

## **The Oregonian**

# **Judge Appears Skeptical of Portland's Earthquake Warning Sign Ordinance**

*By Elliot Njus*

*May 21, 2019*

A federal judge appeared skeptical Tuesday of a Portland city ordinance that would require a warning sign on brick buildings vulnerable to collapse in an earthquake.

During final arguments, U.S. District Court Judge John Acosta quizzed city attorneys at length over the purpose of the signs. The placards state that unreinforced masonry buildings "may be unsafe in an event of a major earthquake."

The purpose could be key to determining whether the signs violate building owners' First Amendment rights to free speech. The owners want the judge to make permanent a temporary order prohibiting the city from enforcing the rule.

The pointed questioning came after two days of witness testimony last week that included owners of affected buildings, city engineers and Dan Saltzman, the former city commissioner who championed the proposal.

Acosta didn't rule in the case nor indicate when he might do so, but the temporary order expires on June 1.

In Tuesday's questioning, Acosta interrupted city attorney Denis Vannier's closing statement to ask whether the signs served a core city function of providing for public safety.

Acosta said that unlike required exit signs or stop signs, the earthquake warning placards don't tell people who read them to do anything in particular.

"The placard doesn't tell a person what to do if an earthquake occurs and they're in an unreinforced masonry building," Acosta said, summarizing part of the building owners' argument.

Attorneys for the building owners argued that the real purpose of the signs is to build market demand for seismic retrofits that reduce the risk of collapse. They pointed to Saltzman's statements during City Council meetings and in media interviews where he said as much.

Vannier instead compared the signs to required warnings on food packaging, such as the statement "contains peanuts," which advises consumers about a potential danger without further instruction.

Attorney for the building owners faced far fewer questions from the judge.

They argued that the signs were in some cases inaccurate because the buildings may have been partially or wholly reinforced, if not to the city seismic standards.

They also attacked the accuracy of the city's database of unreinforced masonry buildings. They pointed to spotty records from when the original basis for the list was assembled in 1990 and noted that the city used Portland State University engineering students as inspectors for its compilation.

Current and former city structural engineers, however, testified last week that they were generally confident in the list's accuracy, which includes about 1,600 buildings, among them schools, apartment buildings, performance spaces and churches.

In addition to the placards, the ordinance also would require building owners to include warnings in lease documents provided to tenants and to file a statement of compliance with the city. Acosta could rule on the requirements separately.

If the ordinance is allowed to take effect, the signs would be required in building entrances as of November 2020.

## **Portland Set to Approve \$5.5 Billion Annual Budget Wednesday**

*By Gordon Friedman  
May 21, 2019*

The Portland City Council is poised to approve a \$5.5 billion budget Wednesday afternoon that would fund new programs intended to help mentally ill or homeless people while cutting parks services.

The \$5.5 billion figure is a nearly 6 percent increase from last year's \$5.1 billion budget. The general fund – a discretionary fund that pays mostly for police, fire and parks services – is set to increase about 2 percent to \$577.3 million.

Funding for the Joint Office of Homeless Services is expected to stay flat at \$32.1 million.

Although the budget would increase, it would pay for fewer services. That's because costs for city workers' salaries, retirement and health benefits are outpacing revenue growth, said Jessica Kinard, interim director of Portland's City Budget Office.

The bulk of Portland's budget pays for infrastructure and is nondiscretionary. Budgets for upkeep of city streets, sewers and drinking water systems come from designated tax streams or user fees and top \$2.9 billion, for example.

The Portland City Council mostly debates the discretionary portion of city spending. Mayor Ted Wheeler and Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty, for example, have disagreed on whether to fund the Police Bureau's Gun Violence Reduction Team.

Planned cuts to parks programming has drawn the greatest ire from involved residents. Portland Parks & Recreation is set to get a \$253 million budget, but that's not enough to close an estimated \$6.3 million budget gap caused by lagging program revenues and escalating costs.

Layoffs are likely and Parks & Rec will all but certainly cut programming at the Hillside, Laurelhurst and Sellwood community centers, the Columbia Pool, Multnomah Arts Center and Community Music Center.

