

## **The Oregonian**

# **Portland Petition Pushes City To Do More to Tackle Homeless Camps**

*By Everton Bailey  
September 20, 2018*

A group of Portland residents has started a petition calling on the mayor and other city officials to do more to stop property crimes and improve livability across the city by cracking down on homeless camps.

Enough is Enough PDX's online petition had garnered more than 1,900 signatures by early Thursday. The group claims camps have fostered violent crimes, drug use, home burglaries, fires and pollution in residential neighborhoods. Many members of the group reside in the Montavilla neighborhood, bordered on the west by Interstate 205.

The petition contends response times for 911 and non-emergency calls involving people who are homeless are delayed or ignored. City sweeps of camps are ineffective and lead to people returning to campsites, the petition claims.

The petition calls on Mayor Ted Wheeler to tour neighborhoods and talk to residents and work to address their concerns, as well as to identify the needs of people in the area who are homeless and offer more support to police officers.

The petition also demands Police Chief Danielle Outlaw and Commissioner Nick Fish increase ATV patrols and rangers in parks in East Portland. Oregon Department of Transportation leaders should prevent people from camping on their properties, and Multnomah County Commissioners should consider needle exchange programs, the petition says.

The city has removed 4,272 bags of trash and cleaned around 150 campsites in the East Portland area, according to Sophie June, a spokeswoman for Wheeler. Police have also responded to more than 3,600 calls for service in the Montavilla neighborhood alone between March and August 2018.

"The Mayor's Office hears the concerns of the neighborhood and we are doing as much as we can with the resources we have," June said in an email.

A Portland Police Bureau spokesman declined to comment Wednesday and said the agency would respond Thursday.

The group adopted the same name as another community initiative that has been around since 2014 and is aimed at encouraging residents to help prevent gang and youth violence in Portland neighborhoods. The older group has worked in coordination with Portland police.

The petition follows an analysis by The Oregonian/OregonLive of city arrest data that found 52 percent of the arrests Portland police made in 2017 were of homeless people, who make up less than 3 percent of the population. Homeless people were most often arrested on property, drug or low-level crimes, the data showed. More than 1,200 arrests were for missing court appearances or violating probation or parole. Allegations of non-violent crimes made up 86 percent of the arrests.

The American Civil Liberties of Oregon called on Wheeler and Outlaw to investigate whether officers are profiling people who are homeless. The city's police oversight agency has since

launched an investigation into how Portland police officers interact with people who are homeless. Outlaw requested the investigation.

Wheeler has called for further review to know how many arrests were related to calls from the public in comparison to contact initiated by police officers.

## **Portland Protester Who Says Flash-Bang Grenade Split his Skull Plans to Sue Cops**

*By Shane Dixon Cavanaugh  
September 19, 2018*

A Portland activist who said a police flash-bang grenade struck the back of his head while he demonstrated against a right-wing rally plans to sue the city, new documents show.

The munition slammed into Aaron Anthony Cantu, 35, lodging itself into his bicycle helmet and splitting open his skull, he said.

Cantu, who detailed the incident and its bloody aftermath in an interview with The Oregonian/OregonLive last month, went to the hospital. Photos of his mangled scalp and ruined headgear went viral.

"Mr. Cantu had suffered a traumatic brain injury, likely one that would have been fatal had not he been wearing a bike helmet," reads a Sept. 17 letter sent to the city and signed by civil rights attorneys Juan Chavez and Crystal Maloney.

A so-called "less lethal" munition, flash-bangs are meant to deliver jarring blasts that disperse crowds. But they can be fatal.

A ProPublica investigation found that 50 Americans were seriously injured, maimed or killed by flash-bangs between 2000 and 2015.

Cantu's tort claim notice, first reported Wednesday by Willamette Week, is the second filed by an individual who says they were injured or maimed by Portland police while protesting an Aug. 4 Patriot Prayer rally at Tom McCall Waterfront Park.

Last week, a lawyer for Michelle Fawcett, 53, wrote her client suffered third-degree chemical burns on her arms and chest in August during an "unprovoked attack on her by members of the Portland Police Bureau."

Cantu's claim, which is a formal notice of his plans to sue the city, largely recounts what he said in the Aug. 10 interview attended by Chavez and Maloney. At that time, he asked The Oregonian/OregonLive not to disclose his full name for safety reasons.

An industrial mechanic and self-described anti-fascist activist, Cantu had gathered with dozens of other demonstrators near Southwest Columbia Street and Naito Parkway when police ordered the group to disperse.

Cantu, a Southeast Portland resident, said he did not recall hearing the police order. But he and people near him heard deafening explosions and turned to retreat, he said.

He was a half block from Naito when the flash-bang slammed into the back of his head.

"I didn't know if my brains had spilled from my head or if I was about to bleed out in the street," he said. "I thought I was going to die."

