

The Oregonian

Ted Wheeler: Portland is our city, our home. Those planning violence here aren't welcome (Opinion)

*By Ted Wheeler
August 11, 2019*

Portland is an amazing and awe-inspiring city. It's a city we cherish for its beauty. A city we love for its tolerance. A city we embrace for its livability, and for its proud history of upholding one of the most treasured American values for generations – the right to assembly and the right to free speech foremost among them. Last year, more than 200 demonstrations were staged in Portland with the vast majority of attendees peacefully promoting their various causes.

But in the last couple of years, the right to assembly and freedom of expression has, on occasion, been abused and undermined by a small contingent of agitators with the intent of enacting violence, inflicting harm and engaging in vandalism. We've received unsettling information that they're planning to try and do it again on Saturday, August 17.

They're planning to use our thriving, beautiful city – our home – as an arena.

They're planning to use Portland as a stage where they can air their extreme political agenda for all the world to see – with guaranteed publicity at the expense of our beloved community. Some to spread hateful messages, and some with the explicit intent to commit violence again.

With escalating rhetoric already creating tensions from coast to coast across our great country, and with extremists committing racialized violence against our brothers and sisters, the stakes couldn't be higher.

Knowing this, I continue to direct and empower the Portland Police Bureau to use all necessary resources to ensure public safety and to uphold the law. To that end, we have been reaching out extensively to our regional law enforcement partners for assistance, and many have agreed to help carry out our mission of protecting all citizens and property in our city, our home.

Violence and hatefulness have never been – nor will they ever be – who we are. This is the city I was born in, the city I was raised in and the city I love. Portland is also a united city. As you read this, my office continues assembling the largest and strongest support coalition this city has seen in years. The coalition includes federal officials, faith leaders, community leaders, elected officials, businesses, alliances, civil rights leaders, athletic organizations and many others. And though our numbers are many, our unwavering voice and our resolute message to these unwelcome few, is one:

If you intend to use our beautiful city to cause mayhem, disturb the peace, create fear and commit violence, you are not welcome here. We will not stand for bloodshed, cruelty, disorder or destruction. Anyone in our city, our home our city, our home who chooses to engage in violence and criminal activity will be held accountable and will face legal consequences.

We are fortunate to live in an attractive, highly desirable and vibrant city. A city that is growing, that draws new residents and visitors from across the world each day and a city with a great sense of pride in all we do and have to offer.

In our collective resolve to keep Portland flourishing, join us in sharing our message to the world. Join us in letting those intent on committing violence here know that we'll be ready for

them. We have more resources, more partners, more coordination and greater resolve than ever before.

Let's take the journey together to ensure the safety of all and to preserve our cherished right to peaceful assembly.

This is our city, our home.

Enough.

Editorial: Portland, reclaim your city of peace

By The Oregonian Editorial Board

August 11, 2019

The outlook for Aug. 17 could hardly be more ominous. For weeks, right-wing organizers have called on supporters from around the country to come to Portland that day for a protest targeting Portland antifascists. Antifascists are summoning their own members to counter the groups and pledging to “continue to defend our community from the rise of fascism.”

That alone would set the stage for the demonstrations to erupt into an hours-long street brawl, as previous clashes often have. But the recent mass shootings in California, Texas and Ohio, underscored by the racist screed allegedly posted to a message board by the El Paso shooting suspect, threaten to push the devastation of a clash off the Richter scale.

Portlanders, it's time to reclaim our city.

That means rejecting not just the message of hate that some are trying to bring to Portland, but also the violence that has characterized these protests for too long. Our city is rightly proud of our long history of peaceful dissent, a reputation that has been co-opted by those more interested in grinding down others who disagree than in winning over minds.

But to do that, Portland – the mayor, police, community leaders and our residents – must sidestep the traps we keep falling into time after time after time.

So far, Mayor Ted Wheeler and Police Chief Danielle Outlaw are doing their part to change the dynamic. Both have warned that protesters looking to commit violence should just stay home, because this city will not tolerate it. While Wheeler has previously allowed political pressures to cloud his judgment as police commissioner, he appears to be adopting the firm, clear and politically neutral mission that any legitimate police force must embrace. The mandate to ensure public safety cannot come with caveats that police should first determine whether any single person “deserves” protection or not.

