

The Oregonian

Top 12 Portland City Hall Stories of 2017

*By Jessica Floum
December 27, 2017*

This year, Portland officials welcomed to City Hall Mayor Ted Wheeler, the former Oregon Treasurer with experience leading as an executive in the public and private sectors, and Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, a former bookstore owner with no political experience.

The mayor's former colleagues wondered how he would adjust to a role with limited power and a lot of politicking. Others waited to see whether Eudaly, a former housing advocate would press hard on rent control or meet her new colleagues in the middle.

What they didn't foresee was a record snow storm that closed schools, shut down businesses, claimed the lives of at least four who died of exposure and led the mayor to declare a state of emergency.

They also could not anticipate the council's decisions to regularly pass policies taking a stance on national issues in response to federal actions or the protests that shut down council meetings early this year.

Needless to say, Portland city commissioners stayed busy. Read on to learn the rest of The Oregonian/OregonLive's top City Hall stories of 2017.

The city council in February approved a renter protection rule put forward by Eudaly. Now, Portland landlords must pay \$2,900 to \$4,500 to tenants evicted without cause or who must move as a result of a rent increase of 10 percent or more.

That month, Portland also approved a \$51 million deal to buy a Northeast Portland housing complex and turn its 263 units into affordable housing. The city plans to make two-thirds of the apartments affordable to families making 60 percent or less than the median family income and one-third affordable to those making 30 percent or less. The housing bureau is now looking at how much Ellington's current residents make to determine whether they will meet these qualifications. The housing bureau doesn't want to displace anyone, director Kurt Creager said.

The council officially declared Portland a sanctuary city for undocumented immigrants, meaning it would not use city resources to enforce federal immigration laws. The decision came after President Donald Trump pledged to increase immigration enforcement and limit funding to sanctuary cities.

Activists repeatedly shut down city council meetings early this year, protesting the mayor's failure to protect Portland's homeless during the storm, the fatal police shooting of an African American teenager suspected in an armed robbery and the police handling of anti-Trump protests. Interruptions delayed city business so much that Wheeler ended up locking the public out of a meeting in March. He also enacted a rule to eject rowdy protesters from council sessions, parts of which the American Civil Liberties Union criticized as unconstitutional.

The Portland Water Bureau found the parasite cryptosporidium in Portland's main drinking water source 18 times this year, more than it has in the last decade. While county health officials did not see an increase in cryptosporidium-related illnesses as of May, the detections surpassed state limits and forced Portland to come up with a treatment plan. Portland will pay up to \$500 million to build a new water treatment facility. Ratepayers are expected to pay an additional \$10.38 per month over the next 16 years.

Wheeler in June took over control of Portland's 911 center, leaving Commissioner Amanda Fritz to manage only the Portland Parks & Recreation bureau and marking the first time in 30 years that a commissioner has been put in charge of just one bureau. The mayor criticized a "failure of leadership" during Fritz's tenure after two reports from the city's ombudsman revealed that bureau officials knowingly reported false wait time data for emergency calls to the City Council and that tens of thousands of emergency calls went untracked and unreturned.

Wheeler promised during his campaign that he would increase Portland's affordable housing supply and help house Portlanders living on the streets. In August, he drew criticism that he was moving too slowly to deliver on these promises.

The city council made more progress on increasing affordable housing over the next few months. That same month, Wheeler hired long-time city hall aide Shannon Callahan as assistant director of the housing bureau and the council approved a plan to buy a Southeast Powell property, tear down the strip club there and build up to 300 new affordable apartments. In October, the city council approved spending guidelines for the city's \$258 million voter-approved affordable housing bond. The mayor announced in December plans to spend bond proceeds to build the affordable apartments on Southeast Powell.

In early September, Commissioner Dan Saltzman announced that he would not run for a sixth term as a city commissioner. Commissioner Nick Fish announced that same week that he would pursue another term. Both of their announcements came almost a month after Fish was diagnosed with cancer, which Saltzman said caused him to reflect on how he wanted to spend his "twilight years"

The Oregon Supreme Court ruled in September that a controversial tax that funds arts education in schools is legal.