Officials have agreed to fund new ventures, however.

One is a "Rapid Response Vehicle" (\$337,126) that would allow firefighters to respond to low-priority calls, like many involving homeless campers.

Another is a mental health nurse triage program (\$182,727) within Portland's 911 center. That will pay for a consultant to study a new dispatch system allowing low-priority 911 calls to be diverted to a nurse.

If approved Wednesday, the city's budget plan will be sent to a countywide review commission to check its compliance with budget laws. The council will then take a pro forma second vote on it in June.

Anyone wishing to attend the budget debate or testify on spending provisions may do so at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, May 22 at Portland City Hall.

## **Portland Police Must Do Better Job of Explaining Why Officers Make Traffic and Pedestrian Stops, Auditor Says**

*By Maxine Bernstein*

*May 20, 2019*

The city Auditor's Office says the Police Bureau has made "some progress" in discontinuing the use of a list of active gang members but that "substantial work" remains for officers to document why they make traffic or pedestrian stops.

The assessments came in the auditor's follow-up to 2018 audit on the Portland Police Bureau's Gang Enforcement Team, now called the Gun Violence Reduction Team.

The bureau still doesn't document investigative reasons for most of the team's stops of motorists or pedestrians and has no comprehensive data on what are called "mere conversations," which police define as contacts with people who are free to leave at any time. They can turn into a "stop" if police decide to detain someone, according to police and city reviewers.

The bureau wants to hire a consultant to analyze its stop data for fiscal 2018-2019.

"The Bureau said it cannot track if stops resulted in contact with criminal gang suspects because gang designations no longer exist," the follow-up report found.

In March 2018, an audit found Portland police were still keeping an informal list of active gang members despite purging a more formal directory of designated gang members in October 2017. The audit also found the Gang Enforcement Team lacked records to explain why its officers pulled over so many African American motorists during traffic stops or if their tactics were effective in reducing violence.

Chief Danielle Outlaw said then that police would draft written guidelines for the active gang member list, which the bureau had renamed the "most at-risk persons" report. The guidelines would set out how police identify people for the list and how it will be used and kept, with input from the City Attorney's Office.

Police said at the time that the list is no different from fliers that narcotics enforcement officers develop identifying suspects in drug trafficking cases. It's a synthesis of police reports and compiled for officer safety, they said.

The follow-up review comes amid a debate over the work of the Gun Violence Reduction Team, which Commissioner JoAnn Hardesty wants to eliminate in the city's budget for next fiscal year.

The release of the follow-up report just days before the City Council is set to vote on the budget was pure coincidence, Senior Management Auditor Minh Dan Vuong said.

The initial audit urged the bureau to regularly analyze and publish demographic data on the team's traffic stops, monitor percentage of encounters recorded as "mere conversations" and train officers on when this tactic should be used, require officers to document investigative

reasons for traffic stops, set goals to determine effectiveness of the team's stops and review effectiveness of the team's "suppression" operations by reviewing arrest outcomes.

The audit also urged the bureau to adopt official policies and procedures for collecting and disseminating information about people with gang relationships.

During the follow-up review, the Auditor's Office found the bureau instead is planning to develop a directive on managing criminal intelligence files that will apply to all divisions. The bureau circulated a draft of the directive for public comment last October and anticipates completion this October.

The draft directive says officers shouldn't create criminal intelligence files relating to people or enterprises without first establishing reasonable suspicion that criminal activity is occurring, has occurred or is about to occur. Officers may include in files names of people or organizations that aren't suspected of criminal involvement as long as the information is clearly labeled "noncriminal identifying information" and is relevant to an investigation, the draft says.

The draft doesn't include a description of the type of information to be gathered or documentation of analyses, the Auditor's Office pointed out in its review.

The recent review also found that the Gun Violence Reduction Team cleared 29 percent of its cases, or 41 of 140 cases, in 2018. The team's goal is a 30 percent clearance rate.

As for stop data, the bureau reported that African Americans made up 56 percent of all traffic and pedestrian stops by the former Gang Enforcement Team in 2017 and 61 percent of all the team's stops in 2016.

