

The Oregonian

Editorial: Portland's a Big City Now. It's Time our City Council Caught Up

*By The Oregonian Editorial Board
December 15, 2018*

Talk long enough with any Portlander these days and you'll likely hear a depressing, yet consistent commentary: The city is failing miserably at the basics.

Portland's dearth of affordable housing has helped create a seemingly intractable homeless crisis. Roads are clogged and crumbling across the city. Downtown businesses and residents feel held hostage by dueling protests that police have struggled to control. More trash, more crime and mounting suspicions that the city's low-income communities are left to deal with a disproportionate amount of blight.

City Hall can't solve these systemic issues any time soon. Most were years in the making and require continued policy improvements and sustained investments to dig our way out.

Yet for Portland to move forward effectively and equitably, a change is necessary. Portlanders need to acknowledge the fast-growing metropolis we've become and accept the glaring need for a grown-up form of city government.

Unlike any other large city nationwide, Portland relies on a century-old system that gives the mayor and commissioners both legislative and administrative powers. That means they set policy and pass laws like any legislative entity. But rather than rely on a city manager, for example, to execute their vision, the commissioners themselves fill the role of top executive for their assigned bureaus. Not only does that create tension as commissioners may prioritize their bureaus over others', but it fails to consider whether or not they have experience or expertise managing complex bureaus with seven-figure budgets.

Recall when former Commissioner Randy Leonard funneled millions of ratepayer dollars into renovations at the Rose Festival headquarters and other projects with no connection to the water bureau's mission? Or more recently, when Commissioner Amanda Fritz defended her Bureau of Emergency Communications, despite reports that tens of thousands of emergency calls went untracked and unreturned, and that bureau officials knowingly provided false wait-time data to City Council. Time and again, such examples have led Portlanders to question what drives commissioners' decisions, and whether it's what is best for the city.

Such management issues are what's led Mayor Ted Wheeler to regularly play musical chairs during budget seasons, seizing dysfunctional bureaus and creating a monstrous – and likely unmanageable -- portfolio for himself.

This archaic system leaves Portland without a unified administration that could increase oversight and accountability, encourage collaboration among the bureaus and reduce redundant services. It's a City Council flawed not only for its inefficient structure, but also in how its leaders are elected.

The vast majority of council members have been white males who disproportionately lived in higher income neighborhoods. And while one-third of Portland's residents are of color, only two black men have ever served on the council. Early next year, Jo Ann Hardesty will become the

first African American woman to serve, joining just eight other women elected to the council since 1948.

The skewed nature of this representation is thanks to another Portland anomaly in which voters elect the five members at large, rather than by a geographic district or through a voting system that allows ranking of candidates. Here, the candidate who has the largest campaign coffers and the time to canvas the entire city is more likely to win.

These glaring inequities alone should spark action in this progressive city that prides its priorities in equity and inclusion.

Throughout the last primary election season, a number of local candidates highlighted the need to tackle Portland's broken government system. Some promised to continue the crusade, whether or not they were elected. But since May, it seems the discussion has gone mostly dark.

That could change early next year, when the Portland City Club aims to unveil a report by a committee that spent the past year researching the issue. Julia Meier, the organization's executive director, said the group began reviewing whether Portland's form of government serves residents equitably, then expanded to examine its efficiency and accountability. She plans to put the committee's recommendations to a vote before the City Club in February, launching what she hopes will be a citywide conversation.

That's a good and needed start. Voters have quashed more than a half dozen past efforts to improve Portland's form of government in various ways – most recently in 2007. Perhaps we've wised up over the past decade. Or suffered enough. There's hope that enough people who've moved here from cities with more logical government systems will understand the need for change. Those voices are needed.

It's an important issue, but also a terribly wonky one. Community and business leaders will be needed to better identify the current structure's shortcomings, prioritize needed changes and help Portland reach the potential we all believe is possible.

There are plenty of places where Portland benefits from weird. Management of our city services and public dollars isn't among them. Let's ring in 2019 as the year in which we begin the hard work and tough conversations that will lead to a city that works better for all Portlanders.

2 Years In, Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler Struggles with Power, Allies and Promises

*By Gordon Friedman
December 16, 2018*

Few decisions by Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler divided the city as much as his plan to impose controversial restrictions on the high-profile protests that have bloodied participants – and his reputation.

Wheeler staked much of his political capital on the idea, appearing on NBC to explain to a national audience why his plan was both constitutional and smart.

Still, the mayor knew getting his proposal passed would not be easy. He surprised his City Council colleagues when he presented it to them only hours before unveiling it publicly. He was aware some city commissioners vehemently opposed it.

And in perhaps the greatest misstep of the mayor's first two years in office, Wheeler failed to ensure he was on the same page with his hand-picked police chief, Danielle Outlaw. The first sign of disagreement happened hours before a crucial Nov. 8 public hearing.

Wheeler and Outlaw separately gave interviews to reporters beforehand. Wheeler said the protest limits plan was Outlaw's idea, but she promptly responded that that was not the case, saying it "came from the mayor's office."

If there was any question whether Wheeler and Outlaw were working from the same script, it would be answered privately that evening.

Commissioner Chloe Eudaly eviscerated Wheeler's proposal during the long public hearing. Reading from a list of prepared questions, Eudaly grilled Outlaw and other top police brass about officers' use of force against protesters, perceptions of police bias favoring right-wing rally-goers and the reasons why "white supremacist gang members" appeared to receive lenient treatment by police and prosecutors.

Sometime during the exchange, Outlaw reached for her phone.

The police chief could have texted Wheeler to ask him to interject and offer backup. Instead, public records obtained by The Oregonian show, Outlaw texted Eudaly.

The chief's message: "You're doing a great job."

