

The Oregonian

Anti-Fascist Group Plans Downtown Rally, says Claims of Planned Violence 'A Hoax'

*By Everton Bailey
November 2, 2017*

A new anti-fascist group plans a rally Saturday in downtown Portland – part of series scheduled in cities across the country – but the demonstrations have whipped up a heap of warnings by right-wing groups on social media that the gatherings will signal a "civil war."

Robert Brown, lead organizer for the Portland event, dismissed the claims of planned violence as "nonsense" and a "hoax" intended to scare people from participating in the march. A national spokesman for the group sponsoring the protests, Refuse Fascism, also denounced claims of any attacks during any of the demonstrations.

Since August, Facebook groups, YouTube videos and posts on other social media platforms – including use of the tag #CivilWar2017 – have warned that anti-fascists will cause a violent uprising Nov. 4 against supporters of the Trump administration.

The claims have ranged from the staging of "mass riots" to plans to "kill every single Trump voter, Conservative and gun owner."

Portland police said they know of no plans for violence during Saturday's permitted event.

The demonstration – calling for the removal of President Trump and Vice President Mike Pence from office -- comes nearly a year after the general election set off nationwide protests, including in Portland, where protesters and counter-protesters repeatedly clashed with each other and police.

Refuse Fascism, founded late last year, is holding a series of Nov. 4 rallies in Salem, Seattle, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City, Philadelphia and 13 other cities.

The purpose of the event, Brown said, is to help kick off continued nonviolent demonstrations in a public movement akin to what led up to the impeachment and removal of South Korean President Park Gun-hye in March.

Brown said he expects a crowd between 200 to 1,000 people here and anticipates appearances from antifa supporters as well as members from conservative group Patriot Prayer and militia group The Three Percenters. The rally will start about 2 p.m. at Jamison Square in downtown Portland with a march to Tom McCall Waterfront Park about 3:30 or 4 p.m., he said.

He said demonstrators plan to stay in the park overnight and aim to occupy a Southeast Portland park starting next week until Christmas if they receive enough supporters.

"It's possible a few people may come expecting some kind of civil war, but if they do, I suspect they'll be pretty disappointed," said Brown, a 23-year-old fourth-year student at Portland State University.

The talk of violence has been concerning, he said. He has gotten death threats and said it's possible someone could act based on the fear-mongering, he said.

Portland Police Sgt. Chris Burley said the agency is working to vet the credibility of any rumors of violence leading up to the march, but as of Thursday hadn't found any evidence a problem. He

said he couldn't speak about any specific threats under investigation. He asked the public to report any information on suspicious activity or threats to Portland police.

"We want to ensure that while people have differing viewpoints, that everyone has a safe space to exercise their First Amendment rights without fear for their safety or their property," Burley said.

Lead in Portland Water Exceeded Federal limits

*By Jessica Floum
November 2, 2017*

Portlanders could be at risk for lead poisoning from their drinking water.

The Portland Water Bureau last week found that lead levels at high-risk homes in Portland exceeded federal limits.

The city tested water from a sampling of 134 homes that it deems at high risk for lead exposure because they contain plumbing manufactured at a time when fixtures could contain significant amounts of lead.

Of the homes tested, more than 13 percent exceeded the state limit of 15 parts per billion. Federal rules require the city to notify the public of lead risks any time more than 10 percent of water samples are that tainted.

If ingested, lead can harm children's development, cause miscarriages and build up in people's blood, brain and bones. No amount of lead is considered safe.

"Ideally, all of our customers' household plumbing fixtures would be lead-free, but they aren't," Portland Water Bureau Director Michael Stuhr said in a statement. "This is why we are making improvements to our system to further reduce the potential for lead at our customers' taps."

Testing of high-risk homes shows that Portland has higher lead levels than other big water providers.

October's lead test results marked the third time in five years that Portland exceeded federal limits on lead in water. Its water tests have hovered around that limit for more than 20 years.

Portland's drinking water comes from the Bull Run watershed and is minimally treated. The bureau does increase the pH level of the water to limit the water's corrosiveness and reduce its ability to leach lead from plumbing.

The Portland City Council in March approved a pilot study to improve corrosion control treatment after a study called for additional treatment. The bureau plans to implement the new treatment method by Spring 2022.

"Between now and 2022, we're doing work to determine the best type of treatment," Water Bureau spokeswoman Jaymee Cuti said.