The bureau compared these stops to the demographics of gang crime victims. The percentage of black people stopped by the team was below the percentage of black people who were victims of gang-related violence, 63 percent in 2017 and 71 percent in 2016, according to the auditor's follow-up report.

"This comparison differs from those in our audit, which compared the demographics of those stopped to the demographics of people injured in traffic crashes and crime victims," the auditor's office noted. "A good benchmark reflects who is at risk of being stopped, assuming no bias. We encourage the Bureau to include these comparisons in its analyses."

On April 22, the Police Bureau posted on its website traffic stop data from the first quarter of this year. While the bureau broke down the stops by precincts and traffic and non-traffic officers, it didn't specifically identify stops by its Gun Violence Reduction Team. The chief had pledged to separate data from the team in annual stop reports.

During the first quarter of this year, traffic stops of African Americans accounted for 18 percent of all Portland police stops, a disproportionately high rate considering they make up about 6 percent of the city's population.

During the same period, traffic officers' stops of African Americans accounted for 11 percent of the traffic division's stops and non-traffic officers' stops of African Americans accounted for a much higher percentage, or 21 percent, of all non-traffic division stops.

In the same period, African Americans accounted for 18 percent of all Portland police pedestrian stops.

The bureau requires a stop report for all pedestrian interactions not associated with a call for service, where an officer "reasonably suspects that a person has committed or is about to commit a crime," regardless of the outcome.

## **The Portland Tribune**

# **Landlords Still Oppose Revised Portland Renter Rights Measures**

*By Jim Redden  
May 20, 2019*

### **Despite delay and rewrite, landlord organization continues to oppose Commissioner Chloe Eudaly's measures**

The changes Commissioner Chloe Eudaly made to her most recent renter protection measures did not satisfy the leading landlord organizations.

The City Council first heard Eudaly's measures for easing screening and security deposit requirements on April 3 and 4. Although tenant advocates supported them, landlords complained about their complexity and charged they could require them to rent to serious criminal convicts. Eudaly pushed the next hearing to Thursday, May 23, to work out compromises.

It didn't work. Multifamily NW, the major lobbying group representing Portland area landlord, still opposes the revised measures, arguing they don't address their concerns. The organization also complains the revisions were not released until Monday, May 20, a mere two days before the May 23 hearing.

The council vote cannot take place for another week, at the soonest.

### **Here is Multifamily NW's statement:**

While we share Commissioner Eudaly's goal of improving access to housing for vulnerable populations, eliminating or watering down basic consumer protections is the absolute wrong approach. This proposal is like pushing subprime auto loans as a means to improve access to transportation.

The requirement that tenants earn three times the monthly rent is not designed to protect landlords — it's to prevent consumers from entering into housing contracts that they can't afford. That is why public housing agencies and lenders nearly across the board require applicants earn three times the monthly rent. This proposal eliminates those protections and would undeniably put more renters in risky financial situations, causing an increase in for-cause evictions.

Discretion in renting to individuals with egregious criminal backgrounds — in particular, violent and sexual crimes, is not to protect landlords. It is to protect other tenants, including young families and seniors, who may feel unsafe with a convicted murderer or rapist living in the apartment next door.

All in all, this proposal curtails basic consumer protections and the rights of existing tenants under the banner of expanding access to housing. It's a downright risky approach, and Portland can do better. That is why we are asking Commissioner Eudaly to slow this process down, delay the scheduled work-session on this flawed ordinance, and to take a more measured approach to housing access that protects the rights and safety of all Portlanders.

Eudaly's office said they will respond Tuesday, May 21.

You can read a previous Portland Tribune story on the issue [here](#).

## **Closing Arguments Made in URM Warning Sign Lawsuit**

*By Jim Redden  
May 21, 2019*

### **Oregon U.S. District Magistrate Judge John Acosta did not say when he will issue his ruling at the end of the hearing.**

Closing arguments in the federal lawsuit against Portland requiring earthquake warning signs in unreinforced masonry buildings were made on Tuesday, May 21.

