

The Oregonian

Complaints about police tactics during protest prompt reviews

*By Maxine Bernstein
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Portland police fired sting-ball grenades during an Inauguration Day protest Friday night, which has led to a complaint from a man who said he was downtown celebrating his anniversary with his fiancée when they were struck with rubber pellets while walking to their motel.

By Monday afternoon, Portland's police oversight division received 10 complaints and 12 commendations about officers' handling of the protests Friday night and Saturday, ranging from allegations that police were too heavy-handed Friday to one complaint that officers were "too friendly" to Women's March demonstrators Saturday.

"We take all complaints," said Constantin Severe, director of the Independent Police Review Division. He and two members of his staff shadowed the marches each day. They viewed several confrontations between police and members of the march Friday night, as lines of officers in riot-control gear sought to keep protesters off the city's bridges, and then later in the evening surrounded Pioneer Courthouse Square and attempted to disperse the crowd.

Matthew McGaugh and his fiancée Amanda Cameron, of Oregon City, were in Portland to celebrate their second anniversary Friday night. After dinner and drinks at Paddy's Bar & Grill, they started to walk back to their motel. As they neared Pioneer Courthouse Square, they saw protesters in the streets and lines of police officers surrounding the square.

McGaugh said he saw a "wall of police" on Southwest Sixth Avenue and asked the officers if they could walk south to their motel. He said the officers let them and others through. They walked one block to Southwest Sixth and Yamhill Street and saw another line of officers to their left. As they continued across Yamhill street, the couple put their hands up in a peace sign towards the protesters in Pioneer Courthouse Square, he said.

"At that point, with our backs to the officers, we were hit with rubber bullets or whatever they shot at us," he said.

McGaugh said he got behind his fiancée to shield her from the shots, grabbed her and pulled her over to the sidewalk.

"I then turned and gave the peace sign to the protesters one more time. I was hit with another barrage of rubber pellets," McGaugh said. He said police then tackled him from behind and handcuffed him. While on the ground, he said something exploded just a foot or two away from his face.

"We were not part of the protests and were not participating," he wrote. "Unfortunately, we were not the only innocents accosted."

He posted to his Facebook page photos of large red welts on his leg and his girlfriend's thigh.

Portland police spokesman Sgt. Pete Simpson said he believes what caused the injuries to McGaugh and his girlfriend came from sting-ball grenades, which upon explosion eject

rubber balls filled with rubber pellets. They're primarily used for crowd control, and also were used during the Election protests in November.

Simpson said he didn't have specific information on McGaugh or his arrest, because he didn't have access to the police reports yet for review. He said officers used impact munitions to disperse what he called an "aggressive crowd."

McGaugh said he never heard any police commands.

McGaugh, 41, was one of six people arrested Friday night, accused of disorderly conduct and failure to obey a police officer. He was taken to the downtown jail but then released. One of the six was arrested on allegations stemming from the November election protests.

On Monday afternoon, McGaugh said he was at a hospital emergency room.

"I hate that this happened," his fiancée Cameron wrote on Facebook. "I hate that my city is even more tainted in my world ... and I hate that two fingers in the air lead to this."

Organizers of Friday's event, unlike Saturday's Women's March, never obtained a permit, and attempts by police to reach out to them before the event were unsuccessful, Chief Mike Marshman said last week.

"Police had a lot of resources out, and I witnessed several confrontations with protesters," Severe said. "Friday was a very different event and feel."

Police Friday night deployed pepper spray after ice balls and eggs were thrown at officers attempting to keep marchers from heading onto the Burnside Bridge. Some people rushed the front of the police line in an aggressive manner, Simpson said.

Later in the night, police used flash-bang devices, which cause a loud explosion and send up smoke, the sting-ball grenades and tear gas in attempts to disperse the crowd around Pioneer Courthouse Square.