He was treated at the scene by several volunteer street medics and eventually taken to the hospital, where he spent the next 24 hours. The injury caused hemorrhaging, and he had a tube inserted in his skull to drain the fluids, he said.

According to his legal notice, the police reaction violated Cantu's First, Fourth and Fourteenth amendment rights, and his alleged injuries could constitute "negligence, battery, [and] intentional infliction of emotional distress."

A spokeswoman for Mayor Ted Wheeler said the office does not comment on pending litigation. Sgt. Chris Burley, a Portland police spokesman, said the bureau's protest response is under review.

## **The Portland Tribune**

### **City Project Aims to Improve Capitol Highway Safety, Pedestrian Access**

*By Corey Buchanan  
September 20, 2018*

Project will bring middle turn lane, bicycle lane to major Southwest Portland transportation link

The Portland Bureau of Transportation is plowing forward with a project that it hopes will improve safety and accessibility for drivers, bikers and pedestrians along Capitol Highway in Southwest Portland.

During an open house at Markham Elementary School on Sept. 13, staff unveiled a design for the project, which is funded through the Fixing our Streets ballot measure, gas tax and state funds.

From 2012 to 2016, city data show there were 55 crashes, including two that led to serious injuries and 33 that led to minor injuries, on Capitol Highway between Southwest Huber and Kerr Parkway. In that section, 57 percent of drivers travel above the 35-mile-per-hour speed limit.

To ameliorate these issues, the city plans to switch the lane configuration from four lanes to three lanes and changing one of the lanes to a turn lane.

PBOT project manager Sheila Parrott said this configuration would remove a dangerous scenario: when one car attempts to pass another car while the stationary car waits for pedestrians to cross the street. She also said it would lessen the likelihood of rear-end collisions, which often occur when one car bumps into a motorist attempting to turn left from a through lane.

"We have a history of doing this type of thing, from a four-lane to a three-lane, and we have seen success in other areas," Parrott said. "And it's a high crash corridor, which is why it rose to the level of something that needed to be done."

Additionally, the city plans to implement pedestrian crossings at Southwest Dickenson and Coronado as well as enhanced bike lanes.

The project also calls for a speed limit decrease from 35 to 30 mph, and the city will examine which areas might need lighting improvements. Currently, most of the lighting along the corridor is located on one side of the street.

"I think it just feels better when, as a pedestrian, you're walking across the street and cars aren't going by you so quickly," Parrott said. "We have data that shows that when you're hit at a lower speed, your survival rate is higher."

The city projects the change would lead to an average of an eight-second increase in travel time for drivers and a lessened crash rate for drivers and pedestrians.

This part of the project costs about \$275,000; Parrott said construction will mostly involve repainting.

For the area of Capitol Highway between Garden Home Road and Taylor's Ferry, the city plans to add a separated bike lane and sidewalk on the east side of the road and a multi-use path on the west side of the road. The bike lane will have a separate surface from the sidewalk.

"The big thing there is the east side is mostly downhill, so we think we're going to have a lot of people on bikes moving quickly downhill. So we want to make sure there's adequate separation between people biking and walking," PBOT project manager Steve Szigethy said.

The middle of the road, which is two lanes in that stretch, will remain unchanged.

Construction for the project is projected to begin in the summer of 2019 and finish up in the summer of 2020. Szigethy said many property owners will be affected, and some will be required to implement retaining walls or remove vegetation. One traffic lane will be open throughout construction.

"There's quite a bit of changes to the physical environment people are going to see on their property frontages, and we're working closely with (them on) that," Szigethy said.

He said local residents implored the city to add pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in this section for over 20 years, and that the project will allow residents to walk around the area more easily.

"My main takeaway that I've heard from the larger neighborhood is this is going to be a major positive," Szigethy said. "People are going to be able to walk to Multnomah Village. They're going to be able to wait for the bus without standing in a mud puddle. They're going to be able to walk down to Barbur World Foods, walk down to the light rail station."

## **Willamette Week**

### **Who Is Not on the Oregon Ballot But Has the Most at Stake This November?**

*By Rachel Monahan  
September 20, 2018*

**“White men have dominated the City Council for more than 100 years,” says Eudaly chief of staff Marshall Runkel. “It will be interesting to see how the first majority female council will operate.”**

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler. He won't be up for re-election until 2020, but the final two years of his first term will be shaped by what happens this fall.

First, there's the City Council contest. Front-runner Jo Ann Hardesty is known as a verbal bomb-thrower who won't be shy at City Hall. She has been vocal in her criticism of the mayor's

policing and housing policies. And with the support of Commissioners Chloe Eudaly (who endorsed her in the primary) and Amanda Fritz (who endorsed her last week), Hardesty will be in a group of three that could and probably will wrest control from the mayor on some issues. If she wins, for example, look for the city to pull out of the federal Joint Terrorism Task Force, long a focus of civil rights advocates.

