

The Portland Tribune

Wheeler Supports Oregon Rent Control, Portland Infill Growth Plan

*By Jim Redden
January 17, 2019*

Mayor talks about a wide range of issues during his monthly press conference on Thursday, including scheduling a work session on the FBI Portland Joint Terrorism Task Force and Major League Baseball.

Mayor Ted Wheeler endorsed the rent control bill to be considered by the 2019 Oregon Legislature and the current Residential Infill Project recommendations at his monthly press conference on Thursday.

Although both proposals are controversial, Wheeler said they are necessary to make housing in the city as affordable as possible.

"Imagine Portland if people working in the culinary industry, artists and school teachers can't afford to live here," Wheeler said during the Jan. 17 press conference.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown and Democratic legislative leaders are currently discussing a bill that would limit future rent increases in Oregon to 7 percent plus inflation in buildings more than 15 years old and prohibit no-cause evictions for tenants who have lived in a house or building for more than a year. Landlord organizations are currently neutral, but individual landlords could oppose it, and some tenant advocates say the allowable increase should be lower.

The city Planning and Sustainability Commission is preparing to ask the City Council to rezone 96 percent of single-family neighborhoods to allow up to four residential units on each lot, and to allow duplexes, triplexes and four-plexes to be up to 1,000 square feet larger than single-family houses. Some neighborhood activists oppose RIP recommendations, and the Multnomah Neighborhood Association is challenging its legality at the Oregon Court of Appeals.

Wheeler said the council would likely enact a similar rent control program if the Legislature simply gave all cities the authority to do so instead of approving its own version. He also said he knows the RIP recommendations will be contentious when they reach the council, probably this summer.

"The cost of housing will continue to grow and more people will be excluded from living in Portland if we don't modernize the way we think about housing," Wheeler said.

On other issues, Wheeler said he:

- Will schedule a council work session at new Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty's to discuss whether the city should withdraw from the FBI Portland Joint Terrorism Task Force. Wheeler said he "absolutely" believes the city should stay in the JTTF to help keep Portlanders as safe as possible, but knows that three commissioners — Hardesty, Chloe Eudaly and Amanda Fritz — want to debate it.
- Was surprised by state Sen. Ginny Burdick's (D-Portland) support for a bill to repeal the 2003 law she supported that would allow the salaries of Major League Baseball players in Oregon be taxed to help pay for a stadium. Wheeler says he supports the Portland Diamond Project's efforts to build a stadium and bring a team to Portland.

- Will pick up trash with SOLVE in Irving Park as part of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service. It will be part of the "Keep it Pretty, Rose City" clean up campaign he announced last year. The Bureau of Planning and Sustainability is schedule to place an additional 1,000 new trash can throughout the city as another part of the campaign to make Portland the cleanest city in the country.
- Has directed the public record managers in all of the bureaus he oversees to release requested public records as quickly and inexpensively as possible, including the Portland Police Bureau, which has been providing reports to crime victims since Jan. 1.

After the press conference, Wheeler told the Portland Tribune he was not surprised that Hardesty spoke out against the small group of white males who repeatedly disrupt council hearings without contributing anything to the discussions the council members are having on agenda items. Hardesty had seemed surprised by the first disruption she witnessed during he first day on the council two weeks ago, Wheeler said.

Willamette Week

Portland Economist Says City's E-Scooter Experiment Was a Success—and Wants to Apply the Same Standards to Cars

*By Elise Herron
January 17, 2019*

“If we applied even a fraction of the scrutiny to cars that PBOT has applied to scooters,” Joe Cortright says, “we’d be looking to have radical change.”

On Tuesday, City Hall announced plans to bring e-scooters back to Portland for another year.

The decision was based on the Portland Bureau of Transportation's analysis of in-depth data provided by scooter operators Bird, Lime and Skip about how and when scooters were used during the first trial period last summer.

Buy local economist Joe Cortright is now criticizing PBOT for what he calls a "stark double standard."

In a blog post, Cortright celebrates the success of e-scooters in Portland—"six percent of scooter users reported getting rid of a private car as a result of scooter availability"—but says the agency's high standards for the new form of transit should extend to cars.