Initially, lines of officers ordered protesters off the MAX rail tracks at Southwest Broadway and Yamhill Street, and outside The Nines hotel off of Morrison Street, sending marchers into Pioneer Courthouse Square. A short time later, a police speaker blared, declaring the square closed to the public and ordering people to disperse to the south. Tear gas was fired at Southwest Sixth and Yamhill Street, not only affecting people who were marching by but bystanders on the sidewalks a block away.

Simpson said "riot control agents and munitions" were used to disperse the crowd, as a result of some protesters throwing bottles, rocks, eggs, snow balls and road flares at officers. The police did not specify what "munitions" were used, but Simpson confirmed Monday that sting-ball grenades were deployed.

Portland's Resistance, one of the organizers of the Friday night march, Direct Action Alliance, also involved in the Friday night "Rise Up and Resist Fascism: Inauguration Day protest," and the ACLU of Oregon complained that police overreacted and abused their power.

"When police hurt innocent people, the police are to blame, not the victims for 'being there,'" Portland Resistance wrote on its Facebook page Saturday night. "When police throw grenades into our streets, they need to answer to the public as to why."

Jacob Bureros of Direct Action Alliance issued a press release Monday, calling it an "Open Letter to Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler," in which he criticized the police use of force and demanded the mayor fire the police chief or they'd block streets later this week.

"Ted Wheeler, fire Chief Marshman by Tuesday or nothing moves on Wednesday," it read.

Bureros wrote Friday night that police "attacked us because we did not obey them when they told us where to stand, where to sit, and how to protest."

ACLU legal director Mathew dos Santos said he's not surprised that innocent bystanders got caught up in police use of less-than-lethal munitions. He complained that police reacted with excessive force "to what appeared to be an entirely peaceful protest," he said. The fact that no permit was obtained shouldn't have made a difference, he argued.

"I think the Constitution is their permit," he said.

The city's Independent Police Review Division will investigate the complaints, not the police bureau, Severe said. It will investigate specific complaints from protesters, as well as look into policy questions raised about the types of weapons used by officers and the circumstances.

Wheeler, who serves as police commissioner, stood with Chief Mike Marshman late last week, pledging that police would not allow protesters to access area freeways. Lines of officers stood steady on the bridges to prevent marchers from getting to Interstate 5 or heading to the east side of the city. Several businesses downtown also took precautionary measures, boarding up their windows ahead of Friday night's protest.

On Saturday, when about 100,000 people took to the streets in a permitted protest, no arrests were made, and officers were spotted taking selfie photos with protesters, or donning pink hats provided by marchers.

On Monday morning, the mayor said he was pleased with the outcome.

"My top priority is always to protect the safety of everyone involved. Additionally, I want to try to limit acts of vandalism and disruptions to transit. By these measures the weekend was highly successful," Wheeler said in a prepared statement. "In the end, no one entered the freeways, and acts of vandalism and transit disruption were minimized. There were five arrests and no serious injuries were reported."

He said greater coordination between protesters and police results in fewer problems.

"The Police chief and I clearly communicated our expectations prior to demonstrations. When possible the city contacted and coordinated with event organizers to prevent what's happened in the past: acts of violence, vandalism, and disruption that lasted into the early morning hours," he said. "Generally speaking, the higher the degree of coordination between the city and event organizers, the smoother the event."

The mayor said he believes the police use of crowd control weapons Friday was appropriate, based on his early review, yet he encouraged anyone who has a complaint to file it with the independent police oversight division.

"The vast majority of participants in demonstrations were there for one reason - to peacefully demonstrate. Unfortunately, in any gathering of this size there is always the potential that some will have different goals - to incite conflict and confrontation. No one

likes to see the use of crowd control devices. I certainly don't," his statement said. "When these devices are used, I want to be sure that they are used under the proper circumstances. Early indications are that their use on Friday night was appropriate. I will of course review post-action reports to make sure that was the case."