Outlaw and Eudaly arranged a tête-à-tête for later that night in the bar at an upscale restaurant steps from City Hall, according to their texts. While there, the chief told the commissioner her questioning hadn't damaged their relationship, Eudaly recalled in an interview.

Although Outlaw said her text to Eudaly was intended "to encourage and support her in her role as commissioner," not to undermine Wheeler, who Outlaw said has her full backing, the exchange underscores the mayor's struggle to keep key allies' support given his performance during two bruising years in office.

Take Wheeler's relationship with Deborah Kafoury, the Multnomah County chairwoman.

Kafoury said in an interview that it's "really important" Portland's mayor and Multnomah County's executive have a good working relationship. Asked if she has that kind of link to Wheeler, Kafoury did not say yes.

"It's in the best interest of Multnomah County that the mayor is successful and the city is successful," Kafoury said. "That is what I can say."

To get a sense of Wheeler's performance halfway into his four-year term, The Oregonian/OregonLive spoke with the mayor, elected officials, current and former city executives, City Hall watchers and some of the friends and advisers who see Wheeler's work up close. Many gave frank assessments on the condition their names not be used.

The interviews paint a picture of an intelligent, well-intentioned mayor who thinks quickly and enjoys diving into the subtleties of policy.

But they also reveal that many around Wheeler feel disappointment with his struggle to achieve the progressive agenda he sold to voters; dismay at an overworked and outmatched roster of mayoral aides; and frustration at Wheeler's seeming inability to grapple effectively with civil unrest and Portland's enduring homelessness crisis.

Significant campaign promises have fallen off the mayor's to-do list or have been relegated to backburner status. Tellingly, most relate to police reform and homelessness.

Unfulfilled pledges include those to establish a landlord-tenant affairs office, end landlords' ability to evict tenants without cause, dedicate increased property tax revenues to affordable housing, create an online database of landlords, expand the number of building inspectors, revamp the census of Portland's homeless, pilot a city jobs program for people without homes, create a plan for moving homeless campers into shelters and eventually apartments, place body cameras on all police officers, demilitarize the officer corps, train all officers in anti-discrimination and de-escalation tactics and give subpoena power to the city's police watchdog agency.

"I don't think anybody recognized the seriousness of the homelessness problem, including Wheeler," said Bob Stoll, a prominent attorney and informal adviser to the mayor. "But I do think he's worked extremely hard trying to get control of the situation."

Wheeler's former chief of staff, Maurice Henderson, said he believes the mayor still has a bold, hopeful vision for a more prosperous Portland. "The question is his energy and focus," said Henderson, now a Trimet executive.

"If I were him, I would really try to focus on the top few issues that I could make a big difference on in the next two years," one elected official said. "If the next two years look like the last two years, I don't think the public is well-served."

And the next two years may be even tougher. Wheeler may increasingly find himself in the minority at the city council dais after Commissioner-Elect Jo Ann Hardesty is sworn-in to replace retiring Commissioner Dan Saltzman in January.

Hardesty has not shied from criticizing the mayor and his bureaus, and his performance on police and housing policy in particular. She even called him "mayor what's-his-name" during her Election Night victory speech (but later apologized for the comment as an unintended gaffe).

Then there is the mayor's own office, which occupies most of third floor in City Hall. His overridingly young team of aides are constantly stretched thin, observers say.

One former bureau director said Wheeler is often hamstrung by senior members of his staff who "as a group don't quite bring the right skillsets to the job."

"They don't have enough experience being a professional bureaucrat," the former director said. "You need people in the leadership offices who are going to push something forward and hold you accountable. They just don't have that."

A current bureau director said disorganization in the mayor's office is "very frustrating" to agency heads trying to achieve Wheeler's mission.

"It's like, who's responsible for what? What are the expectations? They kind of trip over themselves," the official said.

"I've always thought the mayor's office is understaffed," said Alan Ferschweiler, president of the local firefighters' union. He said Wheeler could use extra aides working specifically to tackle homelessness and civil unrest.

Eudaly, the city commissioner who was critical of Wheeler's leadership on police issues, said she is sympathetic to some of his challenges. She cited his "extraordinary workload," having taken on not only the police and housing bureaus into his portfolio but also the bureaus in charge of planning, permitting, finance and economic development.

"That's a big issue right there," Eudaly said.

Many who have worked with Wheeler take a sympathetic tone. The job of Portland mayor is unforgiving and its complexities are under-appreciated, they said. And they wish the public, and in particular the hecklers who constantly hound Wheeler during city council meetings, would give him a break.

“It’s been a rough two years for him,” Ferschweiler said. “I watch him at city council and I watch how people treat him and I find it inappropriate.”

“He’s under siege,” said the former bureau director. “Not only personally by protesters every Wednesday in council chambers, but publicly everyone is saying ‘Why aren’t you dealing with this?’”

For his part, Wheeler said he is trying to stay forward-thinking.

“You have the luxury of focusing on the vision if you’re successful in managing the crises that come up. And as mayor, there’s a lot of crises,” Wheeler said. “I feel like we have been successful at balancing managing the issue of the day against the long-term vision.”

Asked how he is measuring his own performance, Wheeler said he has focused recently on the boring-but-important work of molding Portland’s vast bureaucracy into a nimble, 21st-century enterprise. He gave as an example the reforms he has begun applying to city budgeting, which aim to prod officials set long-term goals.

“A lot of what we do is process-oriented. You don’t end up with tangible outcomes,” Wheeler said.

The mayor continued: “I’m trying to keep the tangible outcomes in mind. But I don’t want to discount the fact that the work we do over here that’s sometimes invisible is leading to real improvements and outcomes.”

Pressed for what he would deem success on police and housing, Wheeler articulated modest goals. He said he would be satisfied if the \$258 million Portland housing bond produces its promised 1,300 units. He’d also like to see the Broadway Corridor and other large planned developments break ground.