As New York City and Washington D.C. have shown, a strong police presence is critical for maintaining a safe distance between groups and preventing violence. While Portland lacks the sheer number of law enforcement officers those cities have, Wheeler and Outlaw are working with federal, state and county officials to line up reinforcements. Wheeler also said he is looking to use other city resources – for example, water bureau pick-up trucks – to help physically keep protest groups separated.

We've already seen what happens when police leave dueling demonstrators to largely manage themselves. Protests on Aug. 6, 2017 between right wing and antifascist demonstrators resulted in numerous injuries with people punching and throwing one another to the ground. No matter

how peaceful people's intentions may be at the start, it takes only a tiny spark -- a taunt, a gesture, a feint -- to ignite pent-up emotion into a full-scale fight.

And that assumes that everyone in the crowd has peaceful intentions. Unfortunately, as we've seen over and over again, some individuals do not. Acts of violence, regardless of who commits them and what they believe, don't belong in a demonstration protected by freedom of expression. In those instances, they are not championing values. Rather, they are looking to physically stamp out those who disagree. It's a difficult balance to achieve in an ever-changing situation, but police must act swiftly to stop these actions cold while allowing true expression to continue.

Community leaders also have a role to play. The mayor's office is coordinating an Aug. 14 gathering of representatives from across the community to jointly denounce hate and deliver a message of peace. Civil rights groups that have been critical of Portland Police should join the effort, along with business, faith leaders and communities of color. While they should continue holding police accountable for the job they do in upholding public safety, they should also make it clear to Portlanders that committing violence in the guise of exercising free speech is not a civil right.

That leaves Portlanders. This city of 600,000 people shows every day how deeply it values the strength, opportunity and growth that comes from a diverse community. We look for ways to expand our inclusiveness in government, business and education. We vote for leaders who reflect or embrace multiculturalism as inherent to our civic character. And we strive to recognize the racism and mistakes of the past that persist into the present. As imperfect as we are, this community is firmly pointed in the direction of progress.

But that spirit isn't captured in the images making their rounds in national outlets showing protests devolving into brawls or featuring the milkshake-covered, bruised face of a conservative writer. Such acts of violence should never override the message of unity and hope that Portland embodies.

We don't have to be props for right-wing outsiders who come here looking for people to taunt or fight. We don't have to feed their sense of self-aggrandizement by losing our cool. We don't have to wear masks or throw milkshakes to make a singular, eloquent statement about the values Portland stands for. We can demonstrate peace and demonstrate peacefully.

This is our city. What will we show the world?

Will Proud Boys, antifa showdown mark a tipping point for Portland?

*By Shane Dixon Kavanaugh
August 10, 2019*

Summer is a time for bike rides and cold craft beer in Portland. Lately, it's also been a time for bear spray and bursts of violence.

For nearly three years, rival political factions have descended on the city's downtown. They've vented and raged. Too often, they've beaten and brawled with one another.

The demonstrations will return next week when right-wing activists from around the country plan to hold a waterfront rally to condemn anti-fascists, or antifa, and push to have their adversaries designated as domestic terrorists.

This time police and city leaders are more alarmed than usual.

“We’ve been sitting on a powder keg and everything is kind of coming to a head at this point,” Police Chief Danielle Outlaw told The Oregonian/OregonLive in an interview this week. “Not just because of what’s happening locally, but nationally.”

Cities across the U.S. have seen street skirmishes erupt between right- and left-wing groups since Donald Trump entered the White House, yet Portland has emerged as one of the most contested centers in the country’s culture wars.

Fanning the flames is the zeitgeist of incendiary political rhetoric, including recent remarks by President Trump, that has deepened divisions and resentment as partisan lines harden nationwide.

But a large share of the turmoil is Portland’s alone. Its long legacy of left-wing activism, notably its militant anti-fascists, has drawn the ire of the conservative movement as well as the pundits and politicians who lead it.

