

The Oregonian

Without federal leadership on climate protection, Portland must step up (Guest opinion)

By Ted Wheeler

May 31, 2017

With a clear vision for the future, we can avoid being left to the whims of fate. A solid strategy is especially important when it comes to confronting a slow-moving threat to our city and to the Oregon way of life. This week, the City of Portland will step up to the challenge of climate change with an ambitious plan to transition to 100 percent renewable energy by 2050.

There is a lot of work to be done, but it's more about the will than the way. We already have the technology to run our lives on clean energy: solar and wind, electric vehicles, and exciting innovations like turning waste to energy at the Columbia Boulevard Wastewater Treatment Plant project.

But the switch to clean energy will not happen on its own at the speed necessary to guarantee our kids and future generations a livable world. That's where our will comes in. With Portland joining more than two dozen U.S. cities committing to 100 percent renewable energy, our local economy will benefit from more good-paying jobs, households will realize energy bill savings, and our air will be cleaner.

Leading cities and states will thrive in the fast-growing, low-carbon economy. It's happening now. The downtown Portland Fire Station will soon harness solar energy and use a battery to store it, saving the city money on energy bills and allowing emergency responders to work through a major outage. In Southern Oregon, they're heating schools using the warmth inside the Earth at a fraction of the cost of oil or electricity. In Bend, one of the state's first community solar projects allows renters and people who can't install panels on their homes to reap the benefits of renewable power.

Transitioning our households, businesses and government operations in Portland and Multnomah County to 100 percent clean energy by 2050 is achievable, but it will require strong policy guidance and innovative new sources of funding. It is time for Oregon to put a statewide cap and price on climate pollution to fund our clean energy solutions.

The Clean Energy Jobs bill (House Bill 2135) being considered by the Oregon State Legislature would raise more than \$700 million per year, by requiring the largest emitters to pay for what they put into our air. It incentivizes lowering emissions while creating proceeds to re-invest into communities across the state. It would put Oregonians to work improving energy efficiency in homes and businesses to save households money, build affordable housing near transit, install more solar on rooftops and invest in more transportation options.

Clean energy provides a unique opportunity in rural and urban communities alike by training Oregonians with new skills for projects that must be built in our communities and can't be outsourced. Consider work going on in East Portland's Cully Neighborhood, one of the most diverse neighborhoods in the state. A partnership of nonprofits and businesses collaborated, raised funds and sweat equity to help retrofit homes for low-income families. The work was done by community workers and minority-owned firms, and the homes now use less energy and save families money. Clean Energy Jobs funds could replicate this kind of partnership in communities from Brookings to Baker City, Beaverton to Burns.

From Portland's ban on large, fossil fuel terminals to Oregon's Clean Fuels Standard and the Clean Electricity and Coal Transition Act, our local actions send ripples through the energy landscape nationwide. At a time when leadership on climate protection and clean energy are more vital than ever, Portland and Oregon must step up and lead.

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler under fire after asking feds to revoke permit for pro-Trump rally

*By Jessica Floum
May 30, 2017*

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler drew criticism Tuesday from free speech advocates, the American Civil Liberties Union and local conservative leaders for calling on the federal government to revoke the permit for a pro-Trump free speech rally scheduled for Sunday.

Wheeler also asked federal officials not to issue a permit for an anti-Muslim march planned for June 10.

But his spokesman, Michael Cox, said Tuesday that the mayor isn't commenting on whether he approves of an anti-bigotry, anti-islamophilia rally also planned to take place downtown Sunday. Cox conveyed an inconsistent position with regard to that protest, saying, "It's not up to the mayor to sanction or not sanction speech events."

"We are planning for protests and counter protests and to protect everyone," Cox said.

Mat dos Santos, ACLU Oregon's legal director, said Tuesday he understands the mayor's concern for safety in the wake of a hate-fueled fatal attack on a MAX train Friday. But, he said, Wheeler can't "just decide that somebody's speech is the wrong kind of speech and shut it down."

"It's an all too familiar theme here in Portland, where the Portland police shut down constitutionally protected activities...because of the bad actions of a few," dos Santos said.

Portland native Scott Quick emailed the mayor on Tuesday urging him to retract his call to revoke rally permits.

"I vehemently oppose the alt-right agenda and any form of hate speech, but I am more opposed to your calls to revoke the permits for alt-right events," Quick wrote. "You are trampling on the First Amendment, which is more important than any single event."