A city attorney told Oregon U.S. Magistrate Judge John Acosta that the City Council was legally trying to make Portland safer when it approved the requirement, as allowed by the City Charter. Attorneys for URM owners said the requirement violates their free speech and due process rights without making the city any safer.

The URM owners are seeking a permanent injunction against the requirement, which the council delayed from July 1 of this year to Nov. 1, 2020, after the lawsuit was filed. Acosta took the case under advisement but did not say when he will rule at the end of the nearly two-and-a-half hour hearing.

Acosta questioned city attorney Denis Vannier harder than the owners' attorneys during the hearing. Acosta accused the city of changing the rationale for the requirement during two days of hearings last week, soliciting an apology from Vannier at one point.

The owners' attorneys quoted former Commissioner Dan Saltzman, who was the most vocal advocate for the requirement on the council, as saying it was intended to pressure the owners to either pay for expensive earthquake retrofits or redevelop their buildings.

The owners' attorneys also criticized the list of URMs maintained by the city, saying it is incomplete and fails to acknowledge that other kinds of buildings can be dangerous in earthquakes, too.

You can read a previous Portland Tribune story on the issue [here](#).

## **Your City Hall: Calls to Revamp City Budget Likely at Public Hearing**

*By Jim Redden  
May 21, 2019*

### **Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty will try to change the recommended budget on Wednesday by reducing police and other general fund spending to help parks.**

**WHAT IS HAPPENING?** The City Council will hold its only public hearing on Mayor Ted Wheeler's recommended budget for the next fiscal year on Wednesday, May 22. This is the hearing where council members can formally propose changes to the budget that was first slightly adjusted after the May 9 public hearing. Several other public forums were also held all over the city on specific and general issues before Wheeler released his proposed budget.

**ARE ANY CHANGES EXPECTED TO BE PROPOSED?** Yes, Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty has announced that she will propose big changes how some of the \$577.3 million in discretionary general fund dollars are spent. Three involve the Portland Police Bureau, where Hardesty wants to disband the Gang Violence Reduction Team, terminate the program to equip all officers with body cameras, and end the program to hire non-armed officers to assist on patrols.

In addition, Hardesty wants to delay funding the restoration of the historic Mt. Tabor reservoirs, cancel the creation of the James Beard Market, and not fund a feasibility study water taxi service on the Willamette and Columbia rivers.

Hardesty has proposed using the savings to close the projected \$6.3 million shortfall in the Portland Parks & Recreation budget, where 56.3 positions could be eliminated. Most of those employees have the right to transfer to other bureaus, however.

### **DOES A MAJORITY OF THE COUNCIL SUPPORT HARDESTY'S PROPOSALS?**

When Hardesty brought most of them up during a May 14 work session on the budget, no other council member specifically supported any other, although Commissioner Chloe Eudaly said she has some concerns about how the police bureau has prioritized its spending. Parks Commissioner Nick Fish said the proposed budget will allow the parks bureau to transition to more stable financing. Commissioner Amanda Fritz does not usually say how she will vote on any issue ahead of time.

**HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?** Information on the proposed and recommended budgets are available on the City Budget Office's website at [www.portlandoregon.gov/cbo](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/cbo). Hardesty's amendments had not been released by press time.

**WHAT CAN I DO?** You can testify on the recommended budget Wednesday, May 22, in the Council Chambers of City Hall at 1221 S.W. Fourth Ave., Portland. The hearing is scheduled for 2 p.m.

Council members also are accepting feedback at their offices. You can find contact information for them at [www.portlandoregon.gov](http://www.portlandoregon.gov).

The public can also testify on the budget at the Tax Supervising and Conversation Committee hearing after the council vote on June 11, and then again June 12 when council formally adopts it.

## **Willamette Week**

### **Portland City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty Proposes Wage Freeze to Avoid Most Layoffs at the City Parks Bureau**

*By Rachel Monahan  
May 21, 2019*

**The proposal highlights her position but does not appear likely to pass at City Hall.**

On the eve of a vote on the city of Portland's budget, City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty is again pressing for a way to limit the number of layoffs at Portland Parks and Recreation.