In the meantime, water bureau officials recommend customers take steps to reduce their risk of exposure to lead. They include running taps to flush out lead before using the water to drink or cook, using only cold water from the tap for cooking or drinking, using filters and regularly cleaning aerators.

Officials suggest running the tap for 2 minutes or until the water gets colder, indicating that the water is coming from outside the home.

Use only cold tap water for cooking and baby formula and do not boil water to remove lead. Lead dissolves more easily in hot water.

The bureau recommends asking a doctor to check children for lead and testing your water.

To get a free lead test or inquire about checking a child, call the LeadLine at 503-988-4000 or visit www.leadline.org.

The Portland Tribune

'Elevated levels' of Lead Found in Portland Water

*By KOIN 6 News
November 2, 2017*

Portland Water Bureau's twice-a-year tests reveal lead levels at high-risk homes throughout the city.

The Portland Water Bureau has announced that its most recent tests for lead in water exceeded allowable levels in high-risk homes.

The bureau tested water from 134 homes in October that are deemed high-risk because they're known to have lead solder in their plumbing. The results found 18 homes exceeded the federal limit of 15 parts per billion.

When more than 10 percent of homes test above the federal limit, the bureau is required to notify the public of the results. A number of previous tests have produced similar results, most recently in the fall of 2016, when 14 of 112 homes exceeded the lead-in-water limit.

According to the PWB, there are potentially up to 15,000 homes in Portland that were built between 1970 and 1985 that are more likely to have lead solder in their water pipes.

Because of that, in March, the Portland City Council gave the water bureau approval to begin "implementation of improved corrosion control treatment" as a way to reduce lead levels in drinking water. The improved treatment is expected to start by the spring of 2022.

Portland's drinking water comes from the Bull Run Watershed, which the bureau treats to make it less corrosive by raising the pH of the water.

"Ideally, all of our customers' household plumbing fixtures would be lead-free, but they aren't. This is why we are making improvements to our system to further reduce the potential for lead at our customers' taps," PWB Director Michael Stuhr said of the results.

Even small exposure to lead can cause lifetime developmental damage, especially in infants and children.

To reduce the threat, the bureau advises that those living in high-risk homes: run tap water two minutes to flush out lead, use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula, never boil water, and consider using a filter that reduces lead.

To test children for lead, ask a physician or contacting the LeadLine at 503-988-4000 or by visiting multco.us/health/lead-poisoning-prevention.

Free home testing for lead is also available at the LeadLine.

Willamette Week

District Attorney Rod Underhill Rules Uber's Greyball Technology and Playbook Are a Trade Secret

*By Rachel Monahan
November 2, 2017*

Uber used the software to break city rules. But you can't see it—because it's a "trade secret."

In a letter released today, Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill ruled that the city of Portland does not have to release the complete set of records that show how the ride-hailing company Uber used a software called "Greyball" to evade regulators.

Underhill ruled that the records are "trade secrets, unconditionally exempt from disclosure."

Underhill's letter comes in response to a public-records appeal filed by WW and Reuters.

Uber used Greyball in 2014 to help drivers illegally operate in Portland and evade regulators. The Greyball technology hid Uber cars from city inspectors who attempted to use the Uber app to hail a car.

As part of its investigation into Uber, Portland subpoenaed documents related to Greyball.

The city's subpoena included a request for documents "relating to any software or software application known as Greyball." In other words, the city was asking to look at the rule-breaking software and the manual for how to use it.

WW asked for all the records the city had received. The city declined to provide them, saying they were covered in a nondisclosure agreement the city had signed with Uber.

Today, Underhill sided with the city.

Underhill cited a 2016 Multnomah County Circuit Court decision that said information on "individual Uber rides constituted a trade secret."

"As to the others, we find that information could show a competitor the technical mechanisms used by Uber to run its operations constitutes a trade secret where, as here, substantial legal efforts have been made to ensure secrecy," he wrote.

The Daily Journal of Commerce

Portland Reportedly Sees Dip in Residential Rents

*By Chuck Slothower
November 2, 2017*

Rents in Portland have fallen for consecutive months, suggesting new supply is making a dent in meeting the city's housing needs.

In October, rents here were 0.4 percent lower than a year earlier, and 0.8 percent lower than September, according to Apartment List. The new data indicate rental housing costs have crested after strong increases in recent years.