"At what point was it determined that small, personal two-wheeled electric vehicles required special bureaucratic dispensation (and per trip fees paid to the city)," Cortright writes, "and that large gas guzzling, polluting, frequently deadly four-wheeled ones were allowed to roam free in unlimited numbers?"

By Cortright's calculations, scooter operators paid around 22 cents per mile to use Portland streets (the per-ride city surcharge was 25 cents and the average ride length was 1.1 miles). Car drivers, whose cars average 20 miles per gallon, pay a combined state and city gas tax of two cents per mile.

"It's vastly unfair to charge scooters more than cars," Cortright says. "When will PBOT ask the same questions or impose the same standards on our car-dominated transportation system?"

He suggests that PBOT cap the number of cars in the city, impose a 20-cent-per-mile car fee, and require "electronic speed governors that keep vehicles from being operated at unsafe and illegal speeds."

Dylan Rivera, a spokesperson for PBOT, says Cortright "makes some very good points," and that the city is already "making progress on many of the same safety, financial and sustainability objectives."

"As technology allows," he says, "PBOT is gathering more and better data about how people travel through all transportation modes—e-scooter, bicycle, car, or by foot or mobility device."

For example, Rivera says the city used Bluetooth devices to clock car speeds on Southwest Naito Parkway during the Better Naito project by tracking how fast drivers' cell phones traveled.

He adds that the city has "lowered the speed limits on dozens of busy streets in the last two years," and is "using high-tech safety cameras to enforce speed limits around the clock."

In terms of road charges, Rivera says drivers can volunteer to sign up for a program from the Oregon Department of Transportation, called OReGO, and be charged by the mile rather than by the gallon.

"We strongly support pricing strategies that will provide incentives for sustainable transportation options, protect people who are living on low incomes, and charge more for options that involve driving greater distances," Rivera says.

The Portland Mercury

Hardesty Leads Charge to Sever City's Ties With Federal Terrorism Taskforce

*By Alex Zielinski
January 17, 2019*

With a new opponent in city council, the future of Portland's ties with a controversial FBI taskforce is—again—up for debate.

"On the campaign trail, what I heard over and over again from people was their sense of insecurity, just walking around Portland," Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty said at a community meeting Wednesday night. Removing Portland police from the FBI-led Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), Hardesty said, could be a major step toward repairing those community fears.

Portland has had an on-again-off-again relationship with the JTTF, a top-secret program that allows local law enforcement to share information with their regional FBI office, for more than a decade. Currently, the city has dedicated two Portland police officers to the taskforce, but neither the mayor nor the police chief are allowed to know what kind of projects the FBI has them working on.

Civil rights advocates have long raised concerns that the FBI could easily rope local officers into surveillance efforts that violate state laws—specifically, laws that prohibit police targeting people based on their ethnicity or religion alone. And now, those advocates have a dedicated ally on the city council. At the Wednesday forum, held at immigrant rights nonprofit Unite Oregon, Hardesty joined local civil liberty groups in decrying Portland's role in the JTTF.

"I feel very uneasy having city employees that are working for a federal government that has shown that its targeted immigrants and refugees," Hardesty said.

Hardesty entered Portland City Council with a primary goal to end the city's relationship with the JTTF. By replacing longtime JTTF fan Dan Saltzman at the council dais, Hardesty may have the votes needed to get the job done.

The FBI isn't thrilled about this plan. Earlier this week, Hardesty met with Renn Cannon, the special agent in charge of the FBI's Portland division, to hear the agency's arguments for remaining in the JTTF. According to Hardesty, Cannon and his colleagues explained that there are "very clear lines" between what the FBI does and what the police do on the JTTF. She wasn't convinced.

"We just don't know how much data the FBI is collecting, what they're doing with the data, and how they're using that data to have an impact on community members," she said. Hardesty said there's little proof that Portland's involvement in the JTTF makes Portland any more protected from terrorist threats.

Last year, former FBI investigator Michael German testified before city council in opposition of the JTTF partnership, alleging that the taskforce has explicitly targeted immigrants and communities of color. Hardesty said that instead of putting police resources toward supporting the FBI, the city should focus its attention on responding to overlooked and underreported hate crimes in the community.

