter plans to operate for a maximum of six months, stopping sometime in May, at about the same time that Peace 2 shelter will close. Peace 2, 333 S.W. Park, opened in November in a deal with developer Tom Cody and also has space for 100.

The Washington Center building is in the process of being purchased by Greystar Real Estate Partners. According to Greystar's managing director, Brad Schnell, the building will eventually be high rises.

The building won't see use until much later in 2017, so they decided to offer the unused space to those in need.

Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury emphasized the amount of work it took from everybody in the community to rally together during the severe weather.

"We can pull together when times are tough because we know Portland isn't just a place on the map," she said. "It's a community of hundreds of thousands of caring individuals." She half-joked that Marc Jolin, director of the city-county Joint Office of Homeless Services, hadn't slept in two weeks.

George Devendorf, executive director of Transition Projects Inc., the largest shelter provider in Multnomah County, said that the bout of severe weather is "really compelling us to think: What's the right level of shelter for Portland?"

"This winter, I think, is showing us that we really need to redouble our efforts to try and find that right number."

Officials also pointed to the approach of A Home for Everyone, the initiative between Multnomah County, Portland, Gresham and Home Forward to end homelessness — which focuses on getting people into permanent, affordable housing instead of establishing more shelter.

When asked if officials were still at all considering the idea of a larger permanent campus-style facility for homeless people, Wheeler said he wasn't going to "foreclose any solution now."

"I think this storm really illustrated the point that we have a long way to go — we need more resources across the board and we still have people freezing to death on our streets," Wheeler said, referring to the four hypothermia deaths of homeless people this winter.

Jordan Menashe said there's more space around town that could be used.

"I was a little bit disappointed in the lack of private sector follow up. I made a couple calls myself and got shut down by other individuals in the community — others in real estate. Everybody's got a different opinion on homelessness," he said.

"We don't have a long term solution yet — I hate to use the term Band-Aid — but we need to get these people off the street."

Columbia Shelter details

- Temporary, low-barrier overnight shelter for those experiencing homelessness — including women, couples and men all 18 and older, with priority for people 55 and older, those with disabilities and veterans.
- Plan to close in May 2017
- Hours: 7 p.m. to 6:30 a.m.
- Operate on a reservation basis. Reservations are handled over the phone at 503-280-4700 or in person at Transition Projects Inc. Day Center, 650 N.W. Irving St.
- Once a space is reserved, guests may continue to use the space until they no longer need it
- Multiple sleeping rooms
- Space for coffee, tea, books and board games
- Food not usually provided, guests should access a meal before arriving
- Bathrooms and basic hygiene supplies
- Staff will provide information, referral, support
- Pets welcome
- Volunteers/donations welcome: contact Lauren Holt at lauren.holt@tprojects.org or 503-280-4741.
- Find out more at tprojects.org

Willamette Week

Tenants' Union Wants Portland Mayor to Force Landlords to Forgive February Rent for People Who Lost Wages During Snow

*By Rachel Monahan
January 18, 2017*

In the aftermath of Portland's worst snowstorm in a generation, renters-rights group Portland Tenants United is asking Mayor Ted Wheeler for help in winning rent amnesty from landlords for next month.

Citing the snow's effect on lost wages for non-salaried, low-income renters, the tenant's union asked for Wheeler's help in applying pressure to landlords to forgive rent payments for tenants who have lost work during the storm, in an open letter posted to Medium yesterday.

The letter argues the weather emergency allows City Hall to set rent for all tenants in the city at \$0 for next month if landlords don't cooperate, using emergency provisions of state law.

"Mayor Wheeler, on January 11th you showed leadership by calling on Portlanders to do their part to help the homeless during this catastrophic storm," the letter says. "We are asking you to

call on Landlords to do their part too, and for you to otherwise use the full extent of your power and influence to ensure that no tenant is evicted due to loss of income from the snowstorm."

Wheeler's office did not respond to a request for comment.

The storm's impact on renters may indeed be significant. Businesses throughout the city closed during the storm and are also suffering financial consequences.