Wheeler said in a Facebook post Monday that holding Sunday's rally following the double-murder of two heroes on the MAX "can only exacerbate a difficult situation."

"The mayor's request to revoke the permit is in no way intended to censor political speech," Cox said Tuesday. "The request was made because the mayor's top priority is the safety of everyone in our city. He believes that this rally is planned for the wrong time at the wrong place in the wake of a horrific double murder and in the midst of the Rose Festival."

Vancouver native Joey Gibson organized the pro-Trump rally set to take place at Terry Schrunk Park Sunday. He said in a Facebook Live video Monday that Wheeler's plea will not convince him to cancel the rally.

Gibson told The Oregonian/OregonLive Tuesday that he has arranged for informal security officers, some with permits to carry concealed handguns, to help keep participants in order.

Revoking the event permit, Gibson said, would pose more safety risks because it would limit the ability of the rally organizers to promote peaceful demonstration and to remove anyone peddling hate speech.

"It's going to be an amazing rally where we don't have hate speech," Gibson said. "If they want us to make a stance and they want us to stand up against any Nazi members, they cannot pull our permit because the permit is the only thing that gives us that right."

If anyone has a racist sign or yells anything racist, "they will be gone," Gibson added.

MAX stabbing suspect Jeremy Christian participated in an April "March for Free Speech" event that Gibson hosted, but organizers asked him to leave after he yelled racial epithets and "Die Muslims!" and threatened Gibson.

Gibson obtained a permit weeks ago for Sunday's demonstration from the U.S. General Services Administration, which owns the property across Southwest Fourth Avenue from Portland City Hall.

A self-described libertarian, Gibson said he hopes to promote conservative values, smaller government, spirituality and freedom at the rally. He said he doesn't intend to promote a particular political party, religion or skin color over others and does not discriminate based on sexuality, gender identity or race.

About 300 people indicated on Facebook as of Tuesday afternoon that they plan to attend the event, where Gibson said diverse keynote speakers will promote freedom and anti-communist perspectives.

James Buchal, chair of the Multnomah County Republican Party, told The Guardian Monday that his group is considering using militia groups as private security at Republican events. He suggested calling on the Oath Keepers, an anti-government group, and the Three Percenters, a group that pledges armed resistance against efforts to restrict gun ownership.

"We're casting around to see how we can keep our people safe," Buchal said. "One of the ideas is reaching out to these groups who see themselves as street dogs in a time of wolves."

Gibson said he has arranged for "unofficial" private security to encourage participants in his demonstration to "not provoke or be violent."

The Oath Keepers and the Three Percenters will not be there in an official capacity, Gibson said, though some of the members of his private security team are also affiliated with those groups.

Gibson's security includes about 50 to 60 private individuals, many with military backgrounds, Gibson said.

Many of the private security members have concealed carry licenses with the state, which means they will be allowed to carry concealed weapons outside the plaza, Gibson said. They will not have guns inside the plaza because that violates federal law, he said.

Gibson said his security will not deal with other protesters or attempt to arrest anyone.

"That's the job of the police," Gibson said.

Portland police spokesman Pete Simpson did not respond to multiple email requests for comment.

Gibson said speakers will include religious figures and a woman he described as transsexual who will discuss the different ways conservatives and liberals have treated her.

Alt-right activist Kyle "Based Stickman" Chapman will also speak.

Chapman became famous among alt-right conservatives and infamous among many when he broke a wooden sign post on an anti-Fascist protester's head at a March riot in Berkeley, Calif. Demonstrators clashed violently in Berkeley over a canceled speech by "alt-right" provocateur Milo Yiannopoulos.

"The things I have to say attract a lot of different people," Gibson said. "The common thread is I'm promoting freedom, and I'm promoting spirituality."

Several protests have organized in opposition to Gibson's pro-Trump free speech rally. An event called Portland Stands United Against Hate is set to take place in Chapman Park next door. About 700 people indicated on Facebook that they would attend the protest event, endorsed by 35 immigrant rights, anti-war, mental health and religious groups.

Event organizer Nico Judd said she is in the process of getting a permit from the city. She said city officials assured organizers that they will have the space they need.

'He died fighting the good fight,' Rick Best's son says

By Rob Davis

May 31, 2017

A memorial service has been scheduled next week for Rick Best, one of two men killed in a brutal attack Friday aboard a MAX train.

Best's funeral has been set for Monday, June 5 at 10 a.m. at Christ the King Church in Milwaukie, the Catholic Sentinel reported.

