

The Portland Tribune

City Hall Update: Half of Portlanders Struggle with Rent

*By Jim Redden
January 1, 2018*

Plus, the Portland Bureau of Transportation is asking the public how to improve 122nd Avenue, one of the city's most dangerous streets.

Nearly half of Portland renters are paying more than 30 percent of their incomes for housing, and slightly more than half of them are paying more than 50 percent of their incomes for rent.

Because of that, there are no neighborhoods in the city where the average black, Native American, Pacific Islander, or single-mother headed household can afford rent.

Those are among the finds of the annual State of Housing in Portland report released on Dec. 19 by the Portland Housing Bureau. The disparities are occurring despite a significant increase in apartment construction that has slowed rent increases to about 2 percent and rapidly rising incomes within the other half of the population.

The city also has increased the supply of government-supported affordable housing projects. You can read the report at: www.portlandoregon.gov/phb/78184.

Help improve 122nd Avenue

The Portland Bureau of Transportation is asking the public for ideas to help upgrade 122nd Avenue, one of the most congested and dangerous streets in Portland.

The bureau is dedicating \$2 million from the Fixing Our Streets program funded by the temporary 10-cents-a-gallon city gas tax to developing a plan for improving the street. Anticipated improvements include more lighting, crossings, improved bike lanes, bus lanes and signal changes.

But the bureau also wants to hear your ideas. You can learn more about the project and take the online survey at: portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/706747

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler Raises \$58,500 in Three Days

*By Nick Budnick
December 31, 2018*

Weeks after suggesting he wouldn't run again, Wheeler launched an eye-popping fundraising drive.

Two weeks after a muttered gripe sparked speculation that he would not run for reelection, Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler launched a campaign fundraising drive that garnered \$87,000 from an array of developers and unions, campaign reporting shows.

The contributions are interesting in light of the comment overheard after a Nov. 15 public appearance where he was heckled. "I cannot wait for the next 24 months to be up," he said, a comment promptly tweeted out by The Oregonian's Molly Harbarger. One local wag promptly dubbed it "Muttergate."

Hours later, Wheeler denied having made a decision on reelection, and two weeks later walked his statement back even further in an interview with the Portland Tribune — saying he "expects" to run and had been "raising funds for a re-election campaign" even since Nov. 15.

The contributions are also interesting in light of contribution caps that were recently approved by voters but which have not yet been approved by the Portland City Council.

Regardless, it seems Wheeler has been raising funds with renewed vigor.

In November, his one contribution came in on Nov. 14, from John Andrews of Melvin Mark Properties for \$5,000.

On Dec. 7, Wheeler took in another \$5,000 from Jim Mark of the same firm. And then came 22 more contributions that month. Of those, 15 came in during just the three days after Christmas, for a total of \$58,500.

The biggest contributions included \$25,000 from Local 48 of the International Brotherhood of Electric Workers, followed by \$10,000 apiece from Nike, Inc. and Peter Stott, a trucking magnate and investor. Another \$10,000 was split between four business entities affiliated with Tom Brenneke, a local developer and property manager.

"I would call that a warchest-building operation," said local lawyer Jason Kafoury when the contributions were read to him over the phone. Kafoury was active in a campaign finance reform measure that passed in November, setting caps of \$500 on individual contributions in city of Portland elections.

The contribution caps don't go into effect until an implementing ordinance is approved by the Portland City Council. That must take place by September 2019, under the measure.

Motives unclear

Given the timing, it's unclear if Wheeler is trying to scare off would-be challengers for his job, bank contributions before the new contribution limits make fundraising more difficult, or both. It's also unclear if the funds might be redirected to run for a different elected post.

His campaign consultant, Jake Weigler of Hilltop Public Solutions, declined to shed light on his client's thinking, instead issuing a generic comment by email.

"Ted throughout the year has been securing resources to work on the issues that matter to the community," Weigler wrote. "He raised over \$100,000 to expand affordable housing creation through the recent housing bond. He supported the campaign to oppose the profiling of immigrant Oregonians and the campaigns to elect more Democrats to the Legislature. He is committed to continuing this work in 2019 and appreciates the support he is receiving from the community."

Wheeler's three-day post-Christmas fundraising binge compares favorably with his pace in April 2016, shortly before his victory over Jules Bailey. That month, he raised nearly \$250,000, meaning a pace of about \$8,000 a day in the runup to the May primary.

In comparison, none of Wheeler's fellow incumbents on the Portland Council raised a penny in December.