Meanwhile, the city’s liberal free speech tradition has allowed the bitter confrontations to continue while police struggle to keep the peace.

“It’s undeniable that the far-right has been able to achieve the outcome they’re looking for by coming here again and again,” said Lindsay Schubiner, program director for social justice group Western States Center, which monitors right-wing extremism from its base in Portland. “Whether that’s direct violence or viral media clips.”

ASSIGNING BLAME

Looming over next Saturday will be the double mass shootings in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio, that have outraged many Americans and left them looking to assign blame.

In El Paso, authorities say a 21-year-old white man shot and killed 22 people at a Walmart and later confessed to officers that he targeted Mexicans. Most of the dead had Hispanic last names and eight were Mexican nationals.

The suspected gunman also published a manifesto before the rampage that railed against immigration and appears to echo language used by the president and his hardline supporters. The shooting has since sparked a widespread debate about whether to designate white supremacists as domestic terrorists.

Hours after the El Paso massacre, another armed man opened fire in an entertainment district in Dayton that left nine dead, including the suspect’s sister.

While federal investigators have offered no evidence that the Dayton shooting was politically inspired and continue to seek a clear motive, conservative news outlets and politicians have repeatedly highlighted the suspect’s apparent support for anti-fascists and liberal politicians on Twitter.

The focus culminated Wednesday with Trump using the Dayton shooter’s alleged political affiliation to draw an equivalency between him and the El Paso gunman.

“I don’t like it, any group of hate, whether it’s white supremacy, whether it’s any other kind of supremacy, whether it’s antifa,” he said.

“As I was saying, it just came out, the Dayton situation, he was a fan of antifa,” the president continued. “Nothing to do with Trump, but nobody mentions that.”

‘A CLEAR ESCALATION’

His remarks have converged with an event weeks in the making by two Florida men with large followings in the right-wing movement.

The “End To Domestic Terrorism” rally seeks to draw like-minded people from around the country to Tom McCall Waterfront Park as a show of force against antifa.

Participants plan to decry a June 29 attack against conservative writer Andy Ngo by black-clad demonstrators in Portland, video of which racked up millions of views online and generated days of national headlines.

They also back a U.S. Senate resolution to label antifa members as “domestic terrorists” sponsored by Texas Republican Sen. Ted Cruz, who cited the assault and accused Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler of prohibiting police from arresting “left-wing anarchists.”

Trump, too, has addressed the Ngo attack and has said publicly in recent weeks that he’s open to cracking down on anti-fascist activists.

The ongoing attention has helped create a surge of interest in the upcoming rally, said organizer and former InfoWars staffer Joe Biggs. He expects to have up to 1,000 people in attendance.

The event also is getting help from Enrique Tarrio, national head of the Proud Boys, whose members describe themselves as “Western chauvinists” and opponents of Islam, feminism and liberal politics.

Proud Boys have routinely brawled with left-wing activists in the streets of Portland, New York and elsewhere.

Some supporters of the gathering have spoken openly online about bringing weapons to the Portland event and the desire to “exterminate” anti-fascist activists. Others have posted images depicting graphic beat downs, knives slicing the throats of enemies and corpses in body bags.

“Those represent a clear escalation from the rhetoric they’ve used before” said Stanislav Vysotsky, a sociologist at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater who has studied the conflict between right-wing and anti-fascist groups. “They’re infinitely more violent.”

Biggs in the last few days has tried to tone down the combustible exchanges, many that he led himself. He now says he wants a peaceful demonstration and has told his followers to keep their weapons at home.

“We’re not looking to throw punches or deliver brain bleeds,” Biggs said. “All we want is for the country to see antifa for who they are – the maskless thugs that run around and act above the law.”

‘COMMITTED TO SHOWING UP’

Rose City Antifa, Portland’s homegrown, amorphous band of anti-fascist activists, is calling on supporters to turn out in opposition to the rally. The use of physical force isn’t out of the question.

“We will not allow Portland to be a playground for far-right violence,” said a Rose City spokesman who identified himself only by the first name David. “We will not shy away from defending the city or ourselves.”