Best, 53, an Army veteran, worked as a technician for Portland's Bureau of Development Services. He was headed home to Happy Valley when a man began hurling epithets at two teenagers aboard a MAX Green Line train.

Best and two others intervened. The man then pulled a knife and stabbed the three men, killing two and injuring one.

Best had three teenage sons and a 12-year-old daughter. In a television interview, Best's oldest son, Erik, remembered his father as an upbeat person.

"The last name is sort of ironic because he was the best father," Erik Best told KATU. "He was always cheery. After serving in the military, he'd usually say, 'Hey, I'm not getting shot at, why shouldn't I smile?'"

"He died fighting the good fight, protecting the innocent. Honestly, that's what he probably would've wanted," Best told KATU. "I miss him, we all miss him.

"He was a hero."

The Portland Tribune

Our Opinion: Rallies distasteful, but so is censorship

By Editorial Board

May 30, 2017

A 'free speech' gathering deserves a place, even if the mayor and others disagree with the group hosting Saturday's event.

Having the right to do something doesn't mean it's right to do it.

That's why we are joining Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler in asking the organizers of two upcoming public demonstrations to put their plans on hold.

The first, slated for Sunday, June 4, is billed as a Trump Free Speech Rally aimed at "exercising free speech" in "one of the most liberal areas on the West Coast." The second, more-disturbing, event is a March Against Sharia on Saturday, June 10.

Both events were planned before the sickening attack last Friday in which two men on a MAX train were killed after coming to the aid of two young women, one of whom wore a Muslim hijab, who was being verbally attacked by Jeremy Joseph Christian.

Alt-right organizers for the June 4 pro-Trump rally have tried to distance themselves from Christian, though he attended their previous "free-speech" rally earlier this spring. But any event supporting our president is ill-timed, given his past anti-Muslim statements and the three days it took him to issue a tepid condemnation of last week's fatal attack.

The June 10 event is one of 22 nationwide being organized by ACT for America, which cloaks anti-Muslim sentiments in a purported concern about Muslim women's rights. Even if the group was truly interested in drawing a distinction between Muslims who twist a part of Islamic tradition to justify violence and the vast majority of the peaceful practitioners of that faith, doing so would be nearly impossible in Portland's highly charged political climate right now.

There's nothing organizers can do to unlink the planned public events to Christian's actions, so for the good of the community — as well as their own political messages — they should call off the events.

If, however, they choose to go forward, the city must ensure everyone's safety without standing in the way of constitutionally protected speech.

That's why we were troubled by Wheeler's announcement on Monday that he'd asked the federal government to revoke the permit for the June 4 event and deny a permit for the June 10 event. (Both events are planned for the federally owned Terry Schunk Plaza downtown.)

We understand his motivation, but believe he's on shaky constitutional grounds.

Yes, the murders on the MAX were horrific, particularly because the men killed were defending two young women from ugly, bigoted verbal assault.

But that doesn't justify using political influence to try and deny permits for people to express their opinions, even unpopular opinions, without proof that doing so poses an imminent threat of harm. And, despite violence at past events put on by the organizers of the June 4 rally, Wheeler did not on Monday offer any evidence that public safety was an issue.

Wheeler has every right to ask organizers of the permitted marches to reschedule them — and we strongly concur with his request.

But if they don't, absent any proof of threat, they must be allowed to continue and any hateful rhetoric espoused should be matched — and overmatched — with a peaceful, clear, response that Portland will not stand for bigotry (or censorship).

Willamette Week

Portland City Employees were Subjected to Hazing, Violence and Bigotry. Senior Officials Shrugged.

For six years, a maintenance crew leader shot subordinates with BB's, popcorn kernels and hard candies.

*By Nigel Jaquiss
May 31, 2017*

For some employees, the Portland Bureau of Transportation's maintenance facility at 2929 N Kerby Ave. is a little shop of horrors. It's a place where they were bound with duct tape, shot with popcorn kernels from an air-compressor gun, and forced to pick food off the floor in ritual humiliations.

And city officials have decided that's OK.

The details are spelled out in a nine-page report of a personnel investigation completed in January and obtained by *WW*. The report, based on interviews with nine PBOT maintenance employees, paints a picture of violence, hazing and bigotry inside a shop that prizes loyalty and punishes "snitching."

When the behavior was substantiated by an investigation, the response of PBOT management was to transfer the ringleader—and fire one of the whistleblowers.