"What we're really trying to address is a very realistic situation of people missing week of wages," says PTU organizer Margot Black. "What's it going to look like when the first of the month rolls around?"

But the radical PTU proposal already has significant opposition.

John DiLorenzo, a representative for Equitable Housing PAC, the largest landlord political-action committee in the state, invited tenants to return to negotiations over rental subsidies he proposed last month, saying he views his proposal as a far more realistic option.

"It's too bad that the tenants union refused to talk further about our rental assistance program," he says. "This would be a perfect use...Rental assistance would be much more doable politically than shifting costs around the economy."

This dust-up comes in a context of a larger impending legislative fight over the fate of the state's laws on tenant protections and landlord rights.

PTU and other tenants groups around the state are advocating for an end to "no-cause" evictions and a lifting of the ban on preemption. Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek, who is championing legislation on the issue, has already called DiLorenzo's proposal a distraction.

Landlords are fiercely opposed to both proposals.

Mayor Ted Wheeler Says Portland Police Will Not Allow Protesters to Block Freeways This Weekend

*By Sophia June
January 18, 2017*

Mayor Ted Wheeler says Portland police will not allow protesters of Donald Trump's presidential inauguration to block freeways or public transit lines this weekend.

"We are not going to allow people to go onto the freeways, that is for the safety of everyone," Wheeler said in a press conference this afternoon. "In addition we are going to do our level-best to prevent people from blocking our public transit."

Multiple anti-Trump protest marches are planned for this weekend, both for Inauguration Day and in the days following.

Police Chief Mike Marshman says there the city is expecting 5,000 to 8,000 people for Jan. 20 protests, and 20,000 people for the 44-block Women's March on Jan. 21.

In November, Portland saw several nights of protests, some of which turned violent when vandals smashed cars and windows of businesses. Many of those marches blocked freeways.

Police responded by deploying non-lethal crowd-clearing devices such as flash grenades and rubber bullets.

Wheeler, who became mayor on Jan. 1, says the city will not tolerate violence and vandalism.

"Peaceful protest is the bedrock of American democracy. It's something I support and our community supports and we understand a limited number of people might be under the cover of these peaceful protests to do acts of violence vandalism," Wheeler says. "I want to be clear that's something we will not tolerate."

Marshman says steps will be taken to keep the freeways open, but "it depends on the event that day," what those steps will be.

"It's just not safe," he says.

He hasn't ruled out non-lethal crowd-clearing devices, like flash-bang grenades, or even pepper spray.

"I don't want to use those, but if the crowd dynamics dictate it we might have to, unfortunately," he says.

When asked if there would be a line drawn for how much police will intervene, Marshman responded "no."

The Portland Mercury

Hall Monitor: Wheeler's Testy Early Term

By Dirk VanderHart

January 18, 2017

FOR PORTLAND'S brand new mayor, the tests have come early and often.

No sooner had Ted Wheeler assumed office on January 1 than the city saw the first of at least four deaths on the streets this year due to the winter's relentless frigidity.

The mayor capably parried, opening up the Portland Building as a warming shelter for the first time in the city's history.

Then the snows came. Wheeler's not the city's transportation commissioner, but when something snarls the roads—say, layers of ice that leave them hazardous and deeply unpleasant for a week—it's often the mayor whom citizens will take to task (there's a reason Charlie Hales didn't run again, you know).

Wheeler appears to be feeling that pressure. When a citizen angrily tweeted the mayor a recent photo of a downtown road covered in pockmarked ice, someone behind Wheeler's account tweeted back: "You sent me a picture of a plowed road?"

Winters come and go. But in Portland, protest is everlasting. That's why this Friday will be the most telling test of Wheeler's first three weeks. When Donald Trump is inaugurated on January 20, hundreds or thousands plan to demonstrate, as they did after Trump won in November. And like Hales before him, Wheeler's handling of those protests will force the mayor to walk an almost impossibly fine line that's probably more typical of his job than anything he's yet experienced.