For the Police Bureau, Wheeler said he wants to see “more community engagement” and a police force that deals more compassionately with people who are mentally ill, homeless or drug addicted.

Though his term has been bleak at times, it is not without successes.

Wheeler touted as his wins the more than 600 affordable homes that have so far been built or planned under the Portland housing bond; his plan, dubbed Build Portland, to pay for infrastructure improvements including upgrades of roads and bridges; slow but steady progress to move Portland’s building permits system online; a fivefold decrease in 911 call wait times; the hiring of many new police officers and approval for a corps of unarmed support workers; and significant planning for development at OMSI, the Broadway Corridor, the Gateway business center and the South Waterfront, plus planning for a possible Major League Baseball team.

Wheeler pins the brunt of the blame for his struggles on himself. But he also points to problems posed by the city’s commission-form of government, which affords the mayor almost no powers beyond those of an ordinary commissioner.

“I don’t think it’s the best model,” Wheeler said.

Outlaw, who until last year worked within a strong mayor-style government as deputy chief of the Oakland Police Department, said Portland's way of governing makes being mayor exceptionally difficult.

"Expectations are placed upon him as if it was a strong mayor form of government, but it's not," Outlaw said. "People expect him to say and do all the things a strong mayor says and does, but they don't recognize that he's only one of five [commissioners]."

It's unclear whether Wheeler will seek re-election. He has said the public should assume he will, but he has also been caught expressing disdain for the job.

Several advisers are crossing their fingers in the hopes he will go for another term, which would make him the first Portland mayor to file for re-election since Vera Katz in 1999.

"Frankly, I hope to God he does run again," said Stoll, the attorney. "I think it'd be a tragedy to have another one-term mayor."

Henderson, the former chief of staff, said perhaps what Portland needs most is consistent leadership.

"There's a volatility that comes with constant change," Henderson said. "I think we're seeing that now."

Wheeler is trudging ahead and trying to smile through it. Former Gov. John Kitzhaber, expressing frustration near the end of his second term, famously called Oregon "ungovernable."

Wheeler isn't going there.

"Yes, Portland is governable," he said. "Yes, it's challenging. It is what it is."

Portland Mayor's Chief of Staff Discloses Romantic Relationship with Subordinate

*By Gordon Friedman
December 15, 2018*

Michael Cox, chief of staff to Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, formally disclosed Wednesday that he is in a romantic relationship with a senior member of Wheeler's staff after the city attorney advised the mayor the disclosure was necessary to abide by the spirit of city ethics rules and avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Cox made the disclosure the same day a reporter for The Oregonian/OregonLive asked him face-to-face if he was in a relationship with the woman. His written disclosure said he verbally informed Wheeler of the relationship on Dec. 5.

City rules state no employee may directly supervise a person with whom they are in a romantic relationship. Any employee supervising a significant other must "promptly disclose" it in writing to the bureau director or elected official who oversees them to resolve the conflict, the rules say. Cox does not directly supervise the subordinate in question; his deputy does.

Tracy Reeve, the city attorney, wrote to Wheeler on Wednesday to say it did not appear that Cox had violated policies against nepotism or prohibited conduct. Nevertheless, Reeve advised, Cox should disclose the relationship "to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest" and to "comply with not only the letter but the spirit" of the ethics rules.

Cox on Wednesday declined to confirm or deny the relationship. He downplayed the public interest in such a relationship and said reporters would likely struggle to prove its existence or that he were out of compliance with the rules.

Cox also raised the prospect that he was on sound footing with ethics requirements because he is not the direct supervisor of the subordinate, Michelle Plambeck, the mayor's legislative director.

Kristin Dennis, the deputy chief of staff, said Saturday that Plambeck reports to her, not Cox.

Wheeler promoted Cox to chief of staff on June 18. A month later, Plambeck was promoted from senior adviser to legislative director. Her promotion was in the works before Cox became chief of staff, Dennis said, and was made as other mayoral aides received raises.

"When Michael became chief of staff, he agreed to let me execute these promotions that had been held up in the transition," Dennis said.

On Wednesday, the same day Cox disclosed in writing the relationship with Plambeck, Wheeler issued a directive stipulating that Cox may not make decisions about Plambeck's pay or performance or weigh in on other workplace issues involving her. If Dennis is briefly absent, Plambeck is to report directly to Wheeler, not Cox, the directive states.

Other public figures in Portland were beset recently by revelations they had romantic relationships with subordinates. Brian Krzanich, the Intel chief executive, resigned in June after an investigation found he violated company policies against fraternization with co-workers. And Yousef Awwad, the deputy chief executive of Portland Public Schools, was investigated for such a relationship and later fired.

Cox, Plambeck and a spokeswoman for Wheeler did not return requests for comment Saturday.

Cox is a longtime aide to Wheeler, beginning as then-State Treasurer Wheeler's press aide in 2014. Cox later ran Wheeler's mayoral campaign, was made communications director once Wheeler was elected, and was eventually promoted to deputy chief of staff and chief of staff.

Plambeck rose through the ranks as Wheeler's deputy communications director, senior adviser and then legislative director. Before working for the mayor she was an aide to House Speaker Tina Kotek and a Democratic state senator.

Layoffs Strike Portland Development Bureau as Building Boom Slows

*By Gordon Friedman
December 14, 2018*

Four employees were laid off Friday at the Portland Bureau of Development Services as the city's development boom shows its first signs of slowing.

In an email to employees, Rebecca Esau, the Development Services director, said the cuts come as officials there were given a "quite sobering" forecast for Portland building trends.

A construction slowdown by definition hurts the bottom line for Esau's bureau, which gets most of its funding from permit application fees.