Since Mayor Ted Wheeler started his term in January, eight of the city's bureau directors have left or announced plans to leave. The mayor axed three of them himself. Eudaly also ousted the directors of her two bureaus.

Vera Katz, acclaimed as a pioneer in women's politics as Oregon's first female House speaker and the last Portland mayor to win three terms, died at 84. Her son, Los Angeles journalist Jesse Katz, remembered her as a Jewish immigrant and loving mother who strove to give back to the country that "rescued her."

City of Portland Drops Challenge to Court-Ordered Hearings on Police Reforms

*By Maxine Bernstein
December 27, 2017*

Portland city officials have agreed to appear before a federal judge in the next month or two on the state of the city's settlement agreement on police reforms, and present several amendments for court approval.

The development marks the end of a more than year-long logjam, resulting from the city's legal challenge to the holding of periodic hearings on the city's settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice.

In December 2016, the City Council voted to appeal a judge's order that city attorneys return to court the following month to explain how the city planned to come into compliance with the community engagement piece of the settlement.

On Tuesday, the city withdrew that legal challenge before the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Once the city withdrew its challenge, the U.S. Attorney's office and the city Tuesday filed a joint request for U.S. District Judge Michael H. Simon to schedule a hearing within 45 days. At the hearing, both sides will also present a series of mutually-agreed upon amendments to the settlement.

The city's settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice called for reforms to police training, policies and oversight after a 2012 federal investigation found Portland police engaged in excessive force against people who have or are perceived to have a mental illness. Investigators also found that police improperly used stun guns against suspects. A federal judge approved the agreement in 2014.

"It's been a little over a year since our last hearing before the court. The fact of the matter is there's been progress," said Oregon's U.S. Attorney Billy J. Williams. "We're going into year four of the agreement, and the court needs to hear about it, and just as importantly, the public needs to know."

Document: U.S. Department of Justice's compliance report, December 2017

The City Council approved multiple changes to the settlement agreement in August. Federal civil rights lawyers, the Portland Police Association and the Albina Ministerial Alliance Coalition for Justice and Police Reform support them, though the coalition has cited some lingering concerns.

The coalition also is urging the court to hold a "fairness hearing" on the amendments because they include significant changes governing community engagement and oversight, and the community has "been left in the dark" for more than a year, according to the coalition's motion.

"The people whose lives will be directly affected by these changes should be informed and afforded an opportunity to weigh in on whether the proposed changes are fair, adequate and reasonable and within the spirit of the Settlement Agreement's intended impacts," attorneys J. Ashlee Albies and Kristen Chambers wrote in a motion Wednesday on behalf of the coalition.

The changes include:

--A plan to create a new citizen oversight group called the Portland Committee on Community Engaged Policing within 90 days of the approved amendment. The group, with 11 members appointed by the mayor, will solicit community concerns and make recommendations to the chief and mayor. Its membership should come from a "reasonably broad spectrum" of the community, meet as needed and hold "regular town hall meetings" that should be open to the public, the amendment says. It does not say all the group's meetings will be held in public. Any written reports the group provides to the mayor will be made public.

--A way to speed up the discipline process and bypass the Police Review Board when an officer agrees to accept certain discipline for less-serious offenses. Complaints of excessive use of force, discrimination, disparate treatment or retaliation, as well as officer-involved shootings and in-custody deaths would not be eligible for this "stipulated discipline" process.

--Removing from the 180-day deadline the Citizen Review Committee's handling of a citizen's appeal of a bureau ruling on alleged police misconduct.

--Procedures to ensure the internal affairs division interviews officers who use deadly force within 48 hours of the incident. When an officer uses deadly force, the bureau no longer will require the officer who uses deadly force to file a use of force report, and the supervisor will no longer have to file an after-action report, as all the information is expected to be captured through the internal affairs' investigation, the bureau's updated force policy says.