The primary target of the investigation is an 11-year city employee named Jerry Munson, who served as a crew leader on the maintenance group's "liner crew."

That group of six workers performs a vital function, rehabilitating the city's aging sewer pipes by installing liners inside the pipes that stop them from rupturing and leaking. (Transportation workers repair sewer lines because that work has always been performed by maintenance workers, who were absorbed when PBOT took over the 450-employee Maintenance Bureau.)

The city personnel investigation found that for years Munson used a specially rigged high-pressure air gun to fire various hard objects at his subordinates. He allegedly targeted new employees the most. (Munson did not respond to *WW*'s requests for comment.)

One of Munson's subordinates, Hayden Rich, reported Munson "shot him numerous times over multiple areas of his body with an air compressor gun" his first day on the job, according to the report. "He said he was shot with BBs, popcorn kernels and hard candies...the air-gun shots were painful and they left welts and bruises."

Maintenance official Scott Wojcicki interviewed nine employees, all of whom said they'd either been shot by Munson or seen him shoot others. One reported the shootings had been going on for "more than a couple of years."

Employees said they disliked being shot but felt powerless to do anything because "there's a culture in this place you can't snitch."

It was a culture in which supervisors last October not only helped immobilize a new employee with duct tape and locked him in a room but then sent a cellphone image to other city employees memorializing the event. WW has obtained that image (see photo above).

Bullying, the report says, was routine. Also on Rich's first day on the job, Nov. 7, 2016, for instance, he was assigned to clean up the liner crew's shed. When Munson and another veteran employee named Matt Hoyt returned to the shed from lunch, Rich told them he had finished the task and had nothing else to do. Hoyt, the report says, then dumped some french fries he was holding on the floor.

"Pick them up, bitch," Hoyt told the new employee, the report says. Rich hesitated, not sure what to do, then picked up the fries.

"Wow, you're a bitch for life, now," Munson told him. (Hoyt did not respond to a request for comment.)

Other employees accused Munson of making homophobic comments and tolerating a sign in the shop that had been altered from "DISTRICT 2" to "RICT 2," which at least one employee interpreted as a reference to Hitler's Third Reich and a reference to white supremacy.

Wojcicki, the city manager who conducted the investigation, did not find Munson's responses to the allegations against him convincing.

"You repeatedly either denied doing something or claimed you did not recall it, although you would then admit doing it," Wojcicki wrote.

In his conclusion, Wojcicki said it appeared Munson had begun shooting employees with his air gun as far back as six years ago, when he sprayed one with rock salt.

"Your co-workers have been attacked and bullied by you," Wojcicki wrote.

On Jan. 23, he proposed Munson be fired for "physical violence, discourteous treatment and bullying of co-workers, violating safety rules, inappropriate use of city resources, and dishonesty."

But Munson kept his job. He was merely demoted and moved within PBOT after his union contested his firing. "Part of our function is to ensure that the disciplinary process is fair and equitable, and that all allegations of misconduct are investigated in accordance with applicable contractual and legal standards," said Farrell Richartz, business manager for Laborers' Local 483, in a statement.

One of the employees who cooperated in the investigation did lose his job, however.

Russ Wilkinson alleges in a complaint filed March 23 with the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries that he was fired two days before his tenure as a probationary employee ended. "I believe this was in retaliation for participating in the investigation," the complaint says.

In his BOLI complaint, still under investigation, Wilkinson provides a possible explanation why superiors ignored Wojcicki's recommendation: "I know that Jerry Munson is the brother of Lee Munson, who is the acting director of the Bureau of Maintenance," Wilkinson wrote.

WW asked PBOT officials, including direct Leah Treat, to explain. PBOT spokesman John Brady declined to answer questions from WW about Munson or the investigation, instead issuing a statement.

"We did take appropriate action to address this situation," Brady said. "Employee safety is of paramount concern to us, and we are taking steps to address the issues of hazing and bullying raised by this incident."

Brady also addressed Wilkinson's allegation about Munson's brother.

"Lee Munson has no supervisory authority, nor input into any employment decisions related to Jerry Munson," Brady said. "This is per PBOT and city of Portland policy."

City Commissioner Dan Saltzman assumed oversight of PBOT in January, when the bureau's previous commissioner, Steve Novick, left office. Saltzman's chief of staff, Brendan Finn, says the commissioner's office doesn't comment on personnel matters.