The mayor asked that anyone who was present at the protests and wishes to file a complaint or commendation stemming from their encounters with Portland police contact the city's [Independent Police Review Division](#).

The Portland Tribune

A new plan for Interstate Corridor

By Jules Rogers

January 24, 2017

When the urban renewal area was established in 2001, it was supposed to benefit existing residents and businesses in the historically black neighborhoods of North and Northeast Portland. But statistics reinforce that these communities did not equally benefit from the economic prosperity and growth there.

Meant to foster economic prosperity among African-Americans and people of color, the Portland Development Commission finalized its North/Northeast Community Development Initiative Action Plan last week.

The final draft plan was developed to guide the PDC's investment of the remaining \$32 million in tax increment financing resources for economic development in the Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area (URA).

The final draft plan took input from stakeholders, group interviews, public comment, forums, the Urban League's State of Black Oregon Report, the Interstate URA plans and the PDC's 2015-2020 strategic plan.

Kate Deane, community economic development manager with the PDC, said they've been working on the N/NE action plan since January 2016, and the process included stakeholder interviews as well as community forums.

"The focus of this plan is really around that Interstate Corridor URA," Deane said. "After ... getting feedback, we intend to go to City Council at the end of the month and have the plan accepted by them, and then we will head into implementation."

The N/NE Action Plan will be seen by the City Council on Wednesday, Jan. 25. A last forum is planned in mid-February to roll out the final plan to the community and begin talking about implementation.

"A few things have changed," Deane said. "The goal really is to foster economic prosperity on individuals and communities that have not fully participated in the economic opportunities that have been present in the Interstate Corridor URA."

Interstate Corridor

The Portland Housing Bureau has a separate plan for the remaining Interstate Corridor funds for affordable housing, and this is what's known as the North/Northeast Neighborhood Housing Strategy.

When the Interstate Corridor URA was established in 2001, it was supposed to benefit existing residents and businesses in the historically black neighborhoods of North and Northeast Portland by creating wealth, revitalizing the neighborhoods, expanding housing choices, creating businesses and job opportunities, linking transportation and protecting residents against gentrification.

However, statistics reinforce that these communities did not equally benefit from the economic prosperity and growth in the Interstate URA: between 2000 and 2013, three demographic groups saw a decrease in their population within the Interstate Corridor URA.

The African-American population fell by 33 percent or about 3,544 residents; the Hawaiian-Pacific Islanders population fell by 36 percent or about 208 people; and the Native American community lost 25 percent or 339 people of its population living there.

Over the same 13-year period, median income for African-Americans fell by 31 percent, bringing the median household income for blacks in the Interstate Corridor to \$24,322 — 13 percent lower than the African-American median income in Portland.

Citywide data and data from the Interstate URA show that individuals living within the URA likely had a sharp decline in their family income between 2000 and 2013. Part of this is due to the Great Recession. Black families faced foreclosures after taking out second mortgages.

James Paulson, board chair of Worksystems Inc. and owner of property management firm JMPDX LLC, served on the N/NE CDI advisory committee.

"We called out African-Americans and people of color," Paulson said. "When you look at data, those are the people most affected in that area so we really wanted to call that out, and as a representative of the group I wanted to make sure I presented that to the board."

Since 2000 in the URA, African-Americans living in poverty rose by 9 percent, and now 30 percent of blacks in the URA have incomes below the poverty level.

The plan emphasises reaching the black community because they have constituted the largest minority population in the URA since its inception. So, the PDC reorganized how to invest the remaining \$32 million TIF funds into five categories over five years:

- Promote property ownership and redevelopment: \$10.75 million in grants and loans to 44 property owners.
- Support business ownership and growth: \$9.25 million in grants and loans to 55 business owners.
- Invest in new and existing homeowners: \$5 million in grants and loans to 60 homeowners.
- Advance community livability projects: \$2.5 million in grants and loans to 20 nonprofits.
- Catalyze cultural-business hubs: \$4.5 million in grants and loans to one or two anchor or signature projects.