Founded in 2007, the loosely organized group is considered one of the oldest and largest of its kind in the U.S. It often shields the identity of its members to avoid having them become targets of law enforcement or political enemies.

They publicly confront those who they believe espouse racist and bigoted views or seek to harm marginalized people. Some are willing to fight their adversaries in the streets. Others have clashed with police and destroyed property.

But the anonymous activists have also sought to soften their image in the face of mounting scrutiny.

“Anti-fascists are regular people: moms, teachers, carpenters, servers, healthcare workers, and veterans,” Rose City Antifa said last month in response to Cruz’s domestic terrorist resolution, which called out the group by name.

“Fighting against the oppression, bigotry, and violence that we call fascism requires ordinary people to do extraordinary things.”

Anti-fascists also mix among, and overlap with, the hodgepodge of social justice activists, anarchists and other radical groups at the center of Portland’s protest movement.

Raucous demonstrations have landed the city in the national spotlight more than a half-dozen times in the last 2 ½ years on issues ranging from Donald Trump’s election to immigration policy to police use of force.

But antifa supporters often gather simply to counter-protest right-wing activists such as Joey Gibson and his Vancouver-based group Patriot Prayer. Gibson began leading rallies and marches in Portland after Trump’s election and has been criticized for attracting white nationalists and others who promote hate.

“Anti-fascists are ideologically committed to showing up against them,” said Joe Lowndes, a professor of political science at the University of Oregon who studies social movements.

‘CONFLICT IS ALMOST GUARANTEED’

As the left- and right-wing clashes continue, Mayor Ted Wheeler acknowledges Portland’s protest tradition as a robust form of political expression. But he believes it’s been co-opted lately by people more interested in simply causing trouble than having any cogent discourse.

And in picking a fight with antifa, they’ll get one.

“I think they come to Portland because it gives them a platform,” he said this week. “They know that if they come here conflict is almost guaranteed.”

Though he doesn’t name names, Wheeler said, “There’s no question in my mind that some people are hiding behind the protections of the First Amendment but whose clearly stated intentions are to come here to commit acts of violence.”

Yet the mayor said his role in containing the tumult runs up against the state’s expansive civil liberties. Often, he is the lone voice among Portland’s elected leaders on the city’s ongoing protest clashes.

Oregon’s constitution carries unusually strong protections of free speech and expression that are broader than those of the federal level’s First Amendment and extend into all manner of public conduct in Oregon.

That legal framework has earned Oregon a reputation as a stalwart defender of free speech. But it has frustrated officials in Portland who wish to curtail violence at protests.

Wheeler drew a fierce backlash in June 2017 when he tried to derail a pro-Trump demonstration held only days after authorities accused Jeremy Christian of murdering two men aboard a MAX train after he launched into an anti-Muslim rant.

Last fall, concerns about free speech led the Portland City Council to reject an ordinance offered by the mayor and the police chief to restrict the time, place and manner of protests.

Wheeler has voiced similar concerns about a recent proposal by the police chief to bar protesters from wearing masks.

‘SHADES OF CHARLOTTESVILLE’

As such, the outcome of demonstrations has hinged in large part on the strategy employed by Portland police to provide public safety and protect the First Amendment rights of participants.

The bureau has vacillated between having a heavy police presence aimed at keeping rival protest groups separated and taking a more hands-off approach even as factions sometimes have come to blows in the streets.

Both have led to controversy.

Police drew condemnation last August when officers fired dozens of flash-bang grenades and other less-lethal munitions at those protesting Patriot Prayer and Proud Boys downtown, injuring multiple demonstrators.

The bureau has also faced rebukes, from both the left and the right, for failing to make arrests in violent attacks captured on camera during the protests.

“We get criticized for doing too much, either arresting the wrong people or focusing our efforts on a side or using force. On the other hand, we get criticized for not doing enough,” Outlaw said.

The police chief said she agreed that protesters bent on violence may feel emboldened to return to Portland after seeing scenes captured from past protests showing bloody beatings occurring without immediate police intervention.