Her latest idea to amend the mayor's budget: a one-time freeze in the wages of employees who are not represented by a union at the bureau, which she says would save nearly \$2.4 million and approximately 45 jobs.

She suggests alternatively that funding to save the jobs could come from the Portland Police Bureau—with savings from vacancies as well as eliminating the planned program for police cameras.

Her efforts appear more likely to highlight her principled position on the issue than to result in changes to the budget.

That's in contrast to earlier this year, when Hardesty led a coalition of two other commissioners to pass key policies the mayor opposed: withdrawing the city from the Joint Terrorism Task Force and delaying the city's requirements to disclose when a building is unreinforced masonry. (She also voted with two other commissioners on disciplining a police officer.)

But on this proposal she appears isolated, even as she continues to push forward ideas that show the latitude the city has with a constrained budget.

"Our budget is a moral document, and in no way can I vote yes for a raise at the expense of 56 people's lives," Hardesty says in a statement. "There is a fundamental issue if council votes to increase our own wages, at the same time when 56 people are slated to lose their jobs. Although I know that there are many hard working city employees that deserve this increase, many of these increases live at the higher end of the city's salary scale—while these layoffs live at the bottom."

She also continues to push for getting rid of the Gun Violence Reduction Team (formerly the Gang Enforcement Task Force) within the Police Bureau in favor of sending the officers on patrol.

"From small business owners to community members, many have made clear their concerns in police response time due to the force being stretched thin," Hardesty says in a statement. "If the team is not effective in meeting its stated purpose but exists at the community's expense, I say it's time for it to be defunded and officers move back to patrol, where they're most needed."

## **Portland Office of Community and Civic Life Proposes New Commission to Oversee Cannabis Tax Dollars**

*By Elise Herron  
May 20, 2019*

OCCL's Cannabis Program supervisor Brandon Goldner says that there "ought to be some process outside of the normal budget process for this specific tax revenue."

Portland city commissioners disagree about how cannabis tax dollars should be allocated after a recent audit showed that a majority of the revenue from tax passed in 2016 went to the Portland Police Bureau.

At the Portland City Council's 2020 budget work session May 14, the Office of Community and Civic Life presented a possible solution: a new five-person committee to oversee who gets cannabis tax revenue and how it is used.

Civic Life's cannabis program supervisor Brandon Goldner said the group would meet four times or more a year, and their meetings would be open to the public, which would increase transparency around how the funds are used. Civic Life would oversee the committee and members would include "experts" in the three areas the 2016 ballot measure pledged to support: racial and social justice, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, and public safety and safe driving.

"The goal of the commission would be to request information from the bureaus that would request tax revenue so they can make informed decisions with the benefit of public comment," Goldner said, "and that the commission would hear back from those organizations about if the revenue met outcomes."

Civic Life's proposal has the support of Commissioner Chloe Eudaly. Commission Jo Ann Hardesty pointed out that currently, Mayor Ted Wheeler doesn't consult with bureaus about where the money he proposes allocating comes from.

"I'm wondering how you would have influence on the mayor's proposed budget," Hardesty asked, "prior to the mayor's proposed budget being released?"

Goldner responded that there "ought to be some process outside of the normal budget process for this specific tax revenue."

Commissioner Amanda Fritz raised concerns that the cannabis tax funds are intended to fund ongoing projects, and suggested that only a portion of the revenue be considered for one-time projects.

City commissioners have not yet decided on whether they support a cannabis tax committee.

## **The Portland Mercury**

### **How Will Portland Fix Its Park Budget Problem?**

*By Alex Zielinski*

*May 21, 2019*

Tomorrow afternoon, the Portland City Council will vote to approve Mayor Ted Wheeler's \$5.5 billion proposed annual budget.

By now, you may have heard that the city's Parks Bureau is facing some of the biggest cuts—including the estimated elimination of around 55 full-time jobs and the reduction in permanent funding sources for a number of Portland community centers already struggling to keep their lights on. In total, the Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) budget has a \$6.3 million deficit.