--Allowing the bureau to conduct "force audits" instead of relying on its Employee Information System to examine whether supervisors or divisions within the bureau, such as the Gang Enforcement Team or Drugs and Vice Division, are using force at a higher rate than others in the bureau.

--Allowing the city-hired Chicago academics to issue quarterly reports that focus on one or two comprehensive elements of the settlement instead of addressing every single element.

Since the City Council voted to approve these changes in August, the city attorney's office established a work group with representatives of the Multnomah County district attorney's office, U.S. attorney's office, Portland Police Bureau, and Portland Police Association to draft police procedures to ensure the internal affair inquiries into police use of deadly force stays "walled off" from the criminal investigations.

Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill had cautioned the Police Bureau against having internal affairs compel such interviews before a criminal investigation or grand jury heard the case of an officer-involved shooting. Yet the City Council, acting under pressure from the public and with support from national police experts, moved to require the interviews within 48 hours.

The Police Bureau, however, will restrict any information obtained in the parallel internal affairs investigation from being shared with any assistant chiefs, a deputy chief, the chief or the mayor, who serves as police commissioner, until a criminal investigation is completed.

"Nothing from the administrative investigation can be shared with any part of the criminal investigation," said Mark Amberg, a deputy city attorney. "Nothing from an IA investigation can be shared outside of Professional Standards."

The U.S. attorney's office is pleased with the steps the city is taking to make a "robust wall" between the two parallel investigations to minimize any contamination of a criminal investigation by the ongoing internal inquiry, Williams said.

In its petition to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, the city last December objected to additional in-court conferences before the judge beyond the already-scheduled annual progress report hearings on the settlement. For the past year, the city hasn't held any public meetings on the status of the settlement agreement, and has not selected new members for its planned new community group that will address the settlement reforms. A mediator from the 9th Circuit has worked with the parties to the settlement agreement since the spring.

Williams said his office will continue its oversight of the city settlement, despite national concerns that Attorney General Jeff Sessions would pull back federal lawyers from oversight of police reform pacts.

"The U.S. Attorney's Office, in concert with the Civil Rights Division, remains committed to monitoring the city's compliance with the settlement agreement and representing the public's interest in constitutional policing," Williams said.

The Albina Ministerial Coalition for Justice and Police Reform lent its support to the amendments, yet has concerns about the new community group that is to be formed.

Plans for the new community-based oversight group provide for "far too much Mayoral control, too little involvement from Portland's diverse communities, not enough support for community members, too much privacy and too little emphasis on outreach to the broader community," wrote Chambers, a lawyer representing the coalition, in a letter submitted to the court.

The Portland Tribune

City Hall Update: Timbers' Stadium Expansion Plan OK'd

*By Jim Redden
December 26, 2017*

Plus, Portlanders may vote on public campaign financing again and Adaptive BIKETOWN will return.

The Portland Timbers' plan to expand Providence Park was approved by the City Council on Wednesday.

Peregrine Sports is expected to pay \$50 million to add up to 4,000 seats to the downtown stadium. The city will pay about \$3 million for system repair and replacement and other costs.

The council also agreed in June to waive about \$5 million in ticket tax revenue over the next 10 years to help offset the project costs. When the project is finished, the additional seats could generate up to

\$5 million in additional tax revenue.

The sports company owns both the Timbers and the Portland Thorns women's soccer team. Although a provision in the agreement allows the company to sell the Thorns, in response to a question from Commissioner Amanda Fritz, President Mike Golub assured the council there are no plans to do so.

Public campaign financing again?

Despite the fact that Portland will start a new public campaign financing program in 2019, a prospective initiative petition for another one was filed city election officials last week.

The program sponsored by Commissioner Amanda Fritz and approved by the City Council last December would provide public financing for candidates who agree to cap contributions at \$250 and total spending at \$20,000 in the primary and general elections.

The potential ballot measure allows for public campaign financing but also caps private contributions at \$500 and prohibits any other funds from being spent on a city campaign. It is supported by activists Ron Buel and B. Elizabeth Trojan.