Portland lawyer Ben Rosenthal is representing Wilkinson in his BOLI complaint.

"We're talking about assault and battery in the workplace here," Rosenthal says. "It sounds sophomoric, but it's very serious."

The Portland Mercury

A City in Mourning

Last Week's Horrific TriMet Attack Has Portland Reeling Yet Resolute. Upcoming Alt-Right Rallies Will Test That.

*By Doug Brown and Dirk VanderHart
May 31, 2017*

Until late last week, the bulky, homely pedestrian bridge leading to the Hollywood MAX platform was as mundane and utilitarian a structure as you could find in Portland.

That changed on the afternoon of Friday, May 26, when the bewildering acts of a bigot took the lives of two men standing against racism, and very nearly killed a third. Today, and for the foreseeable future, that pedestrian bridge is something else: an unlikely symbol of selfless sacrifice, overflowing with flowers and messages of hope.

It was, after all, the Hollywood station that authorities **rushed to on Friday**, responding to the increasingly alarming details of an attack that had just unfolded.

Witnesses reported a MAX passenger spewing racist vitriol at two teenage girls—both of them Black, one wearing a hijab—when three bystanders intervened. In **a detailed account** released Tuesday afternoon, prosecutors said the alleged assailant, Jeremy Joseph Christian, 35, turned his attention to the men, managing to stab or slash all three in the neck.

Ricky John Best, 53, an Army veteran and city employee, died at the Hollywood platform.

Taliesin Myrddin Namkai Meche, a 23-year-old Reed College graduate, died after being taken to the hospital.

Micah David-Cole Fletcher, a 21-year-old Portland State University student, survived thanks to aid he received from witnesses.

Christian was apprehended not far from the platform, and prosecutors described a litany of vile confessions following his arrest. He faces a host of felony and misdemeanor charges, including aggravated murder, attempted aggravated murder, intimidation, and unlawful use of a weapon.

The Hollywood station was **front and center once again** on Saturday evening, when somber Portlanders flocked there by the hundreds bearing candles and flowers and, above all, their sincere gratitude to the men who'd paid such a drastic price for intervening.

"They lost their lives because of me and my friend and the way we looked, and I just want to say thank you to them and their family," a tearful Destinee Mangum, one of the two teens Christian had allegedly been harassing, told KPTV. "I appreciate them because without them, we probably would be dead right now."

Today, that mundane pedestrian bridge is utterly transformed—covered with flowers and written tributes to the three heroes of Friday's attack. "This will not stop us," they read, and "I would die for you" and "love prevails." In response to such unspeakable ugliness, the bridge is suddenly beautiful.

But it's hard not to see worse changes afoot.

The slayings Christian allegedly carried out last week appear to be the most violent outcroppings of overt bigotry the city has experienced in recent months, but they are far from unusual. As Donald Trump's victory has emboldened far-right causes, people with racist, white-supremacist sympathies have **gleefully glommed on**. That includes Christian himself.

Last month **the man showed up**, armed with a baseball bat and wrapped in a Revolution-era American flag, to a right-wing "March for Free Speech" along 82nd Avenue in Montavilla. Christian was enraged by left-wing protesters. A police officer quickly confiscated his bat, but he continued ranting at the crowd, yelling "Fuck all you niggers!"

Christian repeatedly gave the Nazi salute throughout the hours-long event and yelled "Hail Vinland," a term used by far-right white nationalists to assert that they "are Vikings in a new land continuing the ancient battle for the preservation of their people," according to an antifascist expert who spoke with the *Guardian*. Notably, Christian had a length of chain looped repeatedly around his neck—a choice that would offer protection should someone slash or attack that part of his body.

On Facebook, Christian expressed admiration for Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh and far-right Norwegian mass murderer Anders Breivik, and regularly lauded Adolf Hitler and the Nazis.

The man had exhibited more recent troubling behavior, too. KATU **reported** on video footage of Christian on a MAX train a day before the attack, shouting: "Fuck all you Christians and Muslims and fucking Jews. Fucking die." Though no one was engaging him, Christian also said he was "about to stab some motherfuckers."

The three victims of the knife attack are now icons of resistance to that racist tide, and support for the men and their families—along with the teens who were the initial targets of hostility—has been effusive. As of Tuesday morning, four crowdfunding efforts had raised more than \$1.2 million.

The pictures that have emerged of the men since Friday are universal in their admiration.