No one wants a homeless person to die in the cold, after all, but marches like those planned against Trump provide no easy options. On one side, Wheeler has workers who'll take umbrage if their commute is stretched by bridge shutdowns. On the other sits a vocal segment of organizers who'll decry any response they see as a heavy-handed attempt to shut down their freedom of expression.

So I asked Wheeler's office what the plan was. Spokesperson Michael Cox answered my list of questions with a statement of vague optimism.

"The freedom of speech and the right to assembly are bedrock values we hold dear," he wrote. "But we should not and cannot abide violence or vandalism. We are confident that Portland will come together around these shared values."

Where the confidence comes from, I'm not sure. Cox's statement, after all, is not so different from Hales' shortly before a notably hands-off police presence at a November 10 anti-Trump demonstration led to rioting.

The pledge not to "abide" vandalism is a hint that Wheeler, who's been strategizing with police command staff, won't take such a laid-back stance (Hales promptly cracked down after the riots). But if he's too quick to deploy crowd-control police—the most reliable tactic I've seen to whip up a group of demonstrators—he'll see himself quickly accused of thuggery. Honeymoon over.

None of this is easy, but in my years of covering protests in this town, it's often seemed to me that a lesser police presence often produces better results than leading with the riot squad.

Is that Wheeler's take, too? We'll find out soon enough.

You've Been Warned, Protestors: The Mayor and Police Chief Just Laid Out Activity They'll Crack Down On This Week

*By Dirk VanderHart
January 18, 2017*

Ahead of a series of protests that should see thousands of people spilling into Portland streets, Mayor Ted Wheeler is drawing a few lines in the sand.

As organizers prepare to protest the January 20 inauguration of Donald Trump on Friday, and then again on Saturday, Wheeler today laid out three scenarios in which police will absolutely intervene: If demonstrators seek to take the freeway, block MAX trains, or incite vandalism or violence.

"Vandalism hurts our community," Wheeler said at a news conference, flanked by Police Chief Mike Marshman, Portland Business Alliance CEO Sandra McDonough, and event organizers behind a Women's March planned on Saturday. "Most businesses are in fact local businesses."

It was a clear allusion to a demonstration on November 10, two nights after Trump was elected, when a small contingent of self-identified anarchists engaged in widespread vandalism in the Pearl District, and took bats to cars at a Toyota dealership on NE Broadway. On that night—as on a night before, when Portland police preemptively shut down Interstate 5 in preparation for a small sea of marchers—the city's police leadership showed notable restraint in their dealings with demonstrators.

That wasn't the case in subsequent nights, and Wheeler and Marshman indicated today that cops wouldn't tolerate serious disruptions or any vandalism.

"Clearly the police bureau is more prepared to handle acts of vandalism and violence" than in November, Wheeler told the Mercury. Regarding transit disruptions, he said: "What I heard from lots of people is, 'I missed my shift.' It impacts lower-income workers. We don't need to allow those things to happen in order to have a peaceful protest."

The new mayor's message was not so different from that of his predecessor, Charlie Hales, who in the aftermath of election day also pledged his commitment to citizens' First Amendment rights, and urged demonstrators to exercise those rights safely and peacefully.

"Didn't work," Marshman acknowledged to the Mercury this afternoon, "but we try."

Marshman said that in the wake of Trump's unexpected election, the police bureau "tried to respond slower than normal. Tried to give people an opportunity to self-police. With this one, people have had time to gear up, so it's going to be different."

As I suggested in this week's paper, the upcoming protests mark the first serious test Wheeler will face as the city's police commissioner. And in protest-happy Portland, they'll set something of a precedent for how he handles disruptions in months and years to come (not that he's not free to change his stance).

Here's a list of protests and other demonstrations planned this week. The biggies are the rally and march being planned by the group Portland's Resistance. It begins at 3:30 pm Friday, at Pioneer Courthouse Square, and as one of its organizers told the Mercury recently, it's adamantly without a permit.

Another, probably larger Women's March on Portland begins at noon on Saturday, at Tom McCall Waterfront Park. That one's got a permit, and will feature a series of speakers before the planned march sets off.