A Multnomah County Circuit Court judge is currently considering whether county campaign contribution limits are legal.

Adaptive BIKETOWN will return

The Portland Bureau of Transportation is calling its Adaptive BIKETOWN pilot project a success. The extension of the city's bike share program will return May 1.

Fifty-nine adaptive bikes for people with disabilities were rented during the 14 weeks between July 21 and Oct. 31. Sixty-eight percent qualified for a discount because of their conditions, 53

percent said it was their first time riding an adaptive bike, two-thirds said they rode in a group, and 76 percent said they live in the Portland region.

The bikes were rented by Kerr Bikes, which is owned by Albertina Kerr, a nonprofit organization that helps people with challenges and disabilities reach their full potential.

Willamette Week

Voters Could See a 2018 Initiative to Limit Campaign Donations in Portland City Council Elections

*By Katie Shepherd
December 22, 2017*

The change would make Portland's campaign finance rules more like Multnomah County's regulations.

Advocates have filed an initiative petition to impose limits on campaign contributions for candidates in Portland City Council elections.

The petition, filed Dec. 20 by Ron Buel and B. Elizabeth Trojan, needs 34,156 signatures by July 6 to successfully make it to the ballot in November 2018.

The proposal would limit individual contributions to \$500 per candidate per year, and cap a person's aggregate donations at \$5,000 each year. A small donor committee that only accepts donations of \$100 or less could contribute as much as it wants to any candidate. Political Action Committees would have to follow the same rules as individual donors.

The state of Oregon has no campaign finance limits—making big-ticket races an expensive proposition. Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, for example, raised about \$1.1 million in his 2016 campaign.

But Portland City Council has already passed a public campaign finance program that will, starting in 2020, allow candidates to accept city dollars if they agree to a donation cap.

The initiative would make Portland's campaign finance rules more like Multnomah County's regulations.

Last November, voters passed a spending cap in county races, limiting direct contributions from any individual or group to \$500, limiting independent expenditures to \$5,000 per individual and \$10,000 per group, and requiring ads to list the five biggest sources of funding.

The Multnomah County rules are being reviewed in court.

The petition says that limiting campaign contributions would open up elections and allow "a greater diversity of persons to seek office" while reducing the "reality and appearance of corruption."

The Portland Mercury

Remember the Top Stories of 2017 With Us

By Doug Brown and Dirk VanderHart

December 27, 2017

Then Put It Behind You Forever

Look, you don't need us to tell you what 2017 was. We're not even sure we could muster the words to sum it up. Past being prologue, though, the Mercury is honor-bound to offer up this, our annual rundown of the notable things Portland struggled (and sometimes rejoiced) through over the last year. Savor this opportunity to reflect, Portland, and resolve to improve in 2018.

A FROZEN, RUTTED HELLSCAPE

Mayor Ted Wheeler could hardly have gotten a rougher welcome to his new job. In January, a serious winter storm took hold of the region and would not let up. Iced-over roads remained barely passable for a week or more, prompting soul-searching about how the city prepares for snow and ice. More troubling, at least four Portlanders died of exposure in the frigid temps—deaths that shocked the city's conscience. "I have been deeply humbled by my first 2.5 weeks in office," Wheeler said on January 17. The remaining 49 haven't been much easier.

CITY HALL DEVOLVES INTO CHAOS

Whether because of precedents set by former Mayor Charlie Hales, his own ham-handedness, or just rotten luck, Wheeler oversaw a period of sustained, perhaps unheard-of tumult during Portland City Council meetings early this year. Again and again, demonstrators brashly disrupted meetings, screaming vulgarities, sending frustrated councilmembers back to their offices, and in one memorable Kendall Jenner send-up, rushing the council dais to hand Wheeler a Pepsi. It got bad enough that Commissioner Nick Fish briefly refused to let his staff attend the meetings until Wheeler got things under control. The mayor wound up pushing through a policy allowing the exclusion of disruptive attendees (its legality is still in question), and has ushered forth an era of unprecedented security measures in City Hall. Guests now have their bags checked, and the mayor refuses to open up the balcony in council chambers.