Best was an employee of the Bureau of Development Services, a job he took after a 23-year-stint in the Army, **according to** KATU.

The man's family—which includes his wife and four children—told the station he was cheerful and principled, always looking to help those in need of assistance. His co-workers gave similar accounts to local news outlets.

“He couldn’t just stand by and do nothing,” Best’s oldest son Erik told KATU. “He died fighting the good fight, protecting the innocent. Honestly, that’s what he probably wanted.”

The *Oregonian* **quoted** a witness who said Best was trying to stop Christian’s unhinged and profane ranting about Muslims, saying: “I know you’re a taxpayer. But this is not okay, that he was scaring people.”

Meche had recently earned an economics degree from Reed College, where professors praised his acumen. His family issued heartbreaking statements of mixed anguish and pride after the young man succumbed to his injuries, and his mother embraced supporters at Saturday’s vigil.

“My heart feels empty from the loss of my big brother, but also from the cruel awakening that hate & judgment can cause someone to do such a thing,” Meche’s sister wrote on Facebook. “I am so proud to call someone so brave and strong my big brother. You have always and will always be my hero.”

Meche was urging Christian to get off the train when he was attacked, according to the *Oregonian*. Among his last words, a witness **told KOIN**, were “I want everybody to know, I want everybody on the train to know, I love them.”

Fletcher, the lone survivor of the knife attack, is a poet and student who’s demonstrated with Don’t Shoot Portland. He was released from the hospital on Monday, but has not yet offered his own account of the attack.

The account released by prosecutors on Tuesday alleges Christian first confronted Meche, then pushed Fletcher when he stepped in. When Fletcher pushed back, authorities say, Christian slashed him with a folding knife, then immediately attacked Meche.

At that point, Best stepped in and was also attacked.

There were other heroes, too. Stories have emerged of citizens on the packed train rushing to the aid of the injured men, offering comfort and medical attention. Others pursued Christian as he fled the station, and alerted police to his whereabouts.

As fallout from the murders continues, the significance of an already-planned “Trump Free Speech Rally” set for Sunday, June 4 has ramped up. The event was organized by Vancouver-based right-wing organizer Joey Gibson, who goes by “Patriot Prayer.” Gibson also organized the April 29 rally where the bat-wielding, slur-yelling Christian garnered attention. The organizer and others disavowed and criticized Christian at the time, but other, less-overt white nationalists were also in attendance.

Gibson’s plan is to bring several major “alt-right” figures to Terry Schunk Plaza on June 4, including convicted felon Kyle Chapman—known as “Based Stickman” because he’s assaulted left-wing protesters with a large stick—and Tim Gionet, a right-wing troll who goes by “Baked Alaska.”

Rose City Antifa and other leftist groups have planned a “Stand United Against Fascism Rally” directly across the street at Chapman Square.

A separate right-wing “March Against Sharia” is scheduled, in concert with events around the country, for June 10.

The tension surrounding these rallies caused Mayor Ted Wheeler to **make an atypical and controversial request** on Monday, May 29. Wheeler said that the federal government had already issued a permit for Gibson’s June 4 rally (the feds control Schunk Plaza), and called on officials to immediately revoke that permit, saying he feared violence.

“Our City is in mourning, our community’s anger is real, and the timing and subject of these events can only exacerbate an already difficult situation,” Wheeler said in a statement. “I am appealing to the organizers of the alt-right demonstrations to CANCEL the events they have scheduled on June 4 and June 10. I urge them to ask their supporters to stay away from Portland. There is never a place for bigotry or hatred in our community, and especially not now.”

Gibson said he’s not canceling the event, and a spokesperson from the US General Services Administration, which manages Schrunk Plaza, would not discuss the government's plans Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the ACLU of Oregon and others criticized Wheeler for his request, saying it encroached on free speech.

“The government cannot revoke or deny a permit based on the viewpoint of the demonstrators,” the organization wrote in a statement. “Period.”

There are concerns about the approach in City Hall, too.

“We are walking a very fine line here,” Commissioner Nick Fish told the *Mercury*. “I appreciate the mayor’s concern for public safety and desire to avoid more violence. I also share the concerns of the ACLU and others that we must never make any decision based on the content of speech, no matter how abhorrent.”

Organizers Cancel Upcoming "Portland March Against Sharia." A June 4 Alt-Right Rally is Still On.

*By Dirk VanderHart
May 31, 2017*

The organizers behind a "Portland March Against Sharia" scheduled for June 10 have canceled the event, opting instead to move it to Seattle.