What's different this time?

"One of the things that we adjusted in the plan is moving away from what was called 'anchor projects' and moving toward 'cultural business hub,'" Paulson said. "One of the things we heard when we did the focus groups with the community was 'we don't want an anchor, we want you to give more grants to people's home improvements.'"

Citizen community members didn't understand how TIF funds could be used, but the level of communication and education is what sets the N/NE Action Plan apart from the old Interstate Corridor plan.

"We've gone through education as we've gone through that process of really understanding how TIF funding works, and mechanisms, so when we put together a strategy it can be much more successful than pie-in-the-sky," Paulson said. "One of the key pieces I don't think people understood is when you make a loan for this project, those loans can be repaid and reissued. When you make a grant, that money's gone."

As for new practices and policies to ensure the URA works this time, and doesn't just gentrify an area meant to be improved for African-Americans, the PDC plans to establish an Oversight Committee — open to the public — composed of community stakeholders that will guide the implementation of the plan. The goal is to form the committee by February, which will review notices of funding availability.

"I have lived this process for the last year. I grew up in the area, have a small business in the area, and going through this process was not arduous but an opportunity to really engage in how we can overcome some of the challenges that are faced in the area," Paulson said. "The same sentiment felt by other people who also sat on that subcommittee with me, everyone felt very passionate about the work and really wanted to do things differently than we've done in the past."

Business hubs

"Let's look at how we can structure this a little differently and people can understand these cultural business hubs," Paulson said. "We have a five-year window on these hubs. Worst case, at the end of the five-year period we have nothing done on the anchor projects."

So they added a three-year clause: "If we don't have something in the works in three years, let's go back and evaluate how these funds can be used to make sure they make it to the people who will be most affected," Paulson said.

"By doing this, we're also going to be able to make space available," Paulson said. "Market space in Portland is extremely high for small businesses to get into. We said let's make this space a space where people can bring their business, build their business in a way that they'll be able to get it off the ground so they're not burdened with these market-rate rents while they're getting started."

That's where \$1.5 million is aimed.

The TIF funding is limited to physical construction, so it's considered an incomplete tool. The PDC needs new funding revenues to initiate more activities that will increase the likelihood of success this time around:

- Develop business opportunities with anchor institutions: increase market opportunities for local businesses by establishing productive connections to large employers and anchor institutions with substantial purchasing power.
- Connect people to jobs: establish a community-based work-force navigator focused on the returning residents and current residents of publicly supported housing.
- Establish a neighborhood prosperity initiative area.
- Promote culturally relevant financial education programs.
- Increase job training support: support training for high-demand, living wage occupations including health care, manufacturing, banking and construction.

TIFs and training

The plans to increase job training include developing opportunities with anchor institutions to support career-track jobs in the health care, public sector and educational institutions. It also includes promoting STEM and STEAM in the youth work-force development.

"That wealth-building that people who haven't had as much success with in the growth of Portland, now's an opportunity to let them in," Paulson said. "We know we're not going to solve all the problems the community faces, but it's a start and something to really move the ball forward and create opportunities for people to do some incredible work."

The TIF investments will prioritize current and former business owners, property owners, residents and their descendants who owned businesses, property or lived within the Interstate URA prior to its establishment in 2000. It's aimed at people who experienced impediments or disadvantages in benefiting from economic opportunities because of racism, a legacy of redlining or lack of access to capital.

"This demonstrates that commitment to really trying to support and rebuild a community that's been very affected over the years, and this is just the first step from a financial standpoint of rebuilding that community," Paulson said.

The TIF investments will prioritize business and property owners without historical ties to the area, but who are African-American or people of color who experience economic barriers to business and property ownership, provide a product or service that benefits historically underserved populations or commit to tangible and sustainable economic benefits for underserved populations.