THE WOMEN'S MARCH KILLED IT

The day after Donald Trump was sworn in, millions of women and their allies took to the streets around the globe to protest the self-admitted groper and advocate women's rights, reproductive rights, gender equality, and other issues that seemed to be at odds with the new administration. After early hiccups in the planning phase for the Portland march, the rally was significantly larger than anyone expected, with an estimated 100,000 people showing up in rainy and near-freezing weather. The passionate crowd first packed shoulder-to-shoulder on the waterfront for speeches and music before marching around downtown. There were great signs, lots of dancing, good spirits, and so many pussy hats.

PORTLAND STEPS UP FOR RENTERS

Activists' dreams for rent control policies in Portland died in Salem this year, amid fuckery in the state Senate. Their cries were more successful in front of Portland City Council. In February, Commissioner Chloe Eudaly ushered forth the strongest renter protections the city's ever seen—a law that requires landlords to pay tenants relocation expenses when they issue no cause evictions, or when a rent increase of 10 percent or more spurs a renter to move out. Landlords

hate this, of course, and are challenging it in court. Meanwhile, the city is preparing to make the policy permanent.

R2D TOO GETS A NEW HOME

This was a close one! In April, well-liked homeless rest area Right 2 Dream Too was slated to be evicted from its longtime home at the base of the Chinatown gate, and it seemed Wheeler's office was fine with letting that happen. The mayor, after all, had stymied an earlier proposal to move the camp to a parking lot on Southwest Naito. Then everything changed. City and county officials came upon a city-owned lot they'd never seen in all their years searching for a new home for R2DToo, and in an expert bit of juggling, Wheeler's office was able to get the camp moved just west of the Moda Center.

PACKY IS PUT DOWN

On top of all the other misery 2017 heaped onto us, Oregon had to say goodbye to its favorite elephant. In February, the Oregon Zoo announced it had euthanized Packy, its famous 54-year-old bull elephant. The oldest male of his species in North America, Packy had been battling recurrent tuberculosis, though some zookeepers felt the mercy killing was premature. In the saddest detail of the affair, someone went to Fred Meyer to buy Packy a raspberry cake to enjoy before he was put down.

PORTLAND GETS GREYBALLED

Things almost quieted down. After Uber infuriated city officials in late 2014 by launching here without permission, the company was becoming part of the landscape, grudgingly accepted by even the most skeptical city officials. Then in March the New York Times broke the news about "Greyball," the secretive tool Uber had used to foil Portland regulators in those early, illegal days. Elected leaders conducted an investigation that didn't turn up much of interest, but the damage was done. Today, Uber's critics in City Hall are renewing calls for a crackdown.

CRYPTO CREEPS IN

The city has long preened itself on its sense of water superiority. That sheen has faded considerably these days. Beginning early this year, the city began regularly detecting the potentially problematic parasite *Cryptosporidium* in its water samples. The frequency of those detections upended a long accord we'd reached with the federal government, and will now result in the city building a massive filtration plant at a cost of up to \$500 million.

SALTZMAN HANGS IT UP

In August, Commissioner Dan Saltzman's office guaranteed reporters with "110 percent" certitude that Portland's longest-serving current commissioner would pursue re-election. By September, Saltzman proved them wrong. Facing what might have proved his hardest political challenge to date—thanks to competition from former state representative Jo Ann Hardesty and the anti-establishment gale rushing through the city—Saltzman is calling it a day. Come December 2018, he'll end nearly a quarter-century of public service. The commissioner's announcement has set off a heated race to fill his chair, with County Commissioner Loretta Smith, mayoral aide Andrea Valerrama, and neighborhood rep Felicia Williams all planning to run against Hardesty for the seat. (A brief, mangled attempt by former OPB employee Spencer Raymond to mount a campaign has been scuttled.)