"The longer we wait to reduce expenditures, the worse future cuts will need to be," Esau wrote in the email, obtained by The Oregonian/OregonLive.

She added that the bureau expects “a downturn” in its five-year financial plan and is taking measures now to “make our reserves last longer to preserve as much stability as possible.”

The apparent start to the slowdown does not bode well for Portland’s increasingly restrictive housing policies, which some developers have said will discouraging construction by builders’ profits.

Esau’s decision is a proactive step that prior officials didn’t take during the last recession. The bureau and its then-commissioner-in-charge, Rand Leonard, held off on making layoffs until 2009, when budget setbacks forced officials to cut 90 jobs.

Today, along with the layoffs of four probationary employees, the bureau, which employs more than 450 people, will freeze most hiring through 2019, limit city-funded travel for work, end an internship program with Portland State University, postpone building upgrades and halve its offering of seminars to help homeowners learn about permit requirements.

Development Services’ full-time employees will also be allowed to cut their workweek by a full day, according to Esau’s announcement.

News of the layoffs comes days after Mayor Ted Wheeler and the city commissioners received news from the city economist, Josh Harwood, who predicted that even a slight economic downturn would necessitate deep cuts to Portland’s budget.

The cutbacks also land amid a push from the mayor’s office for Development Services to complete a longstanding project to move Portland’s byzantine paper-only permits system online. That project is now in its second incarnation after the first fell years behind schedule and blew through \$8 million.

Wheeler has said bringing the system online is a key initiative for his office, and the mayor took control of Development Services from Commissioner Chloe Eudaly when he shuffled bureau assignments in August.

Opinion: Dan Saltzman on His 20 Years on Portland City Council

*By Dan Saltzman
December 16, 2018*

As I close out 20 years as a Portland city commissioner, I’ve been on something of a farewell tour, with “exit interviews” at the City Club of Portland, on TV and at other community events. At each, I’ve been asked, as I look back, what I am most proud of and if I have any parting observations or advice.

I’ve always been someone who looks forward, not backward. But a few thoughts do occur, especially given the atmosphere of frustration with government as it wrestles with tough, seemingly intractable problems. We should not surrender to the easy cynicism that nothing gets done. As evidence that it can, here are the top 10 accomplishments I look back on with pride:

- Created the Portland Children’s Levy, with Portlanders renewing it four times by big margins. It makes a life-changing difference in the lives of tens of thousands of children.
- Created the Gateway Center for Domestic Violence Services, helping nearly 4,000 survivors this year to get the help they need.

- Secured the land to make North Portland’s Bridge Meadows a reality. It provides foster children, adoptive families and foster grandparents with quality housing in a village-like setting.
- Found a permanent home for the Miracles Club and built sober housing to go with the alcohol/drug-free social club.
- Secured voter approval of reforms to the FPD&R system to save taxpayer dollars while providing fair pension and disability benefits to firefighters and police.
- Completed the Big Pipe project to clean up the Willamette River – the largest public works project in city history—on time and on budget.
- Secured voter approval of Portland’s first affordable housing bond measure.
- Secured legislative and City Council approval of inclusionary housing, requiring all new residential development to include affordable units. Over time this will produce far more affordable housing than any bond measure.
- Hired a smart new fire chief who shares my vision of making our 30 fire stations into centers for community health in addition to fire safety.
- Cast the third and decisive votes to bring the Portland Timbers to Providence Park and to build the aerial tram.

There is a common thread through this list: they are not broad, sweeping ideological causes or flashy political master strokes. These are the nitty, gritty stuff of governing. Which leads me to my first bit of advice for those who will follow me: Tackle what’s in front of you. Focus on tangible projects or initiatives. Put those together, and that is what progress looks like. And it is what makes an actual difference in the lives of people and our city

My second piece of advice: know why you are there. Set priorities for your tenure and keep a relentless focus on them. For me, they were children, the environment and the cost of government. And within that focus, be bold. Be willing to take some risks, even fail. Be unwilling to accept that something cannot be done simply because nobody did it before.

Next: make Portlanders your partners. We need to figure out new ways to engage the public in decision making around budgeting. The present process is stale. Consider using a jury system model to recruit candidates for budget advisory committees. This will add residents’ voices to the process and reduce the outsized influence of entrenched interests that can never support any budget cuts or other change.

Also, it’s an obligation, not a choice, to engage with the press, even when you don’t want to. “No comment” or “Not available for comment” doesn’t cut it. This is how our public knows what’s going on in city government.

Finally, and most important, my last piece of advice is more of a plea. I am not given to quoting people, but in these angry, polarized times I keep thinking of a lyric by the singer Jewel: “In the end, only kindness matters.”

There is no force more powerful, yet so easy to overlook. In my career, I have been the beneficiary of great kindness from the people it has been my great honor to represent. I have felt it through your support, your votes and most significantly your willingness to extend that kindness to those who so desperately need it: abused and neglected children, survivors of domestic violence, people struggling with homelessness and more.

And I would never have been able to attempt this work without the kindness shown to me by my staff, my family and especially the two great loves of my life: my daughter, Adrienne, and my partner, Liz Burns.

So, as I take my leave of City Council, I thank them, and I thank you. Please be kind – to each other and this city we love.

Because in the end, only kindness matters.

The Portland Tribune

Police Chief Outlaw Slams 'Inaccuracies' in The Oregonian

*By Zane Sparling
December 16, 2018*

Chief Danielle Outlaw demands 'correction,' but daily newspaper may determine one is not needed.

Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw is pushing back on what she says are "inaccuracies" in a recent cover story published by The Oregonian.