“It’s given a perception that we’re hands-off, and we’ve let the tail wag the dog,” Outlaw said.

In response, Wheeler and Outlaw have promised a larger turnout by police Aug. 17 and vowed to use the full force of the law against those who commit acts of violence and vandalism. City officials have been working with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to secure the officers and equipment necessary to respond, Outlaw said.

The mayor and chief also have gone on video and given interviews, pledging to do what it takes to keep the city safe during the demonstration and urged trouble-seeking participants to stay away from Portland.

Vysotsky, the Wisconsin scholar, said he’s cautiously optimistic about the city’s new response.

But the build-up among some of the protest participants, he said, has him concerned about the possibility of a deadly confrontation like the one in Virginia when a white supremacist came from out of town and mowed down a counter-protesters with his car, killing one of them.

“In some ways,” he said, “this all has shades of Charlottesville.”

Eudaly, staffers bungled efforts to change Portland neighborhood association rules, emails show

By Gordon Friedman

August 9, 2019

Portland Commissioner Chloe Eudaly has acknowledged a bureau under her control badly mishandled efforts to change the rules regarding neighborhood associations by failing to consult and involve the groups, newly released emails and text messages show.

The files reveal that the bungled undertaking led to intense pushback from neighborhood leaders and a lack of support by the City Council. That in turn has led Eudaly to delay the change and launch a damage-control campaign.

Text messages also show Eudaly's policy director, Jamey Duhamel, made plain her scorn for neighborhood associations, casting them as dominated by rich white people clueless about their misguided sense of entitlement.

In defending her office's effort to end a system of special powers afforded only to neighborhood associations, Eudaly has said elevating the voices of groups organized around non-geographic affiliations such as race, ethnicity or status as renters would be beneficial for Portland. Neighborhood associations, she has said, tend to be dominated by older, white homeowners and push their interests rather than the needs of a diverse, growing city.

Eudaly, who has explained she sees herself more as a renter than as a resident of a neighborhood, has said the proposed changes are not meant to impugn neighborhoods or curtail their powers, but to extend such powers to other worthy groups.

Yet the plan has backfired spectacularly, the emails and texts help to show. The communications were released to The Oregonian/OregonLive in response to a public records request.

Neighborhood association leaders say they were not consulted about the proposed changes by the city's civics bureau, the Office of Community & Civic Life, of which Eudaly is commissioner-in-charge. A proposed update to the city code approved by a panel managed by the bureau proved anathema to the associations because it would repeal the laws that establish them.

In her texts and emails, Eudaly appears to have come to grasp the political fray she has entered by waking the sleeping giant that is Portland's 95 neighborhood associations.

"I'm not having an engaged and vocal constituency turned against me, no matter how righteous the goals, due to a lack of engagement by the very bureau that is charged with civic engagement," Eudaly texted on July 18.

She sent that message to Suk Rhee, director of the civics bureau, and Winta Yohannes, a policy adviser.

"I think we're going to have to delay this item and undertake an engagement process with the NAs," Eudaly texted Rhee and Yohannes, referencing neighborhood associations.

Also on July 18, Eudaly emailed a supporter and asked her to co-author an op-ed in favor of the changes. The supporter, Kathleen Saadat, wrote to Eudaly that her goals were laudable, but the process had been "greatly flawed."

Saadat, who served on the panel that drafted the code change and who ultimately voted for its approval, said she was nevertheless "deeply concerned" neighborhoods had not been "fully

informed” of Eudaly’s efforts. Saadat warned that the oversight left the commissioner vulnerable to accusations of back-room politicking.

Eudaly forwarded Saadat’s message to Rhee, the civics director, and Yohannes, the policy adviser. “Not the response I was hoping for, but I can’t say I completely disagree,” Eudaly wrote.

“I’m very frustrated right now,” the commissioner continued. “It didn’t need to go down like this, I don’t know if I’ll have the votes, and I’m not feeling confident in the process. So, what are you going to do to engage the neighborhood associations and successfully move this forward?”