"That's what it's going to take: a lot of partners to pull something together," Paulson said. "Trying to do something on your own, the probability of being less successful is higher."

Funding for housing will be allocated by the Portland Housing Bureau based on its program guidelines and fair housing, state and federal requirements.

"It's all dependent on key things, finding a developer or development group that comes up with a brilliant idea," Paulson said. "We don't want to handcuff it by trying to say 'oh, fit into a box.' We'd like to see something dynamic, but in the end having multiple people able to share in the benefits of this new development."

North/Northeast development projects

The Portland Development Commission's budget and forecast includes funding for projects that are already approved in the Urban Renewal Area, in addition to the \$32 million. Projects planned for the next five years that aren't covered by the \$32 million include:

- Alberta Commons

(\$3.2 million)

- Lombard Streetscape

(\$2.2 million)

- Killingsworth Streetscape (\$75,000)

- Martin Luther King Jr. Heritage Markers (\$225,000)

- Gordly Cultural Center (\$577,000)

- Alberta and St. Johns Main Street District improvement (\$410,000)

- Community livability projects, development feasibility grants, storefront improvement grants and special authority grants

(\$1 million)

- Real estate management

(\$1.3 million)

- Contingency (\$1 million)

Mayor: Response to storm fell short

By Jim Redden

January 24, 2017

The City Council has declined to buy additional snow removal equipment in the past, arguing it would only be used every few years, at most. Mayor Ted Wheeler also said he intends to look at how well the city communicates with the public and whether it can work better with other jurisdictions.

Responding to public criticism of the condition of many Portland streets during the most recent winter storm, Mayor Ted Wheeler and Transportation Commissioner Dan Saltzman now have both promised to review the city's preparedness for severe winter weather.

Neither said much about a specific process they intend to follow, in part because the city was still digging itself out when they made their announcements.

Wheeler made the commitment last Tuesday at a news conference to announce the opening of a new temporary downtown homeless shelter. Admitting that he had been humbled by the lengthy shutdown of many parts of town, Wheeler said he will review such issues as whether the city has enough snow-clearing equipment for such storms, and whether it should use salt instead of chemical deicer to melt snow.

"Let's learn from it, let's pick up from it, let's have the hard conversations, let's evaluate how we did and not be defensive about it. And if there's things we can improve, let's improve," Wheeler said.

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Saltzman made his promise during a Tuesday interview with Oregon Public Broadcasting. Answering questions from reporter Amelia Templeton, he said, "With respect to the storm, I do promise that there is going to be a thorough evaluation of our response and what we can do differently."

Among other things, Saltzman also said it was time to consider alternative snow-clearing equipment, and mentioned contracting with private companies for help

during such storms. Although the Seattle Department of Transportation provided equipment and crews to Portland in the days after the storm hit, the city did not employ anyone else.

"That's one of the things I'm going to look at: How can we staff up for peak events without necessarily increasing the size of the city government that much," Saltzman said.

Saltzman also said he is willing to reconsider the city's longstanding policy of only plowing major streets — including those carrying frequent TriMet bus lines — and skipping residential streets, leaving many city residents struggling to reach main arterials.

"Is there a point at which we do turn our resources to certain residential streets? There are a lot of residential streets that come awful close to being an arterial but are not classified as such. That's one of the things I want to look at," Saltzman said.

Such concerns were absent on the part of the City Council when it met Wednesday morning, however. Wheeler, Saltzman and the rest of the council took the time to praise Portland officials and employees who responded to the storm, including transportation and public safety workers. None voiced any misgivings about how long the roads were in poor condition or the parts of town that weren't helped.

The storm was, in fact, more severe than any Portland has experienced in decades. The 8 inches recorded at the Portland International Airport was the most since 1995. Because temperatures stayed at or below freezing for a week after the snow first fell, it covered the roads far longer than usual. The lingering snow and ice also wreaked havoc on the transit system, frequently shutting down and delaying TriMet bus and MAX lines.