The pushback aims at a City Hall article reviewing Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler's first two years in office, which was titled "[For Wheeler, a tough two years, and next two may be tougher.](#)"

The cover story was published Sunday, Dec. 16. Hours later, Outlaw sent out her missive:

"We've requested a correction to the article because it's misleading. It's convenient to create a narrative of disunity," [she explained on Twitter](#). "That couldn't be further from the truth. I am proud of our Mayor and his bold efforts to try and curb protest violence."

Here are her requested corrections:

- The Oregonian article stated that Wheeler and Outlaw gave conflicting answers about who requested a controversial protest ordinance that ultimately did not pass the City Council.

The article reported that the Mayor said it was Outlaw's idea, while she said it came from Wheeler's office.

"What was shared with the reporter, but was left out of the article, was that my response also stated that, after the August 4th demonstration, I asked Mayor Wheeler for additional tools as it related to addressing violent, disruptive behavior during recent protests," Outlaw shot back.

"While I did not draft the ordinance, I was in full support of the ordinance, as I testified and I have consistently publicly stated. I respect the final decision by City Council but am also appreciative of the the Mayor taking the initiative to promptly address my request for additional tools," she continued.

- The article also revealed another juicy tidbit — that Outlaw apparently texted Commissioner Chloe Eudaly "You're doing a great job" during a lengthy public hearing regarding the protest ordinance. Eudaly came out against Wheeler's idea and did not vote for it.

Outlaw responded: "I explained to the reporter that I wanted her to know I recognized that people in high-profile positions must make difficult and uncomfortable decisions and I respected her for standing up for what she believed was in the best interest of her constituents."

While Outlaw is clearly displeased with the daily paper's coverage, it's no guarantee that a correction will be issued. Newspaper editors generally give reporters wide latitude to determine which facts are relevant and what can be left on the cutting room floor.

Portland Ahead of House Speaker on Controversial Infill Policy

*By Jim Redden
December 16, 2018*

City is already preparing to abolish most single-family zoning, which the 2017 Oregon Legislature is now expected to consider.

Portland is already on track to meet Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek's goal of eliminating almost all single-family zoning.

The idea is controversial, however, and will likely spark conflict before both the Oregon Legislature and City Council next year.

Kotek, who represents parts of North and Northeast Portland, plans to ask the 2017 Legislature to allow duplexes, triplexes and four-plexes in single-family zones in cities with more than 10,000 residents. Her goal is encourage the construction a greater variety of homes that are more affordable than single-family houses.

"Oregon needs to build more units, and we must do so in a way that increases housing opportunity for more people," Kotek said in a statement.

The council already approved a policy to encourage more so-called missing middle housing when it updated the city's state-required Comprehensive Plan in 2017. The details are being worked out in the Residential Infill Project, which is currently before the appointed Planning and Sustainability Commission.

The commission is currently recommending that 96 percent of the single-family neighborhoods be rezoned relatively small multifamily projects. Duplexes, triplexes and four-plexes can also be larger than single-family homes — up to 3,500 square feet for a triplex or four-plex, compared to 2,500 square feet for a single family homes.

The commission is expected to approve the recommendations on March 12 and forward them to the council, which will consider such changes in the summer. Although the Legislature could approve Kotek's bill before then, the council would still need to adopt such details as the square footage allowances to enact it.

The commission was briefed on the findings of a recent economic report on its recommendations on Dec. 11. A majority of the members were pleased that Johnson Economics said they would result in far more lower-priced homes being built over the next 20 years. The firm's report said the rezoning and size allowances would encourage 38,115 new homes to be built over the next two decades. That compares to 13,665 new homes under the city's current zoning, the report says.

The report also said the additional homes would be mostly rental units that would cost far less than single-family homes, mostly because they are far smaller. According to the report, the average rent for the new units would be \$1,823, compared to \$4,159 to rent a single-family house.

And the report predicted a relatively small increase in demolitions if the recommendations are adopted by the council — from 1,384 to 1,501 over the next 20 years. But the net increase of 24,333 units is much greater because so many multifamily projects will replace them.

"I'm very happy with the way this turned out," commission member Chris Smith said of the Johnson Economics report released shortly before the Dec. 11 meeting.

But commission member Andre Baugh said that even though the predicted rents were lower, they will still be higher than lower income households can afford.

"That's not affordable by HUD [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development] standards. All of a sudden, we have a class of people being left out."

Other commission members noted that few of the new units would be available for purchase. And some worried that older existing homes, which are currently the most affordable ones, will be demolished to way for the new multifamily projects. The commission responded by directed the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, which is staffing to project, to prepare a study on the displacement of existing lower income residents potentially caused by the recommendations.

Project manager Morgan Tracy said it was never intended to create affordable housing as defined by HUD or home ownership opportunities, but to increase the availability and variety of housing in the city. Tracy said the city has other programs to create affordable housing and home ownership opportunity.

The figures in the report do not include the larger multifamily projects expected to be built along major transportation corridors and in designated urban centers. including downtown, over the next 20 years.

Although the council is not expected to vote on the recommendations for months, they are already dividing the city. Supporters say the change will encourage the construction of a greater and more affordable range of housing throughout the city. Opponents say the rezoning will change the character of the city's neighborhoods and encourage more existing homes to be demolished and replaced.

"This latest recommendation will allow for smaller, more flexible, and less-expensive housing options, making it possible for all kinds of Portlanders to live in neighborhoods that are close to schools, jobs, parks, transit and all the things that we love about our city," said Madeline Kovacs, coordinator of Portland for Everyone, a project of the 1000 Friends of Oregon land-use watchdog organization.

But the results were criticized by members the Multnomah Neighborhood Association, which is challenging the city's missing middle housing policy in court.

"This is far from a providing a solution to the affordable crisis and it comes at the expense of destroying the zoning of residential properties that Portland has today," said MNA Land Use Committee Chair Jim Peterson.