This massive budget hole is caused by PP&R's annual costs regularly outnumbering the amount of money coming in to the department from class costs, rental fees, and other revenue streams. This year, Wheeler has found the funds to keep a number of underfunded community centers and recreation facilities open for the short-term—but has acknowledged the city urgently needs a more permanent solution to PP&R's imbalanced finances.

At a May 1 press conference, Wheeler told reporters he'd be open to introducing a "parks district," an entity that has the power to raise and collect its own parks-specific taxes (Seattle voters approved this in 2014 ) or introduce a "parks bond," similar to the successful housing bonds Portland and Metro have introduced in the past few years. He's also suggested that PP&R partner with community organizations for extra financial support.

"I would support taking a long hard look at a fundamentally different revenue stream," he said at the time. However, Wheeler noted, that decision is largely up to PP&R's new director, Adena Long, and Parks Commissioner Nick Fish.

There's still no concrete solution to this long-simmering problem.

Sonia Schmanski, who serves as Fish's chief of staff, said fixing the structural problems within the Parks Bureau is her office's top priority.

"Following this budget process, we will be working with the Parks Board, the Parks Foundation, and our new Director to evaluate options for sustainable long-term funding, and will bring those

options to Council for consideration," wrote Schmanski in an email. "This is an urgent and pressing problem."

Parks employees agree. Many have shown up at the city's budget hearings—some of them who already know their positions will be cut—upset that the city didn't address this problem earlier. Even more community members who rely on PP&R daycare programs, exercise classes, summer camps, and other social activities came to the hearings to ask commissioners to protect employees behind the beloved programs.

"This decision upstream is going to affect all of us downstream," said Kelsey Owens, a Sellwood mother of two who spoke at a May 9 hearing.

A particular point of frustration: Many of the employees facing unemployment just fought the city to obtain reasonable living wages and benefits—and won.

"Those folks are going to be the first cut," said a representative with Laborers' Local 483, the union that represents PP&R employees, at a recent budget work session at City Hall.

"I think it's very realistic to say that we need to come up with a better plan," said Ryan Sotomayor, a PP&R employee who spoke at a budget hearing. Sotomayor said his job will be cut under the proposed budget.

"I really appreciate working for the city," he said. "I think there's a way forward to be fiscally responsible, and still retain the heart of the city... which is our parks department."

City Council will vote on the budget Wednesday afternoon at 2 pm.

## **Audit Finds Portland Police Have Done Little to Improve Its Gun Violence Team**

*By Alex Zielinski  
May 20, 2019*

Last week, we tried to find out what Portland's Gun Violence Reduction Team (GVRT)—previously called the Gang Enforcement Team (GET)—had done to improve the numerous problems with its model outlined in a March 2018 audit. But our questions went unanswered by the Portland Police Bureau (PPB), who instead pointed to the October 2018 name change and the data tools the GVRT uses to solve gun-related crimes.

Fortunately, the City Auditor's office has come through with the receipts.

According to a new report, Portland Police Bureau (PPB) has completed one of the five recommendations the auditor's office made 14 months ago.

This is particularly important because Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty has spent the past few weeks pushing for Mayor Ted Wheeler to defund the 34-person GVRT. Her argument is based primarily on the 2018 audit, which found its officers disproportionately pull over Black drivers and fail to track whether or not these stops ever conclude with an arrest of a gang member. Hardesty suggests the officers assigned to the program return to police patrol work, which would allow them to respond to 911 calls and officer requests for backup.

While PPB Chief Danielle Outlaw, Wheeler, and others in the law enforcement community say the GVRT is a crucial piece to Portland policing, no one has shown evidence proving that GVRT

officers are no longer taught to target people of color or are even successful at tracking gang activity.

The City Auditor's "follow up" to the 2018 audit, published today, details how PPB has responded to the initial report's five recommendations.

According to the report, PPB still doesn't require GVRT officers document the "investigative reason" for a traffic stop. The PPB has also neglected to set goals to measure the effectiveness of its traffic stops, in hopes of proving that they actually target gang-related criminals. PPB's reason? Because the bureau no longer records if someone is a "criminal gang affiliate," so it's apparently impossible to track.