RETIREE TROLLS UNDER ARMOUR

Kirk Kennedy should be in the running on any "Oregonians of the Year" list. In July, the Portland Bureau of Transportation employee capped off 32 years with the city with a bold final

salvo: He burned a plastic Nike swoosh into the roadway in front of Under Armour's new outpost in Southwest Portland. Then he rode off into the sunset. Unfortunately for Kennedy, the city wasn't too happy with this show of hometown favoritism. City attorneys sent Kennedy a \$266.16 invoice for the prank. He paid happily, the city says. Happy retirement, Kirk!

ALL THE PROTESTS

Portland's wild protests after the presidential election were just a warm-up for 2017. Stand-offs between armor-clad police officers and left-wing protesters became commonplace in the first half of the year, and clashes between right- and left-wing groups ramped up in the second. Shit got especially heated on Inauguration Day (that tear gas was no joke), as well as President's Day, May Day, and on June 4. Cops got lots of practice with flash-bang grenades, and Washington-based "Patriot Prayer" emerged in 2017 to troll Portland liberals with dumb rallies. Dumb yelling and dumb fistfights ensued.

POLICE SHOT PEOPLE

Portland police officers shot five people in 2017. Two of them—17-year-old Quanice Hayes and 24-year-old Terrell Johnson—were killed. Hayes, shot on the same February day that police shot an apparently suicidal man named Don Perkins, was described by the police as an armed robbery suspect. The teen's death set off protests around town, with activists and family members suspicious of police rationale for the shooting. Johnson, who was homeless at the time of his death, had gotten into an altercation on a MAX platform in May, and was shot by a transit cop after a foot chase.

ICE AGENTS ARE TERRIBLE

Agents for US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) are huge assholes whose tendencies have been emboldened by an asshole president. Under Trump, Portland-area ICE agents have been staking out local courtrooms, entering homes without warrants, hounding brown people for identification, and snatching up people who've lived here for nearly their entire lives to send them to countries they've never known. There were plenty of deportations under Obama, but ICE under Trump has been particularly aggressive and cruel.

TRAGEDY ON THE GREEN LINE

In one of the most heartbreaking days in Portland's recent history, a known white supremacist with a knife killed two people and nearly killed a third on a MAX train in May. Jeremy Christian, 35, slashed the three men after they stood up to him for harassing two young women of color. Ricky Best, a 53-year-old Army veteran, and 23-year-old Reed College graduate Taliesin Namkai-Meche died on the train, while Micah Fletcher, 21, survived. Christian was recorded by the Mercury giving Nazi salutes and yelling racial slurs during a rally a month earlier. His murder trial is scheduled for 2019.

COUNTY REPUBLICANS LOVE MILITIAS

What can go wrong when political parties team up with heavily armed anti-government militia groups? The Multnomah County Republican Party wanted to find out. In June, the conservative group voted to formally pair up with the Oregon Three Percenters and the Oath Keepers to run security at rallies and events. It was necessary, MCRP chairman James Buchal told us, because of "unhinged people screaming at (them), in one case shoving them, and in other case spitting at them. They don't feel like it's a safe environment anymore."

OREGON CAUGHT FIRE

Those damn teens. The Portland region looked like a post-apocalyptic hellhole for too long this summer, after a 15-year-old kid and his friends allegedly chucked a smoke bomb in the ultra-parched Columbia River Gorge. Nearly 50,000 acres burned. People east of Portland had to evacuate their homes. Ash rained down from the sky, turning bright afternoons dusky and polluted. The unnamed teen who apparently started the fire, a Vancouver resident, faces juvenile misdemeanor charges in Hood River County.

CHLOE EUDALY TOOK TO THE 'BOOK

Portland Commissioner Chloe Eudaly got some heat this fall for posts on her personal Facebook account. The city's newest commissioner used the site in November to trash Oregonian staffer Jessica Floum, calling the City Hall reporter "not sharp enough" to do the job and saying the O was "irrelevant." The resulting dust-up forced the city to examine its social media policies.