The same divisions can be expected to surface when the Legislature takes up Kotek's bill. The current draft also allows "cottage clusters," which are not included in the commission's recommendations.

You can learn more about the project at www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/67728.

Mayor: Exiting FBI Task Force Puts City 'Out of the Loop'

*By Zane Sparling
December 15, 2018*

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler wants to hold steady within the Joint Terrorism Task Force.

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler is doubling down on his support for the Joint Terrorism Task Force.

The Rose City has had an on-again, off-again relationship with the law enforcement group overseen by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The city exited the local, state and federal partnership in 2005 but then rejoined in 2015.

Many City Hall observers expect incoming Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty to lead a charge to yank Portland out of the JTTF again, though it's hardly a foregone conclusion.

Wheeler, for one, is holding steady in opposition.

"We would be out of the loop on information that impacts the safety of people in our community," he said during his monthly press briefing on Friday, Dec. 14.

Wheeler plans to discuss the proposed pull-out during a private meeting with Hardesty this month. He has met privately with FBI officials to discuss next steps if the city leaves the task force, but thinks the best solution is to solicit testimony from the public at City Hall sometime early next year.

"It has long been my opinion that we should stay in the JTTF," he continued. "I would stay in the JTTF unless the JTTF gave me a reason not to be there."

The Portland Police Bureau coordinated with the JTTF after "numerous" local businesses reported receiving bomb threats and demands for payment on Thursday, Dec. 13, part of a nationwide scare and email hoax.

Officials said none of the local bomb threats were credible.

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler has no Plans to Stop Tweeting

*By Zane Sparling
December 14, 2018*

The Mayor of Portland is undaunted by the 'trolls' and 'naysayers' who stalk his online offerings.

Ted Wheeler is a glutton for punishment, apparently.

The first-term Portland mayor has no desire to get off social media, despite the well-publicized link between online interaction and deteriorating mental health.

The mayor admits that "trolls," "naysayers" and "a lot of hate" haunt the digital world — but still enjoys engaging with his 24,000 followers on Twitter and 12,000 fans on Facebook.

"I had more of a positive vision for the way social media would unfold," the mayor said wistfully during his monthly press briefing on Friday, Nov. 14. "But on balance these tools are still really, really important as a means of engaging people in the community who you might not otherwise have the opportunity to engage."

He's speaking from experience. Like many politicians, the mayor can be bombarded with critical replies to his posts, especially when local riots or protests are spotlighted by national media. He says many of his detractors are not residents of the city and believes some may not even live in America.

As of press time, all of the comments on his latest online offering were negative, including a response in all caps claiming that Antifa takes people hostage, another calling him a "Republican shill," and another suggesting the words affordable housing should be in scare quotes.

Wheeler's post was a short video involving a formerly homeless woman sharing her personal experiences.

The final response: "Your cops swept dignity village on the coldest night of the year so far."

PBOT Wants Feedback for Improving 122nd Avenue

*By KOIN 6 News
December 14, 2018*

City says 122nd Avenue is among most dangerous roadways for travelers in Portland and needs to be improved.

In Portland, 122nd Avenue is known to be risky. Now the Bureau of Transportation wants public feedback on how they should improve it.

Most of the street is currently five lanes of traffic, but the on-street parking and narrow bike lanes drop off to become turn lanes at the street's major intersection, creating conflicts for drivers and bikers. And pedestrian face dangers trying to cross it, even in marked crossings.

In fact, PBOT says 122nd Avenue is one of the most dangerous roadways for travelers in the Portland area and most of it does not meet new city guidelines for marked crosswalk spacing.

The transportation bureau is considering putting in lighting and crossings, among other things.

The public is encouraged to weigh in on how to make 122nd safer by filling out a survey now through Jan. 6, 2019. You can find it [here](#).

Willamette Week

Mayor Ted Wheeler Says the Problem of Homelessness in Portland Is Solvable

*By Rachel Monahan
December 14, 2018*

"It's a matter of political will, prioritization and resources. We'll get there a lot faster if we have partnerships from the state and federal governments. But we will get there."

Mayor Ted Wheeler has had a tough year by several measures—not least among them, the complaints about the tents and other visible signs of street homelessness.

But at his final press conference of 2018, Wheeler struck a hopeful note on one of the most intractable issues facing Portland.

"Do you think homelessness can be fixed in Portland?" asked a reporter.

His response was confident.

"Yes, I do," said the mayor. "It's a matter of political will, prioritization and resources. We'll get there a lot faster if we have partnerships from the state and federal governments. But we will get there."

Portland City Hall and the mayor himself have embraced a range of goals around all aspects of addressing homelessness, including adding 2,000 units of supportive housing, which is housing that is accompanied by addiction or mental health services for people who are at risk of chronic homelessness.

"I'm convinced we have the right formula," said Wheeler. "Shelter to get people off the streets right now, [mental health, addiction and job training] services and adequate transition services to get people off the streets or out of the shelters into housing, and making sure we have permanent supportive housing to make sure people are successful."

City Hall is still in negotiations with Multnomah County and Metro over an agreement to use hotel and rental car taxes to fund supportive housing.

Mayor Ted Wheeler's Chief of Staff Disclosed a Relationship to a Woman Who Worked for Him in the Mayor's Office

By Rachel Monahan

December 15, 2018

After WW started making calls, Michael Cox disclosed a relationship with a woman he indirectly supervised.

Mayor Ted Wheeler has agreed to accommodate a "personal relationship" between his chief of staff, Michael Cox, and a woman who was previously supervised by Cox and continues to work for the mayor's office.

The woman reports directly to Deputy Chief of Staff Kristin Dennis and previously reported indirectly to Cox, who supervises Dennis.