Interestingly, Wheeler's closest city-level competition came from Commissioner-elect Jo Ann Hardesty. Since her Nov. 6 victory over Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith, Hardesty has received 41 contributions totaling more than \$10,500.

Hardesty has been a vocal proponent of the contribution caps sought by reformers like Kafoury — indeed, some of the reformers considered the measure a two-fer that would highlight Hardesty's stance on the issue and thereby help their ally win the council race over Smith.

Hardesty's post-election contributions have maxed out at \$500 in apparent recognition of the victorious city campaign finance measure. There were 17 such \$500-givers in December, including lobbyist Len Bergstein, former state Sen. Chip Shields, real estate developer Thomas Cody and Julie and Cliff Hockley, owners of Bluestone & Hockley, a real estate firm.

Anna Nguyen, who managed Hardesty's campaign, said it's common for candidates to raise money during their term to help sponsor community events, maintain the candidates' website, and for other purposes.

Asked whether Hardesty is considering a run for another office, Nguyen said that right now, Hardesty is focused on the job she was elected to do, "and that job alone."

Reformers, meanwhile, hope to make the voter-approved contribution caps go into effect as soon as possible.

"We look forward to quickly implementing an ordinance to put measure 26-200 into place to limit campaign contributions in 2019," Kafoury said.

Willamette Week

Multnomah County Keeps Revising Demands Related to \$5 Million a Year in Funding for Homeless Services

*By Rachel Monahan
December 31, 2018*

The negotiations between the county, city and Metro are stalled and two parties blame the county.

On Dec. 18, elected officials at Portland City Hall, Multnomah County and Metro released a joint statement cheering the progress in reaching a deal on using hotel taxes for homeless services.

But behind the scenes, city officials say the county is holding up a deal.

Metro and the city had reached a deal on a revised Visitor Facilities Development intergovernmental agreement, but still need the county's support.

The three governments use hotel and rental-car taxes to fund the convention center and support tourism as well as other venues around the city. For the last year, County Chair Deborah Kafoury has championed the idea of directing \$5 million to homeless services as part of the agreement.

On Dec. 14, the city's lobbyist Elizabeth Edwards updated officials that the county had suggested a version of the agreement that "was severely inconsistent with terms of our agreement, introduced new concepts, raised issues that had previously been settled, etc.," in an email obtained by WW.

At the Metro Council vote on Dec. 13, outgoing president Tom Hughes told a similar story, explaining that negotiations had been ongoing for 10 months with the county, but a pattern had emerged.

"We have come to agreement multiple times only to find that 'agreement' didn't really mean agreement; it meant agreement except we've got another set of red-line changes we want to make," Hughes said.

It's unclear at this point whether a deal will be reached, but county officials say they plan to continue discussions in the new year.

"Using these dollars is a completely new concept and we knew this would not be an easy negotiation," says county spokeswoman Julie Sullivan-Springhetti. "But our position hasn't changed. Getting stable funding to help people get off the streets and into housing, and protecting our fiscal integrity, have been the county's top priorities throughout these talks and what we will work on with our partners in the New Year."

Mayor Ted Wheeler's office similarly expressed a commitment to continuing to work out a deal.

"The Mayor continues to work in good faith with the Chair and the Metro President on negotiating this multi-jurisdictional agreement," says Wheeler spokeswoman Eileen Park.

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler Raised \$146,000 in 2018 for His Political Action Committee

*By Rachel Monahan
January 1, 2018*

Wheeler's struggles on the job have raised questions about his shot at reelection, but he says voters should expect he'll run.

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler has stepped up his fundraising efforts, presumably as part of a run for reelection, raising \$87,000 in the last month.

In 2018, he raised \$146,000 in total.

Wheeler's public struggles on the job have raised questions about his prospects for reelection, though he has said voters should expect him to run again.

The fundraising is one indication he's preparing a run.

The \$146,000 is a fraction of the more than \$1 million Wheeler raised for his 2016 run for office, but the next election is still more than 23 months away.

Four years ago, in 2014, then-Mayor Charlie Hales raised \$506 toward a possible 2016 campaign. (Wheeler also raised an insignificant sum that year: \$100.)

Wheeler's tallies comes in advance of a new limit on campaign finance limits passed by voters in November that will prohibit corporate donations and limit donations from a single donor to \$500. None of the recent contributions to Wheeler would meet those requirements. The measure calls for the provisions being enacted no later than Sept. 1.

The fundraising caps are likely to be challenged in courts, but will, at a minimum, be a political force in the election.

The next cycle will see other changes in Portland elections law, including a return to publicly financed campaigns.