Rhee replied that she spoke with Saadat and was optimistic she could be counted on to support the code change.

“I do not like the position I’ve been put in,” Eudaly wrote back to Rhee, “so I’m looking for how we’ve engaged with NAs, how their concerns are being reflected in the code change, and what you suggest we do moving forward given how controversial this has become and the fact that I currently don’t have the votes to pass this.”

Changing city code requires three “yes” votes of the five-member City Council. Commissioner Nick Fish has told Eudaly he cannot support the change as currently envisioned but is open to workshopping the idea, said his chief of staff, Sonia Schmanski. It’s unclear where Mayor Ted Wheeler and Commissioners Amanda Fritz and Jo Ann Hardesty stand.

In another email, Eudaly said she has found it “so hard to convey to neighborhood advocates how much I appreciate their efforts” while also explaining they “do not represent all Portlanders.”

“They feel blamed, which is not my intent. They want me to fix their shortcomings for them, which is not my job,” Eudaly wrote. She said she feels an obligation to make Portland more inclusive but “can’t wait for 95 neighborhood associations, largely dominated by white, middle class, middle aged community members to figure out how to do that.”

Text messages released by Eudaly’s office also show Duhamel, the commissioner’s policy director, expressing open disdain for neighborhood associations.

Duhamel sent those texts to Mustafa Washington, Mayor Ted Wheeler’s operations manager, during a May 2018 City Council meeting at which many addresses in Southwest Portland were changed to new South Portland ones to make the city 911 system more effective.

Though the change was thought to be non-controversial, about a dozen people gave testimony on it at the meeting, which frustrated Duhamel.

“Why is this taking so long, ffs? Like WE GET IT ALREADY!! Who are they trying to convince?” she said in a message to Washington, using an acronym that includes profanity.

Several who testified were neighborhood association members who complained of costs associated with changing their addresses. A resident of the chic Riverdale neighborhood made a comment about her neighbors being “well-educated, high-income, high-caliber individuals,” which Duhamel perceived as haughty and insensitive.

“How you like that ‘high income, high caliber’ bull—,” Duhamel texted to Washington. “This is why we need our neighborhood associations in their place. They get too much power and voice.”

Washington responded, “I never thought this would be this big of a deal.”

Duhamel: “Well they are white and ‘high caliber’ soooooooo ... any inconvenience is a big deal to their cozy lives. HOW DARE WE STRESS THEM OUT!!!”

Washington: “LOL, there are definitely more important issues than this.”

Duhamel: “So. Much. Privilege.”

In an interview, Duhamel said she regretted her words. She said she has long been an activist and frequently fought against neighborhood associations, and her comments were made under that mindset.

“This is one of those moments where I really saw myself as an activist speaking truth to power. What I realize now is neighborhood associations also see themselves in that way,” Duhamel said.

“I wish I had chosen my words better. I wish I had not said that at all,” Duhamel said. “I am very regretful about how this is going to come out and how it will be perceived by neighborhood associations or people in general who want to give testimony and not feel they are being judged for it.”

Duhamel said she “absolutely” supports every person’s privilege to testify to the City Council and said the way she engages with constituents “has to also evolve.”

The Portland Tribune

Heavy rains cause sewage overflow into Willamette River

*By KOIN 6 News
August 11, 2019*

Both Portland and Troutdale recorded record rainfalls for Saturday, Aug. 10

About 60,000 gallons of combined sewage overflowed into the Willamette River in Portland in a 23-minute period Saturday afternoon, the Portland Bureau of Environmental Services said.

The overflow was caused by heavy rains that fell in the area and came from a single outfall at Northwest 110th and Front Avenue, officials said. It began at 4:46 p.m. and ended at 5:09 p.m.

People should avoid contact with the Willamette River in the area of Linnton and the Port of Portland Terminal 4 and downstream until late Monday.

This is the first combined sewer overflow of 2019, authorities said in a release, and was made up of 80% stormwater and 20% sewage. Before the Big Pipe project of 2011, there were on average about 50 outfalls a year.