The audit report notes that PPB has trained GVRT members on how to enter data on traffic stops that don't result in an arrest, but the bureau is still not monitoring the data as recommended. The PPB has also failed to report whether targeted operations on groups of alleged gang members ever result in arrests.

The only recommendation that PPB has "resolved," according to the report, is the suggestion that the bureau "regularly analyze and publish demographic data regarding GET [now GVRT] stops." However, the report notes, the PPB isn't publishing the right data.

The 2018 audit found that 59 percent of traffic stops made by the GVRT were of Black Portlanders. Only 6 percent of Portland's entire population, however, is Black.

But, instead of comparing this demographic data, PPB has been publishing data that compares the percentage of Black drivers pulled over by GVRT officers to the percentage of Black Portlanders who are victims of violent crimes. Essentially, PPB is saying that since many Black people are victimized by violent crimes, then it makes sense to target Black drivers.

The only problem? It's unconstitutional for police to treat people different based solely on the color of their skin.

Will this new report change Wheeler's budget decision? Probably not. What does matter, however, is that after being sent a blistering audit, the biggest change made to a controversial PPB department appears to be... its name.

## **You Can Help Decide How Portland's Clean Energy Fund Is Spent**

*By Blair Stenvick  
May 20, 2019*

The City of Portland is seeking volunteer committee members who will help decide how to spend \$70 million on sustainability projects through the brand-new Portland Clean Energy Fund.

You might remember that Portland voters passed the Portland Clean Energy Initiative—a first-of-its-kind plan to use a new business sales tax to fund projects that both promote sustainability and benefit people of color and low-income Portlanders—last November. The fund was officially adopted into city code earlier this year, and last week the city announced it had hired Sam Baraso, previously the senior policy advisory for the Multnomah County Office of Sustainability, as the program manager.

The next step is to fill out Baraso's team of employees—and start building the volunteer-filled grant committee, a nine-person body that will review applications from different organizations

and decide how to parse out the annual funding. That group has been dubbed the Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund Grant Committee (PCECBFGC? Hopefully it's a temporary name).

Applications for the PCECBFGC are due Friday, June 14.

The city will begin awarding grants in 2020, and is expecting to have somewhere between \$54 and \$71 million to spend each year.

Baraso told the Mercury that the plan is to create a grant committee that represents “the full spectrum of Portland’s racial, economic, ethnic, and geographic diversity.”

“There’s a lot of key criteria and attributes that the individuals we’re going to place on these grant committees are expected to have,” he added. “These are the people who are going to be making the major recommendations into how these funds are spent.”

The first five members of the grant committee will be selected by each of Portland’s five city commissioners; those first five members will then select the remaining four members themselves.

As we recently saw with the Portland cannabis tax, good intentions aren’t always enough to ensure that public funds help the people they’re meant to help. That’s why it’s crucial that this grant committee includes members who are well-versed in sustainable infrastructure projects, and issues of equitability and community accountability.

If you think that sounds like you, or someone you know, [you can apply here](#).

## **The Daily Journal of Commerce**

### **Portland Drafts Ordinance to Crack Down on Short-Term Rentals**

*May 20, 2019*

Portland’s mayor is planning to introduce an ordinance that would force online short-term rental companies like Airbnb to take down unpermitted rentals.

Oregon Public Broadcasting reports the proposed crackdown in Oregon’s largest city follows a federal court ruling in March that dealt a legal blow to Airbnb’s long-held position that it is not responsible for policing unpermitted listings on its site.

Portland’s revenue division has been trying to reach a voluntary agreement with the company for more than a year over unpermitted rentals.

The city says Airbnb’s latest offer represented a step backward, so it is preparing to try a tougher tactic: an ordinance that goes after Airbnb’s profits.

The draft ordinance would prevent Airbnb from collecting booking fees on unpermitted rentals in Portland.

It’s modeled after a similar ordinance in Santa Monica, California, that was recently upheld by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.