The city has had a long and turbulent relationship with the JTTF. In 2005, under the leadership of then-Mayor Tom Potter, the city left the taskforce amid civil liberty concerns. In 2011, shortly after the FBI revealed a Muslim man had tried to bomb Portland's Christmas tree lighting ceremony (not without with the FBI's encouragement), the city was convinced the to re-join the JTTF on a case-by-case basis. Then, in 2015, the city council voted 3-2 to fully join the taskforce—with Commissioner Amanda Fritz and former Commissioner Steve Novick the dissenting votes.

Fritz, whose views on the JTTF remain unchanged, was the only other city council member in attendance Wednesday night.

According to Hardesty's staff, the new commissioner has pushed to get a JTTF vote before city council since entering office earlier this month. But, since the JTTF is a contentious issue with a complicated history in city hall, Hardesty doesn't want to rush it to a council vote without a public work session. The one person who's able to schedule a work session is Mayor Ted Wheeler, a vocal advocate for the JTTF.

"I believe remaining in the JTTF is critical to safety and wellbeing to all Portlanders, because it allows us to preempt potential violence," said Wheeler at a Thursday press conference. "There are others on city council who want to have a conversation about our involvement and I am certainly willing to do that."

Wheeler said he's "committed to a work session" that includes representatives from the FBI and Portland Police Bureau. He's considering allowing people who oppose the JTTF, like the ACLU of Oregon, to join the session. There's no set date for that work session, which will be open to the public but won't include public testimony.

If brought to a council vote, Commissioner Nick Fish is expected to stand by his previous vote to maintain Portland's ties with the taskforce. Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, while skeptical of the relationship, has yet to indicate how she'd vote on the issue.

Multnomah County Unveils Plans For Addiction and Mental Health Resource Center in Downtown Portland

By Blair Stenvick

January 17, 2019

Plans are underway to build a mental health and addiction resource center geared toward homeless people in downtown Portland. If built, it would be the first of its kind in the county.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners approved a purchase agreement Thursday morning for 333 SW Park, a four-story, 30,000-square-foot building located about a block south of W Burnside. This doesn't mean they've purchased the building—yet. A purchase agreement is only the first step in establishing the terms of an eventual purchase.

If the county decides to move forward with purchasing the building, it will serve as a first stop for people experiencing addiction or mental illness to access temporary and long-term housing, counseling, and peer support, as well as basic necessities like showers and phone use.

“It has become very clear there is the need for a peer-led resource center for homeless individuals with mental health and substance abuse issues disorders to receive basic supports to assist them in recovery while experiencing homelessness,” said Neal Rotman, the county's community mental health program manager and a leading advocate for the resource center, at the board meeting.

The center would be developed and managed by the Multnomah County Health Department's Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services. According to a document from Thursday's board meeting, county leaders have been hoping to open such a facility “for years.”

Advocates of the planned resource center say that it is important the county have a place for people to seek help that doesn't have a barrier to entry, as homeless shelters and treatment centers often do. Rather than requiring people to contact the county and wait for a slot in a program or shelter to open up, they could visit the resource center anytime and receive immediate assistance connecting with the services they need.

Portland currently lacks such a center, meaning homeless people experiencing mental health and addiction crises have few places to turn to for immediate assistance.

Funds to pay for the \$4.3 million building would likely come from the sale of the old Multnomah County Courthouse, though they have not been appropriated. It is not yet clear where the county would source development and operating costs.

The City of Portland has not indicated if it will be helping finance the project.

At Thursday's meeting, several commenters and commissioners noted 333 SW Park's ideal location: blocks away from Central City Concern, a homeless services nonprofit, and in close proximity from the North Park Blocks, where many homeless people spend time.

“Nowhere in our community is the intersection between behavioral health and homelessness more concentrated, or more visible, than in downtown Portland,” said Chair Deborah Kafoury.

Though the board unanimously approved the purchase agreement, acquiring the building is not yet a done deal. The county still needs to secure funds before the end of the fiscal year.