Both Portland and Troutdale recorded record rainfall amounts for August 10. In Portland, 0.79 inches of rain was recorded, more than doubling the 1957 record of 0.36 inches.

In Troutdale, a record that stood for 54 years — 0.30 inches — was topped when 0.36 inches was recorded. A final report from the National Weather Service will be released on Sunday.

Older pedestrians at rising risk for death in Portland

*By Zane Sparling
August 12, 2019*

Portland Bureau of Transportation says those 65 or older make up 26% of pedestrian fatalities.

Pedestrians of advanced and elderly age face a rising risk of dying in traffic crashes, the Portland Bureau of Transportation warns.

The bureau says 26% of pedestrians slain in crashes were 65 years or older over the past five years. In the preceding five-year period, those 65 or older comprised about 16% of traffic fatalities in Portland.

Older residents make up 12% of the city's population.

"Oftentimes, people think it's just young people making poor decisions," said Hannah Schafer, a bureau spokeswoman. "What we're seeing is that this is a problem for everyone in the city, and it's impacting older Portlanders even more than in the past."

While the death of 82-year-old pedestrian Louanna Battams on Southeast Foster Road in June drew much public concern, Schafer said their review of crash data was not spurred by any particular incident.

PBOT's analysis corresponds with the conclusions of larger studies, including one conducted for AARP Oregon, which found that adults over age 50 were 64% more likely to die in a traffic collision while walking, compared with those under 50.

Street users age 70 or older have the highest per capita death rates, according to a 2018 study published in the Journal of Safety Research.

City leaders say that slower speeds are the surest route to reducing traffic deaths. In 2016, ProPublica reported that a 30-year-old pedestrian struck at 40 MPH has a 36% chance of dying, compared with a 70% probability for a 70-year-old.

PBOT director Chris Warner said: "This is another reminder that we need to keep designing and managing our streets with the most vulnerable people at the top of our minds and creating a safe street system, and that we all need to look out for each other when traveling."

The problem isn't Portland's alone. Pedestrian deaths across the U.S. have doubled since 2009, according to the Governors Highway Safety Association. Researchers theorize that Americans' preference for bigger cars, such as SUVs, may be driving the trend.

OPB

Portland Still Struggling To Protect Creative Spaces, Despite Efforts

*By April Baer
August 9, 2019*

Portland city commissioners received a formal report this week about the plan to preserve the city's creative space.

In February 2018, Mayor Ted Wheeler and Commissioners Chloe Eudaly and Nick Fish drew up a list of two dozen ideas for easing the real estate pressures on artists and arts groups. Their concern is that Portland loses its essential character if the city's musicians, performers, designers and other creative professionals can't afford the cost of living.

This week, staff from Fish's and Eudaly's offices delivered a report to Council outlining what got done.

The city and the nonprofit that manages arts funding, the Regional Arts and Culture Council, made a few key administrative changes: A new position has been created to oversee RACC's contract with the city, new leadership is at the helm at RACC, and the city auditor's office issued a follow-up last month finding that oversight of RACC has improved since a critical report issued in 2018.

Staff acknowledged that many of the initial 24 recommendations didn't pan out.

However, the presentation noted some advancements made in the city Parks Bureau, including acoustic improvements underway at some facilities suitable as performance venues, cultural mapping, the Percent for Art program on city construction projects and other areas.

City staffers say, overall, they're trying to take a strategic approach, but they acknowledge there's still a great deal of pressure on artists and arts groups to come up with rents and mortgage payments.

Across town in Portland's Montavilla neighborhood, meanwhile, the Pegasus Project offers a real-time object lesson in arts affordability.

The owners of the small, two-story building at the corner of Southeast 76th Avenue and Stark Street is developer Randy Rapaport, an effusive presence in arts circles who's worked on southeast Portland projects such as the Belmont Lofts and Clinton Condominiums. As first reported in Willamette Week, Rapaport tried to turn the old auto body shop into a live/work space for artists, but he said neighborhood complaints and city regulations have hampered those efforts, culminating in some \$13,000 in fines from the Bureau of Development Services. BDS asked Rapaport to add a fire wall. The two sides are also in dispute over the zoning of the building, unpermitted murals and other matters.