Cox disclosed the relationship verbally to the mayor and the attorney for the city on Dec. 5, according to documents provided to WW and The Oregonian today. Cox's disclosure came less than two weeks after WW began making inquiries to people who might be familiar with the relationship.

The decision for a the mayor to allow a "personal relationship" to continue in his office raises questions in an era when sexual harassment and concerns about power dynamics of relationships have an increasingly elevated profile.

But City Attorney Tracy Reeve told the mayor in a formal memo on Dec. 12 that Cox's relationship did not violate the city's human-resource rules that forbid supervisors from overseeing a member of their own household or someone with whom they have a personal relationships. Cox does not share a household with the staffer.

But to avoid a conflict of interest, Reeve advised in a December 12 memo, the mayor to make changes to who supervises the employee, to "avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest and comply not only with the letter but the spirit" of the rules.

Mayor Wheeler directed Dennis and Cox and the staffer to do just that: requiring the Dennis to report directly to him on matters related to the staffer.

The mayor's office did not respond to questions about why Cox disclosed the relationship at this time.

Dennis also did not respond to a question about when the relationship began.

Cox also did not respond to a request for comment.

Could Oregon Become the First State to Ban Single-Family Zoning?

By Rachel Monahan

December 14, 2018

Rep. Tina Kotek (D-Portland), speaker of the Oregon House, is drafting legislation that would end single-family zoning in cities of 10,000 or more: "The state's housing crisis requires a combination of bolder strategies."

Legislation being drafted in Oregon could become the nation's most dramatic effort to address the housing shortages and economic and racial segregation caused by zoning restrictions.

WW has learned that Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek (D-Portland) is drafting a proposal that would require cities larger than 10,000 people to allow up to four homes to be built on land currently zoned exclusively for single-family housing.

"The state's housing crisis requires a combination of bolder strategies," says Kotek in a statement. "Oregon needs to build more units, and we must do so in a way that increases housing opportunity for more people. Allowing more diverse housing types in single family neighborhoods will increase housing choice and affordability, and that's a fight that I'm willing to take on."

Kotek's proposal follows a similar move this month by Minneapolis, Minn., where city leaders have enacted a plan that will end single-family throughout that city—a decision hailed in the national press for its innovation.

"In a bold move to address its affordable-housing crisis and confront a history of racist housing practices, Minneapolis has decided to eliminate single-family zoning, a classification that has long perpetuated segregation," reported The New York Times on Dec. 13.

Portland has been dithering for more than four years on a related proposal for what's called "middle housing" that recently was delayed once again. This time, the delay is until the summer. Under Portland's proposal, as currently drafted, four units would be allowed in 96 percent of the cities' single family neighborhoods.

The city effort has proved controversial, attracting fierce opposition from neighborhood groups interested in preserving suburban-style housing even in urban cores.

But champions of zoning reform say allowing smaller dwellings or breaking up single-family homes into multiple units creates more housing and the chance to make housing more affordable in pricey neighborhoods.

Reversing those zoning restrictions could go a long way toward addressing the need for more housing, experts argue.

"The crux of the matter is land is the scarce commodity here," Oregon state economist Josh Lehner said this week, in a blog post arguing for exploring this type of change. "Outside of lava flows and seawalls, we're not making more of it. As a region grows, so too does housing demand which places upward pressure on housing costs."

Zoning reform could also address the economic and racial segregation of single-family neighborhoods.

The economic segregation of Portland neighborhoods matches neatly with its single-family zoning, and a segregationist history informed those restrictions, Sightline Institute's Michael Andersen wrote earlier this year.

"There are a few ways for a neighborhood in the Portland of 2018 to be reserved mostly for the well-off," he wrote. "But one of the most effective ways seems to be 'ban attached housing in 1924'"—the year Portland enacted its first single-family zoning.

Kotek's legislation is currently being drafted, but her official concept for the legislation sets a deadline of 16 months for cities to come up with a plan to allow for duplexes, triplex, quads as well as so-called housing "clusters." It applies only to cities of 10,000 or more within an urban-growth boundary.

The November's election, when Democrats won more seats in both houses of the Oregon Legislature, ensured that housing will play a key part in the legislative agenda next year, particularly a new attempt to pass tenant protections including an end to no-cause evictions and an overturn of the state's ban on rent control.

This proposal goes toward the other side of the equation, by addressing a root cause of rent increases—the failure to build enough housing stock to address the shortfall of affordable units.

Critics of Portland's proposal are likely to offer the same objection to Kotek's efforts: They fear it will cause the pace of demolitions to rise.

Kotek attempts to address that concern by proposing changes to the state's building code, which would allow single family homes to be divided more easily into multiple dwellings.

In his blog post this week, Lehner discusses the long-delayed Portland proposal and it's possible for Oregon to achieve major results from one policy change.

"By simply allowing for — not requiring — townhomes and triplexes to be built on existing lands in the City of Portland, the policy can accommodate 1 out of every 7 new Portland area households in the coming decade," he writes. "That is a big finding."

The Portland Mercury

Portland Police Bureau to Hire Homeless Liaison

*By Alex Zielinski
December 17, 2018*

The Portland Police Bureau (PPB) is taking applications for a brand-new job: Homeless Community Liaison.

The new hire, announced this morning, will act as a translator of sorts between the homeless community and sworn officers who interact with houseless Portlanders on a daily basis. According to the job description, the liaison will work with PPB's training division to educate

new officers on "communicating, policing, and providing services to the unsheltered community" and will represent PPB on all issues related to homelessness.

To qualify for the new position, applicants must be familiar with existing homeless services in Portland, understand "unsheltered community culture," and be knowledgeable about equity issues regarding homeless polices, among other administrative-related skills. The liaison will not be a sworn police officer and will not carry a weapon. The job offers an annual salary ranging anywhere between \$53,280 and \$98,796.