“We're hopeful that this will be the perfect building for our project,” Kafoury said. “And if we decide against moving forward, if we decide this building isn't for us, we'll continue our search for an appropriate property in downtown Portland.”

The Portland Business Journal

Why Portland's Lack of Commitment May Doom its World-Class Marathon Ambition

*By Pete Danko
January 17, 2019*

Mayor Ted Wheeler wants the Portland Marathon to be one of the best in the world, but given the city's history, there are doubts that the commitment and ability to make it happen are really there.

A few years ago, when ESPN asked a dozen or so expert runners to name the 10 best marathons in the world, they picked races in famous capitals: Tokyo, Paris, Berlin, Rome, London and Washington, D.C. The marathon that started it all, Boston, also made the list — of course — along with the quadrennial Olympic Games race and events in New York City and Chicago that each draw more than 40,000 participants.

That's the company Portland aims to keep with its marathon, according to Mayor Ted Wheeler.

Wheeler wants to pick up the pieces of a broken race and rearrange them into a city-owned marathon that “showcases Portland as a world-class travel and tourism destination,” serves to “move Portland to the forefront of the running community” and “provides an opportunity to increase Portland’s national profile.”

That's how the city described its marathon ambitions in December in a request for proposals seeking a race producer. It was the second RFP issued by the city since September, and it was forced by Wheeler after he rejected an evaluation committee's initial selection. The surprising decision came amid lobbying from a politically well-connected organization that had vied for the contract and lost, but Wheeler said he was motivated by a pursuit of a “bold vision” for the race.

Portland could have a lot to gain if it can establish a race like the one Wheeler has in mind.

Major races like the Bank of America Chicago Marathon can draw thousands of visitors to a city, generating enormous economic activity and funneling millions of dollars to charities.

"A marathon in Portland with bold vision will bolster local businesses by attracting national and international competitors, along with spectators that can patronize our prized restaurants, accommodations and diverse shopping experiences," Portland Business Alliance CEO Andrew Hoan said in November, supporting Wheeler's RFP redo.

But not everyone is sure Portland is equipped to build a big marathon, or even understands what it would take. The city's stumbles in finding a producer for the 2019 race — that second RFP is weeks behind schedule — has hardly suggested well-coordinated engagement across the various bureaucracies.

“This isn't about the organization that puts on the race,” said Paula Harkin, whose company stepped up to rescue last October's imperiled Portland Marathon. “It's about the city coming together and truly embracing the challenge. I hope that can happen, but that's something that needs to be demonstrated.”

Rise and fall

The very first Portland Marathon, on Sauvie Island in 1972, drew 86 runners, according to the Oregon Encyclopedia. After a few years, the race left the island and bounced around in the city

before the start/finish landed downtown for good in 1984. By that time, Les Smith was the race director, staging the event through the nonprofit Portland Marathon Inc.

Despite a course that was widely viewed as less than inspiring, Smith grew the race. Portland wasn't a major marathon like New York or Chicago, but it settled solidly into a second tier of American races that regularly drew 5,000 to 10,000 participants.

“The respect I have for Les as a race director is very high,” said Daniel Brewer, a longtime race director in the area who had worked on the marathon. “The city of Portland does not make it easy — my impression is they don't like events. I don't excuse what happened in the end, but for a long time, Les got as much out of that race as anyone could.”

But problems with Smith and the marathon cropped up as the 2010s wore on. The 2016 marathon was threatened by a failure to get a safety plan in place. In 2017, Portland Fire Bureau Battalion Chief Don Russ complained in an internal memo that the race had failed to pay fees to the city on time since 2013. The number of finishers dropped to 2,912 in 2017, off by two-thirds since 2011.

That same year, the Oregon Department of Justice began a probe into the relationship between Portland Marathon Inc. and a for-profit company Smith also controlled that put on the race. Then in April 2018, the DOJ accused Smith of illegally borrowing \$865,000 from the nonprofit. He admitted no wrongdoing, but agreed to pay back the money and was banned from involvement in races.