"An auto body shop could use the space," Rapaport told OPB en route to Bogota, where he plans to open an upscale cocktail bar, "but someone painting a picture couldn't. It was the ultimate tax for the privilege of doing something that was beneficial to these artists and to the culture."

Rapaport, who acquired the property in 2017, sold the building in June, saying repairs to bring the building in compliance with city code would not pencil out, given that it will ultimately be torn down. But the situation makes a murky future for the four residents plus and a dozen or so other artists with studios in the space.

On the surface, Pegasus might appear to be the poster child of the city's problems with creative gentrification. But the longer you talk to its residents, the nuances of the situation become apparent.

Rapaport's issues with the city stretch back two years, predating the creative space plan.

A number of people who live and work in the building say they're not without options.

Justin Fetko owns the four-person custom decal shop Sticker Ninja at Pegasus. He said a consult with a realtor led him to a new spot lined up in the Goat Blocks off Southeast Belmont. Interestingly, he now has his own set of issues with construction and occupancy permitting.

Fetko said he's about nine months behind from when he thought he'd move in because of delays getting the necessary city inspections, but it's happening.

One of the artists at Pegasus, Parker Wright, seems anything but worried about the future. Wright, who's about 6-foot-4 in his cowboy boots and leopard-print jeans, greeted me with a huge, blissed-out smile. He's been restoring old motor scooters as works of art, along with myriad other projects. If the Pegasus crew is turned out at the end of Rapport's lease-back, Wright said, "We're thinking about buying a circus tent and then installing it in various locations ... like a festival that moves around Portland!"

Joshua Wallace, the art director at Pegasus, is also optimistic something's going to work out. The graffiti artist is promising community classes in August and said he's had conversations with the building's new owner to see if there is any chance to keep artists in the building.

Wallace had a look at the city's creative space plan and pronounced it "very confusing."

"Didn't seem like it had any real outline to direct" rescue efforts for threatened spaces, Wallace said.

The liens placed on Pegasus by the Bureau of Development Services — somewhere in the low six figures — will have to be reckoned with. The new owner will be responsible for paying the city.

If Pegasus is a bellwether for affordable options for artists, one might reasonably conclude that below-market space for artists can happen, but not without cost, and not without conforming to city safety codes.

60,000 Gallons Of Wastewater Flow Into Willamette River After 'Unusual' Rainfall

*By Rebecca Ellis
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Tens of thousands of gallons of sewage and stormwater have flooded into the Willamette River after an abnormally heavy rainfall Saturday evening caused Portland's sewer system to overflow.

Beginning in the late afternoon, a slow-moving storm dumped nearly 0.80 inches of rain on Northeast Portland. The deluge of water overwhelmed the sewer system, leading to an estimated 60,000 gallons to overflow into river near Portland's Linnton neighborhood.

With the raw sewage runoff comes dangerous bacteria, capable of causing illnesses ranging from stomach cramps to cholera. Officials are warning the public to stay away from the water downstream of Linnton until Monday evening.

Before the city invested more than a billion dollars in revamping its sewer system, overflows occurred an average of 50 times each year. Since the improvement project wrapped up in 2011, the city reports the number of overflows into the river has dropped by 94%.

Overflows are now expected four times each winter, and once every three summers, according to the city's Bureau of Environmental Services.

But Saturday was not a typical summer day: Portland saw more rainfall in the early evening of Aug. 10 than it usually sees during the entire month. Less than 0.70 inches of rain typically fall

on Portland each August, according to David Bishop, a meteorologist with the Weather Service's Portland office.

The Portland NWS tweeted that Saturday had become the rainiest Aug. 10 on record, as well as the second wettest day of 2019, so far. But, Bishop cautions, that doesn't mean everyone in the surrounding area was hit with an unprecedented torrent of raindrops. The measurement was taken at Portland International Airport.

"The Vancouver Airport is just across the Columbia, really not that far away," he says. "They got a total of 0.14 inches yesterday."

No more heavy rain is forecast for the upcoming week.