It's not clear if this liaison will be required to have a background in mental health care or substance abuse disorders—two issues that are disproportionately represented in Portland's homeless community.

PPB's interactions with Portland's growing homeless population has taken center stage in the past year, prompted by an Oregonian investigation that found 52 percent of all arrests in 2017 were of people experiencing homelessness. As activist groups suggested a more humane solution to addressing homelessness, spin-off neighborhood organizations called for a heightened crackdown on homeless camps. The head of Portland's police union, meanwhile, blamed the city for allowing homelessness to turn Portland into a "cesspool."

"This position is a critical component to our response to those in the homeless community," said PPB Chief Danielle Outlaw in an emailed statement. "This person will influence how the Police Bureau responds to people in the homeless community and ensure the Police Bureau is in line with best contemporary policing practices. The Homeless Liaison will also focus on the imperative partnerships we have with social service and other governmental agencies so we are all on the same page."

PPB aims to hire someone for this position by the end of January.

The Daily Journal of Commerce

\$90 Million Portland Water Main Project on Tap

By Sam Tenney
December 14, 2018

A Portland Water Bureau project to construct a seismically resilient water supply line under the Willamette River will move forward after Portland City Council on Wednesday approved a \$73.5 million design-build contract with Dallas, Oregon-based James W. Fowler Co.

All six existing pipes that deliver water west across the river are either suspended under bridges or buried in loose soils, making them likely to fail during a sizable earthquake. City officials estimate that restoring water services to the west side after a major seismic event could take up to 12 months, during which time revenue loss could total \$3 billion.

As part of the Willamette River Crossing Project, crews will install a new water main 80 feet beneath the bed of the river in the Troutdale Formation, where it won't be susceptible to damage from soil liquefaction. Because the majority of the crossing cannot be accessed from the surface by normal trenching techniques, the roughly mile-long alignment will be installed in part via horizontal directional drilling, while micro-tunneling construction will take place on the east side.

The proposed alignment of the new line will begin near the intersection of Southwest Harbor Drive and Naito Parkway, pass under the RiverPlace area and under the river to the north end of the OMSI property before terminating near the intersection of Southeast Seventh Avenue and Stephens Street.

The project's total cost is \$90 million, which includes \$4 million for consulting, \$6.5 million for permits, easements and property, and \$6 million in contingency. The contractor has committed to 35 percent utilization of COBID-certified subcontractors, suppliers and manufacturers; including 6 percent utilization of emerging small businesses.

Design of the project is expected to be completed in about a year, with construction to finish in October 2021. Total completion is expected in January 2022.

The Portland Business Journal

Who's in the Portland Marathon Bidding, Take Two

*By Pete Danko
December 14, 2018*

Talk about a marathon.

The city looks to take another step forward Monday on the long road to finding a 2019 Portland Marathon producer, with two proposals appearing certain and a few more likely by the 4 p.m. deadline.

Brooksee LLC, which won an earlier RFP only to have Mayor Ted Wheeler abruptly call for a do-over, said it will bid.

Oregon Sports Authority said it will too. The nonprofit was an also-ran in the first RFP, protested and lost the protest, but is getting a new chance thanks to the mayor's intervention.

The local group Rose City Marathon and Seattle race organizer Fizz Events LLC told the Business Journal they are planning to submit proposals, as well.

One wild card is Motiv Sports, a Denver-based race producer that owns the Shamrock Run, the Portland area's largest running event with around 25,000 participants.

The company is listed on the city's "Solicitation Holder List" where prospective bidders sign up to receive updates on the RFP. But a Motiv representative declined to comment on whether it would submit a bid.

No other possible bidders had popped into view as of mid-Friday.

The revised solicitation shrinks the importance of race production experience, emphasizes creating a compelling race that shows off Portland and adds a new goal: creating an event that will generate revenue the city can use to pursue sports opportunities for historically underserved communities.

In the first RFP, four evaluators scored the bids in various categories adding up to a maximum of 100 points per evaluator.

Brooksee was first with 306 points, followed by Rugged Races LLC (266 points), Oregon Sports Authority (258 points), Fizz Events (235) and Rose City Marathon (216).

Bids in the second go-round will be judged by a new panel of evaluators, according to the city procurement office. The mayor's office said it would "collaborate" with the Portland Bureau of Transportation on pulling together that committee.

Portland has been contemplating getting a new marathon producer for more than a year, after the 2016 and 2017 races were plagued with issues under longtime director Les Smith. This past January, the city nearly launched a process for a new producer for the 2019 race, but Mayor Wheeler decided against going forward with it, the Oregonian reported.

Then in April, Smith reached an \$865,000 settlement with the Oregon Department of Justice, which accused him of illegally loaning himself money from the marathon. That led to his exit and cancellation of the 2018 race — for a while.

The city quickly put out an RFI for the 2019 race that drew interest from more than a dozen entities. A few weeks later, it announced an accelerated search for a 2018 race producer.

The 2018 race went off in October, hastily organized by local group Run With Paula and with its smallest field in memory.

At the same time, the city began considering proposals in an RFP for the 2019 race that had bids due in late September. In late October, it put out a notice that it intended to award a contract to Brooksee.

But the day before Thanksgiving, the mayor's office, in a four-paragraph press release, said it was pulling the plug on that RFP because the mayor wanted to see proposals with a "bold vision" for the race. The release went out despite the mayor's office not having notified Brooksee, and without a new RFP set.

The new solicitation landed on Dec. 4.

According to the document, announcement of "short list proposers" is scheduled for Dec. 28, with a selection committee recommendation set for Jan. 11. Negotiating a contract would follow, although that's what Brooksee thought a few months ago, so stay tuned.