By then, Portland was already looking for an organization to produce the 2019 race under city ownership, but it was struggling. A request for information had been drawn up but killed by Wheeler in January 2018. It finally went out in April, drawing interest from more than a dozen parties, but the follow-on request for proposals lagged.

Amid the confusion, the 2018 marathon, set to run in October, dangled on the edge of oblivion. It was pulled back by Harkin's Run with Paula Events, but just 748 runners finished the race, the lowest total in memory.

Starting over

Given that recent history, the idea of Portland making a run at a major marathon sounds like a big reach to some knowledgeable observers.

Mark Remy, a Portland-based veteran running writer and runner himself, likened it to a non-runner runner announcing they were taking up the sport with the expressed intention of competing in the Olympics.

“I'd think the focus now would be on reestablishing the Portland Marathon as a good, solid race,” said Remy, who covered several New York City marathons for Runner's World. “And that's not easy, because the logistics of putting on a good, solid race are bananas.”

Carey Pinkowski, race director of the powerhouse Chicago Marathon since 1990, said he admired Portland's ambition.

“I'd love to see Portland build a great race,” Pinkowski said. “It's a vibrant, dynamic city in a place with great running history. It could be wonderful.”

Pinkowski knows something about growing a race. In his first year in Chicago, 6,168 runners finished. Now, 28 years later, the number is regularly around 45,000. A study by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign put the direct economic impact of the race at \$137 million in

2017, with another \$200 million in indirect benefits. An estimated \$185.5 million has been raised for charities since 2002.

“It takes time and effort on everyone’s part to get to that level,” Pinkowski said, citing a “total commitment” from Chicago police — an area where the Portland race has suffered in recent years — as one example.

It’s that commitment, Pinkowski said, that allows myriad necessary pieces to fall into place, as a marathon gains the faith of neighborhoods, businesses and charities, and transforms from an imposition to a celebration.

“You need support, but you also have to earn support,” Pinkowski said.

Corporate backing is part of that process. Bank of America took on the Chicago race in 2008, after it acquired LaSalle Bank, the previous sponsor. It actually owns the race, Pinkowski said. The bank’s financial commitment isn’t made public, but some 1,000 employees are among the 12,000 volunteers who help make the race happen.

Other major marathons have similar heavyweight help. A 2011 report from TheStreet estimated that \$5 million of the \$7 million it cost to put on the Boston Marathon came courtesy sponsors. The Portland Marathon never had a corporate sponsor attached to its name, something that would likely have to change under the Wheeler "bold vision" scenario.

Course correction

Another big-time marathon prerequisite is a compelling course. New York famously touches all five boroughs. Chicago has a start and finish at Grant Park, the city’s Central Park, and slices through 29 neighborhoods. Portland....

Portland’s course hasn’t been without its charms, offering a downtown start and finish, crossings of the St. Johns and Broadway bridges and vistas on Willamette Bluff. But it has largely followed a path of least resistance — literally a course that minimized disruption — with nearly half the race banished to industrial areas in the Northwest quadrant.

That was more true than ever the last two years when the city could muster just 33 police officers for an event that formerly used around 80, forcing an even less attractive out-and-back format. PBOT, the city’s Bureau of Transportation, loved that course.

“The route,” a spokesman told the Oregonian in 2017, “includes no interruption of MAX or Streetcar service, no disruption to Morrison, Burnside, Steel, and Broadway bridge traffic, no disruption to Old Town/Chinatown businesses and residents, no disruption to South Portland and Homestead Neighborhood residents and businesses, no disruption to downtown churches, better access for downtown businesses, greatly reduced impact to NW Portland neighborhoods.”

Runners had a different take.

“Just running St. Helens Road once is bad enough," one commenter wrote on MarathonGuide.com. "Now you have to run it again on the return." Another opined: "Out and back courses aren't a great way to show off your city, especially along an industrial highway."

Harkin, after expecting to make a run at the race long-term, decided not to jump into the city’s initial RFP in September, in part because officials didn’t seem to get what a problem that attitude was.

“I didn’t want to go limping into the event with that handicap,” she said.

In the second RFP, the city added language asking bidders to “include additional information about how your event could be improved” given greater flexibility on the number of safety personnel.