The median rent was \$1,140 for a one-bedroom apartment, and \$1,350 for a two-bedroom apartment, according to the rental website. October was the second month in a row rents declined in Portland. The city's decline was steeper than the nation's, where rents slipped 0.1 percent.

"Demand is weak, relative to the supply," said Sam Rodriguez, senior managing director of Mill Creek Residential Trust, a major multifamily developer in Portland. "That's why you're seeing this very anemic growth compared to the growth we had before."

Other data also indicates rents are retreating. At Hassalo on Eighth, a Lloyd District development with 657 apartments, rents were \$1,671 as of Sept. 30, down 4 percent from \$1,735 a year earlier. (Hassalo on Eighth is owned by American Assets Trust, a publicly traded company).

Managers of some rental properties are offering concessions, particularly in the luxury market. At Yard, for example, prospective renters are being offered a month free and a free gym membership. A month free is being offered for some units at Slate. Up to six weeks free is being offered at NV in the north Pearl District.

But the decrease in rents for luxury units has not trickled down for middle-income renters, said Jamey Duhamel, policy director for city Commissioner Chloe Eudaly.

"It's softening at the high end," Duhamel said. "That has not in any way translated to lower rents for folks who are stretched thin, or even the average renter."

"We definitely don't see any slowdown in the need," she added.

Nevertheless, supply in certain markets, including the Pearl District and Central Eastside, has surged as major apartment projects have opened.

"As developers, this is what we normally do – we overbuild," Rodriguez said. "That puts a lid on rents for a while."

Construction has continued apace. Portland's crane count stood at 32 in July – more than New York, which had 18, according to Rider Levett Bucknall, a firm that tracks the data. Seattle had the most cranes, with 58.

The city of Portland has responded to a tight rental market with a slew of housing regulations. Inclusionary housing rules took effect Feb. 1, requiring developers of projects with 20 units or more to provide a portion of affordable units, or pay a hefty fee. Portland also instituted relocation assistance, requiring landlords to compensate tenants when issuing no-cause evictions or raising rent by 10 percent or more.

Developers responded to inclusionary housing by rushing to apply for projects before the rules took effect. Some of those projects are now under construction, while others are stalled.

"We've got a very, very large pipeline," Rodriguez said. "I'm not sure how much of that is going to get done. A lot of it is in design review."

Rodriguez is a member of the Portland Design Commission, which performs design review. Multifamily developers are grappling with inclusionary housing, which dents their revenue, he said.

"Everybody's trying to figure out inclusionary housing," he said. "We're struggling to make deals work."

Rodriguez predicted rents will again grow in about a year as the current supply is absorbed and few additional apartments get built.

City Council Delays Final Vote on Block 290 Appeal

*By Kent Hohfield
November 2, 2017*

Developers of the Block 290 project at 1417 N.W. 20th Ave. will have to wait at least one more week to gain final approval. The Portland City Council on Wednesday delayed finalizing a tentative 4-1 vote denying the Northwest District Association's appeal of the Portland Design Commission's 5-0 vote to approve the project.

A revised report by city staff was not ready for a formal vote by the City Council, Mayor Ted Wheeler said. The project will return before the council on Nov. 8 at 11 a.m.

LRS Architects' design calls for a mix of luxury and market-rate residential units on top of ground-floor retail space. The building will also include below-grade parking, a public square and a roof terrace. Guardian Real Estate Services' project spent nearly two years winding its way through the city's design review process.

Plans are for a horseshoe-shape building with two seven-story elevations and one four-story elevation. The elevations would range from 57 to 79 feet.

The neighborhood association contends that the planned public square wouldn't meet the requirement set forth in the Con-way master plan. The design team claims the current layout would provide a 16,008-square-foot space able to comfortably hold 50 to 100 people at once. The neighborhood group believes those numbers are inflated because they include space under canopies.

The City Council's key concern during a hearing Oct. 12 centered on the housing that the project would provide: mostly market-rate and luxury units. Commissioners questioned how much those units would help ease Portland's housing crisis.

"We have a glut of market- and luxury-rate apartments," Commissioner Chloe Eudaly said during the Oct. 12 hearing. "That being said, I can't find significant enough problems, and defer to the Design Commission (decision)."

Commissioner Amanda Fritz cast the council's lone dissenting vote.

"We are told that we need the housing," she said. "The affordable housing isn't the crux of the issue here. Does it abide by the master plan and provide the open space?"