The move comes days after a double murder on a MAX train that **left the city hurt and angry** over extremist views being aired in public with growing frequency, and in response to Mayor Ted Wheeler's call for the organizers to voluntarily call off the march.

In an announcement on the event's **Facebook page** this morning, a strategist for the group **ACT for America** which is promoting similar events around the country, said Wheeler had been irresponsible in his characterization of the event as "alt-right". The conservative organization is fond of calling itself the "NRA of national security" and pushes issues like border security and increased domestic oil production.

"Due to Mayor Wheeler's inflammatory comments and what we feel is an incitement of violence, he has shamefully endangered every scheduled participant," the statement reads. "Consequently, in order to ensure the safety of those who had planned on attending, we have taken the decision to cancel the Portland March Against Sharia."

The announcement eliminates one of two planned events that have city officials especially worried in the wake of last week's murders. The second, planned for this Sunday, June 4, is still in the works, according to Vancouver-based organizer Joey Gibson. Gibson is planning to host a number of popular alt-right personalities at the event, and apparently already has a permit from the federal government to hold a "Rally for Free Speech" at downtown's Terry Schrunk Plaza.

In a controversial move, Wheeler on Monday **called on the federal government** to pull that permit. The federal General Services Administration has declined comment, but says it will release a statement this morning.

OPB

Portland June 10 March Against Sharia Cancelled

*By Bryan M. Vance
May 31, 2017*

A local offshoot of a national anti-Sharia law rally planned for Portland on June 10 has been canceled, according to the event's organizer. In a post on the Portland March Against Sharia Facebook event page, organizer Scott Ryan Presler said he has decided to cancel the Portland event after what he said was a "blatant attempt to suppress freedom of discourse" by Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler.

Debate raged about the planned rally following the fatal stabbing of two men on a TriMet light-rail train Friday. The two men and a third victim who survived the stabbing intervened when a 35-year-old Portland resident, Jeremy Christian, began shouting anti-Muslim epithets at two teenage girls on the train, one of whom was wearing a hijab. Christian has been charged with two counts of aggravated murder, among other crimes.

Wheeler had called on the federal government to refuse a permit for the rally, which was to take place at Terry D. Schunk Plaza on Saturday, June 10. The park is on federal property and therefore falls under the federal government's jurisdiction.

"Just because something is constitutional and legal doesn't make it responsible," Wheeler told OPB Tuesday. "Given where this city is now, in terms of the mourning we're going through collectively, the anger that is currently focused on what I would describe as the alt-right, this is not the right time for those groups to come into our community and hold a rally."

In the Facebook post, Presler lamented what he said were shameful comments by Wheeler about the rally and the group behind it. Presler took issue with Wheeler's description of the group behind the rally as "alt-right."

"Our March Against Sharia includes all religions, genders, sexual orientations, and walks of life," Pressler wrote.

"Consequently, in order to ensure the safety of those who had planned on attending, we have taken the decision to cancel the Portland March Against Sharia."

Presler said another version of the event planned for Seattle is still set to happen.

Wheeler has also requested that the federal government revoke a permit for a free speech, pro-Trump rally planned for the same park Sunday, June 3. That rally is still scheduled to take place.

Oregon ACLU: Limiting Speech Wrong Response To Portland Attacks

By Tim Manickam

May 30, 2017

Friday's horrific attack on a TriMet train has prompted a debate among Oregonians about the difference between free speech and hate speech.

Two men were killed and another seriously injured when they attempted to stop another man from berating two teenage girls with racist and anti-Muslim language.

Now Mayor Ted Wheeler is urging the federal government to stop two rallies planned for Portland in coming weeks. One is billed as a "Trump Free Speech" rally. The other is a "March Against Sharia," and it is part of a nationwide anti-Muslim demonstration.

Wheeler says the events should be canceled.

Mat dos Santos, the legal director of the ACLU of Oregon, says Wheeler's call to block the rallies is well-intentioned but incorrect.

"The mayor isn't just any Portlander," dos Santos told OPB on Tuesday's "Morning Edition."

"He's a government official, and he's sworn to uphold the Constitution — even when it isn't politically popular.

"... It's troubling to hear him get the law so wrong."

Dos Santos notes that hateful speech is still protected by the First Amendment.

"Without an imminent threat of violation, it's censorship," he said. "Generally speaking, First Amendment rights stop when they invite violence."