THE PBA HATES BIKE COMMUTERS

The Portland Business Alliance can't stand giving up its precious car space. That became clear when the city's "Better Naito" project once again reserved one of Naito Parkway's four lanes this summer for cyclists and pedestrians. In June, the PBA whined about car congestion and spearheaded an email campaign to convince people to complain to Portland City Council ("Have you been stuck in downtown gridlock lately? Take action now."). It didn't work. "BTW, that email alert has generated 10-1 emails in support" of Better Naito, Transportation Commissioner Dan Saltzman tweeted.

The Daily Journal of Commerce

Residential Density: A Burgeoning Conflict

*By Kent Hohlfeld
December 26, 2017*

Residential development has exploded across Portland. While robust, the development has not been comprehensive. The result: housing gaps that city officials are determined to fill.

"We have been building apartments and big houses, but not a lot of middle housing," said Sandra Wood, supervising planner at the Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS).

Filling those gaps is not only a big key to housing an estimated 123,000 households expected to move to the city by 2035 but also the primary goal of the Residential Infill Project. The city is looking to reduce the scale of new infill development, increase the volume and number of types of housing choices, and provide clear and fair rules for "narrow" lot development. The ultimate goal is to promote higher density in structures within the residential overlay zone that covers nearly 90 percent of Portland.

Zoning changes are expected to accomplish the city's goals. The end result will impact neighborhoods and the building industries for decades to come.

Not everyone is a fan of the project's direction. The BPS received more than 800 responses during the public comment period that closed Nov. 30. Some neighborhood groups and area designers believe that it has become a way for the city to push density on already crowded neighborhoods.

“I really don’t think it is on the right track,” said Tamara DeRidder, chairwoman of the Rose City Park Neighborhood Association. “It subverts the comprehensive plan. It’s much too expansive. I don’t feel like many people understand what is going on.”

What is going on is an effort to rework the city’s zoning codes to allow more households per square foot of land while reducing the scales of new structures.

“The new infill housing was out of scale with existing neighborhoods,” said Morgan Tracy, a project manager for BPS. “Some of it is based on market preference. But it is also the escalating value of land. When builders get land, they need to add square footage to justify investment.”

That has led to small houses being torn down and turned into much larger homes in many neighborhoods. The city’s hope is that new regulations will result in fewer 5,000-square-foot McMansions and more 2,500-square-foot homes.

George Hale, owner of H. Hudson Homes, said that such changes could force him and others to build elsewhere. Hale, who has built houses in Portland for 20 years, said his customers aren’t interested in small two-bedroom homes.

“Like it or not, people want a big house,” he said. “They want all the amenities that go along with it. People with families are going to move elsewhere. The city will become dual-income, no-kid people, and that is how the city is going to turn out.”

While reducing the scale of structures is relatively straightforward, finding ways to increase density and housing choice has proven to be a tougher challenge for the city. To achieve higher density, planners decided to allow homes built within the overlay zone to add a second accessory dwelling unit (ADU) to the one currently allowed. One could be attached – such as a basement or garage. Another could be a separate structure.

“Our goal was to address the outcome of infill development,” Tracy said. “We want to increase the diversity of housing options.”

Changing demographics requires smaller units to be built, Tracy said. The average household in Portland has shrunk from 2.5 persons per unit to just 2.1 persons in the last decade, making smaller ADU-type units a viable way to address the housing challenges.

Currently, the most common residential zone, R5, allows one unit for every 5,000 square feet on a lot. More than 75 percent of residential areas fall into either the R5 or R7 (meaning one unit for every 7,000 square feet) zones. Under the new proposed rules, many of those would be changed to a R2.5, meaning that a unit can be built for every 2,500 square feet.

While duplexes have been allowed on corner lots since 1991, only 3.5 percent of owners of those lots have taken advantage of that provision. Many residents fear that will change with the new overlay zone, encouraging builders to put more duplexes, triplexes and ADUs on lots that formerly had single-family homes.

“You have a property that can house a triplex with an ADU on a 5,000-square-foot lot,” DeRidder said. “That changes the entire character of the neighborhood. It will be rebuilt into a new fabric.”