"White men have dominated the City Council for more than 100 years," says Eudaly chief of staff Marshall Runkel. "It will be interesting to see how the first majority female council will operate. There's some evidence that more female representation leads to more spending on social welfare, but it is impossible to predict how that dynamic will play out in Portland."

Wheeler's office says he'll be fine.

"The mayor works well with everyone," says chief of staff Michael Cox. "On the environment, economic development, good governance, you name it, our track record is collaboration and positive results."

But Wheeler has a tricky road ahead. Items on the ballot are placing increased political pressure on him—both from the right and the left.

In the governor's race, Knute Buehler is highlighting the intractable problem of homelessness, appearing in TV ads that make Portland's streets look post-apocalyptic, which doesn't reflect well on the mayor.

Wheeler and his ability to address that problem will depend in part on two measures on the ballot. Measure 26-199, the Metro housing bond, would provide \$253 million to subsidize apartment construction in Multnomah County. And the statewide Measure 102 would allow the city to pair federal housing dollars with bond projects—which would let City Hall build hundreds more units with the taxpayer dollars it collects.

Meanwhile, another measure, 26-201, would hike corporate taxes on big businesses that operate in Portland; funds would pay for clean energy projects. That would give City Hall millions of dollars in new tax revenue—but it would also inflame the frustration of businesses already angry about homelessness. The mayor tried to cut a deal to keep it off the ballot—but if it passes, he'll still have to deal with the rancor from businesses.

And if Wheeler decides he wants four more years of this? His fundraising for re-election could be curtailed by the campaign finance caps in Measure 26-200. They would limit political contributions to \$500.

## **Protester Who Suffered a Traumatic Brain Injury From a Flash-Bang Grenade Intends to Sue the Portland Police**

*By Katie Shepherd  
September 19, 2018*

**"Mr. Cantu thought he was going to die," the tort claim says.**

A Portland protester named Aaron Anthony Cantu says he was running away from police when he was struck in the back of the head with an explosive device that penetrated the bike helmet he was wearing.

In a tort claim filed with the City of Portland on Sept. 19, Cantu's lawyers say he was standing between SW 1st Avenue and Naito Parkway on SW Columbia Street when police began firing

flash-bang munitions at counterprotesters who had gathered to oppose a Patriot Prayer rally on Aug. 4.

"Mr. Cantu thought he was going to die," the claim says. "Mr. Cantu had suffered a traumatic brain injury, likely one that would have been fatal had not he been wearing a bike helmet."

Photos of Cantu's bike helmet quickly spread on social media after the protest. Portland police initially speculated that the explosive flash-bang munitions they fired with 40mm rifles would not have been able to penetrate a bike helmet if functioning properly. However, numerous reports exist that suggest the explosives can cause grave injury or even kill a person.

The police bureau temporarily suspended use of the weapons pending an internal review to see if they were used correctly on Aug. 4.

The Oregonian interviewed Cantu, but did not name him, after the protest and took photos of the helmet that appeared to still have the rubber tip of the explosive used by PPB lodged in its shell.

Both the Portland Police Bureau and the city's Independent Police Review said they wanted to talk to him about his injuries and confirm the photos were authentic, but claimed they were unable to locate him. It was not clear what efforts law enforcement had made to track Cantu down, and he freely identified himself today with the legal filing.

Cantu's tort claim, which is a formal notice of his intent to sue the city, says he did not hear dispersal orders that were given at the intersection of Naito Parkway and SW Columbia Street. He did not see any signs of violence or projectiles thrown by the protesters. Video footage has not confirmed police claims that protesters threw objects at officers before the first flash-bang was shot into the crowd.

Cantu ran toward SW 1st Avenue after the first explosion. The claim says Cantu heard three more loud booms before he was struck in the head.

He fled through an intersection that was open to traffic and tried to get treatment from a street medic at a bus stop, but police continued to use riot control devices on the crowd and Cantu had to move again.

At a hospital, doctors put a tube in his head to drain blood that was pooling from a hemorrhage caused by the explosion.

Cantu is being represented by Juan Chavez, director of the civil rights project at the Oregon Justice Resource Center and attorney Crystal Maloney.

The claim alleges that Portland police have engaged in a pattern of deploying unreasonable force against left-wing protesters, and highlights Aug. 4 as one of the worst examples the city has seen.

"The Portland community has been subject to this treatment—nearly exclusively on left-wing protesters—by the Portland Police at protests before," the claim says. "However, on August 4, 2018, the Police's willingness to use so much lethal force on fleeing protesters represents a new low that needs to be addressed."

Cantu's tort claim is at least the second to be filed after the Aug. 4 protest. Another protester, Michelle Fawcett, filed a tort claim against the city on Sept. 13 after being hit in the arm and chest with a flash band that gave her third-degree chemical burns.

Mayor Ted Wheeler's office could not immediately be reached for comment.