Brewer, the veteran race director, said that sounded like a good start. But, he added: “Talk is cheap. They need to show me.”

Harkin echoed that sentiment.

“The only way to have a world-class marathon is to get the Portland Police Bureau, PBOT and the mayor in one room to decide how they see this happening,” she said. “Let’s hear about all the objections some people might have, because half the city might want to have a big marathon, but then there’s the other half.”

City leaders’ commitment to the marathon will be tested in the months ahead.

Whatever the long-run fate of the race, the missteps and delays in nailing down a producer for the 2019 race have put it in a precarious state.

Mayor Wheeler’s RFP rerun was supposed to narrow the five bidders to a short list before the end of the December, but the target date for that was pushed back to the end of this week. It will likely be February before a race producer is in place — leaving just seven months before the city’s October 6 race target.

“The one thing you have to hope as a producer,” said Jared Loranger, whose Fizz Events company put in a bid in first RFP but not the second, “is that the city’s going to make it easy for you to quickly get a route in place. If they want this race to have any chance to be successful, that’s the least they can do.”

Meanwhile, with no 2019 Portland Marathon organization in place — no registration, no marketing, no nothing — other races are pulling in racers. Or they’re done, as in the case of Chicago, which locked up its massive field for 2019 in December.

OPB

Misconduct Investigations Face Roadblocks As Portland Struggles With Trust

By Ericka Cruz Guevarra

January 17, 2019

A key witness to allegations of police misconduct during an Aug. 4 protest in downtown Portland is refusing to answer questions sent by investigators with the city’s independent police oversight agency.

That’s fine with Mary Hull Caballero, the elected head of the city auditor’s office.

But Caballero takes exception, she said, to efforts to delegitimize the Independent Police Review, an independent city agency that investigates allegations of misconduct by Portland police officers.

Lawyers for Aaron Cantu, a protester who alleged a police flash-bang penetrated the back of his helmet, causing brain damage, first told the Willamette Week that they would not answer a list of

30 questions sent by IPR on Dec. 5 because the questions amounted to victim shaming and were not geared toward holding police accountable.

“I appreciate that they’re representing their client, and they should,” Caballero said. “But my problem with it is when they go beyond representing their client and smear the investigatory process that is set up to take complaints and investigate them.”

Caballero said these statements also contribute to the notion that people should not file complaints with IPR. Caballero’s frustration with mistrust in the process rubs against skepticism among community members dubious of the city’s ability to hold itself — and namely, its police officers — accountable.

Problems with the investigation into the Aug. 4 protest form a case study of the city’s larger problems with trust; that’s despite having an independent civilian oversight agency like IPR, which was created in 2001 to serve as an independent alternative to other misconduct reporting processes.

Juan Chavez, one of two lawyers representing Cantu, said he responded to IPR’s Dec. 5 letter saying he and his client could not in good faith answer IPR’s questions. Chavez said he was convinced that by answering the questions, there would not be a true reckoning of what happened during the protest. Among the things IPR wanted to know was whether Cantu embedded the flash-bang into his own helmet, or if someone else embedded the flash-bang into his helmet.

“We’re not afraid of the facts,” Chavez said. “What we’re worried about is what happens consistently in the city, which is the police manage to get past these controversies unscathed.”

Chavez said he and his client didn’t immediately oppose the idea of an IPR investigation. Things changed when IPR sent the list of questions on Dec. 5.

“Frankly we just don’t want to participate in a process that we don’t think is going to be fruitful in that kind of way,” Chavez said.

Caballero said the system is byzantine, can be difficult to navigate, and can appear — from the outside — hard to understand as an independent city agency. She also says there can be frustration when a potential victim makes allegations that ultimately never amount to a finished investigation. As an example, she said, that can happen if witnesses don’t answer questions from IPR.

“There can be some frustration from people if they feel like a case can’t go forward,” she said. “But I think having attorneys smear IPR isn’t helping that at all.”

While IPR conducts independent investigations and publishes its findings, Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw and City Council have the ultimate authority in disputed misconduct cases to determine whether or not officers will face disciplinary action.

Additional Reading

Welcome to Tax Breaklandia