Neighborhood groups are also concerned the city’s quest to fit more households onto ever-tighter spaces could spur more demolitions of existing homes to accommodate multifamily complexes.

“Remodeling a house for that kind of density is cost-prohibitive,” DeRidder said. “We could have a lot of demolitions.”

The Residential Infill Project's heavy focus on the city's eastern portion led some stakeholders to question why only certain areas are being asked to absorb greater density. Lot size and shape are the determining factors explaining differences between how the east and west are treated, according to the city.

Those explanations have done little to allay fears that east Portland could see a new wave of demolitions and construction.

"The fear of demolition is from the fear that (the Residential Infill Project) lets people build duplexes and triplexes on every corner no matter where it is," said Peter Meijer, founder of Peter Meijer Architect PC. "The majority of blocks are two lots on corners. That could turn into multifamily development. That is a scary vision for folks."

Meijer, who specializes in historic preservation and revitalization, said the Residential Infill Project relies too much on a one-size-fits-all approach. Accounting for differences between city regions is crucial to successfully incorporating higher density, he said.

"One size doesn't fit all," he said. "I think you can say Sandy Boulevard is the type of street (that) is perfect for multifamily, three- or four-story housing. A single-family house getting built there is bad. It's about balance. Why are you forcing (more density) all into R5 neighborhoods? Why is it still OK to build a single-story building on the transit corridors?"

The city believes that the current draft does take differences into account, especially between lot differences on the east and west sides.

"The zoning is already for higher density on transit corridors," Tracy said. "We are still seeing some single-story construction, but that is a function of the real estate market."

With the public comment period now closed, the BPS will spend the next several months updating and refining the draft proposal. The proposal will go before the Planning and Sustainability Commission for hearings in early 2018. The hope is to have the final completed proposal before the City Council in May or June.

"I am not against more flexibility or the need for more apartments," DeRidder said. "But the question is: Is that what we need instead of homeownership? This would be more a rental market and not a homeownership market."

The amount of change revisions bring will likely depend on where a structure is built, according to Wood.

"It really depends where you are," she said. "If you are where we are proposing an R2.5, you may see more change, but I think you will see a pretty positive change."

OPB

Portland Police Clarify Policy On Cooperation With ICE

*By Ericka Cruz Guevarra
December 23, 2017*

The Portland Police Bureau updated a directive clarifying guidance for police on federal immigration enforcement.

The directive explicitly prohibits cooperation with federal immigration officials in enforcing federal immigration laws. It also bars the use of bureau resources, including equipment and personnel, for federal immigration enforcement.

Revisions were made to the directive Dec. 19. The changes go into effect Jan. 18.

Community members expressed concern in an initial review and public comment period on the directive, saying the bureau's current policy doesn't align with the city and the state's sanctuary status. That status prohibits using local resources to aid federal deportation efforts.

Revisions were made to "more clearly direct members with regard to the enforcement of federal immigration laws."

In November, an internal investigation into three Multnomah County Sheriff's deputies who helped U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detain and deport six men revealed an institutional lack of direction and policy at the Sheriff's Office when it came to cooperation with federal immigration authorities.

PPB's revised directive prohibits any bureau member from interrogating, detaining, arresting, initiating an investigation or taking any official police action against an individual solely based on their national origin or immigration status.

The bureau makes an exception for cooperation with the Department of Homeland Security in "emergency situations and combating a wide array of global criminal threats." Those include terrorism and human trafficking.

Bureau procedure bars police from even asking about a person's immigration status unless it's relevant and unrelated to the enforcement of federal immigration law.

Federal law prohibits Portland Police from withholding information about a person's citizenship or immigration status. Yet the revised directive does not require Portland Police to share that information with federal immigration law enforcement agencies, even if it involves a person with legal status.

Portland Police are also instructed not to share someone's personal information — including a person's address, place of employment or contact information — with federal immigration authorities for the enforcement of federal immigration laws.

Immigration officials could request the Bureau's assistance for pre-planned missions, though the extent of PPB's cooperation would be limited to something like traffic control.