

The Oregonian

Tweet shows Portland police car with ‘Blue Lives Matter’ sticker, appearing to violate city policy

*By Jayati Ramakrishnan
November 6, 2019*

A tweet by a Portland resident appears to show a police patrol car displaying a Blue Lives Matter sticker, sparking criticism on social media and questions about how the Police Bureau would respond.

The sticker violates city policy, which outlines the standard format for city vehicles and prohibits any “private decals or markings.”

Lindsay Burrows, who posted the original photo, said she took the picture on Oct. 20 when she was near the Stark Street exit off Interstate 205. She tweeted the photo on Monday.

The tweet captures a Portland police car from the back with a sticker shaped like the state of Oregon. The sticker has the pattern of the American flag and one blue stripe on the flag. Willamette Week first reported the tweet.

Proponents say the “thin blue line” is a symbol of support for police officers and their sacrifices. It has been incorporated into the Blue Lives Matter initiative that followed the fatal shooting of Michael Brown by Officer Darren Wilson in 2014 in Ferguson, Missouri. Critics say the symbol and the initiative belittle the Black Lives Matter movement that focuses on police brutality against black people.

Portland police Lt. Tina Jones said the bureau was aware of the tweet, but police officials haven’t confirmed if a police officer put the sticker on the car.

“Our vehicles are shared and at this time it is uncertain when it was placed on the vehicle and by whom,” Jones said in an email to The Oregonian/OregonLive.

Jones didn’t say if or how the bureau was investigating. She said she couldn’t say exactly what kinds of consequences the person would face but described it as a “minor policy violation” and that any discipline could depend on whether the person had been previously sanctioned.

Burrows said in an email to The Oregonian/OregonLive that she was alarmed Portland police would use the symbol. Dozens of others responded to Burrows’ tweet, many expressing similar concerns about police displaying the symbol.

“It concerned me that Portland Police would display this symbol without (or despite?) recognizing that the symbol had been used in opposition to the #blacklivesmatter movement and by white supremacists,” she said.

In April, Multnomah County paid \$100,000 to a black employee who claimed the county fostered a racially insensitive workplace by allowing colleagues to hang up a Blue Lives Matter flag. The plaintiff said coworkers harassed her when she complained about the flag.

Portland may expand which old homes must be dismantled by hand

By Everton Bailey Jr.

November 6, 2019

The Portland City Council is considering expanding which older houses and duplexes it requires owners to dismantle piece by piece to salvage the building materials.

The council is scheduled to vote next week to amend city code to mandate that any Portland home built in 1940 or earlier whose owner wishes to demolish it must deconstruct it rather than mechanically knock it down. City code currently calls for homes built in 1916 or earlier to be deconstructed.

Historically designated homes of any age also fall under the deconstruction requirement.

The majority of council members said Wednesday that they plan to approve the ordinance, and Commissioners Jo Ann Hardesty and Chloe Eudaly said they would like to see a more severe penalty for violators. A first offense can lead to a fine of up to \$500 and a third or more can be up to \$1,500.

“I support everything else, but I think if you’re going to hold people accountable, they’ve got to feel it,” Hardesty said. “This is not something that they’re going to feel.”

City officials noted that offenses also come with suspensions and fines of up to \$10,000 for using heavy machinery in the deconstruction process. The city accepted public comment on the proposed ordinance Wednesday.

If approved, the new city rule would go into effect Jan. 20. The city adopted the current deconstruction requirements in July 2016, which city officials said made Portland the first in the country to do so.

The current requirements primarily cover homes in areas that lie along historic streetcar lines and extend to 82nd Avenue, city officials said. The expansion is expected to apply to other homes in those areas as well as neighborhoods east of 82nd Avenue.

Bureau of Planning and Sustainability officials said Wednesday that in the last three years, deconstruction has had a carbon benefit, raised the chances of finding hazardous materials hidden in structures such as asbestos and lead paint that could cause harm if the home were razed and created job opportunities for women, people of color and other historically disadvantaged people.

Shawn Wood, a construction waste specialist in the planning and sustainability bureau, told the council that more than 200 homes have been deconstructed since 2016 and over 2.4 million pounds of old-growth wood and other material that would have otherwise been burned or gone to landfills have been recovered for reuse. He also said two retail outlets have opened that sell materials salvaged from deconstructed homes.

City officials say salvaged materials have been repurposed in other remodeling and new construction projects, sleeping pods for the homeless, furniture for restaurants and coffee shops, and other things.

There are 12 companies certified to do deconstruction work in the city and three others on the road to getting there, Wood said. All the contractors have to be trained in how to deal with lead-based paint and asbestos as a condition of their deconstruction certification.

City records show the current ordinance covers about a third of Portland home demolition permits, Wood said, and the expansion would add roughly another third. But demolition permit applications have been declining since 2016, he said, from a little more than 350 that year to about 200 in 2018. He didn't state a reason why during the meeting but said expanding which homes fall under the requirement now would present a low risk to overwhelming the industry since fewer applications are being sought.

Wood said city records show that for every Portland home deconstructed, 12 new housing units are created on average. He said the homebuilders' association suggested adding a deconstruction exemption for houses removed and replaced with affordable housing projects. But he said that was denied by the planning and sustainability bureau and the Housing Bureau because there would be issues with implementing and enforcing it and other reasons.

Wood said mechanical demolitions take less time to accomplish but the time from when the permit is issued to when new construction begins is roughly the same — about three months.

Shane Endicott with Northwest Deconstruction Specialists testified that his business is one of the certified companies created in response to the 2016. He said his employees deconstruct about 20 homes a year and all but four have had asbestos in them.

Endicott said the company has been hitting some of the apparent goals of the ordinance, such as job creation. He said 90 percent of the business' employees are people of color and they make up the entire leadership and management staff.

He said the company has fostered worker advancement and paid for employees to get training to take over managerial roles.

“We're much more successful because of it, and we also have people who want other people to work there who they have relationships with, and that's how it grows,” Endicott said. “We have the problem of a lot of people want to work there, but we don't have a lot of openings. That's a good problem, because we can fix that problem.”

He said the company has been getting more and more requests from clients to deconstruct homes that aren't required to be torn down in that manner.

The Portland Tribune

Eudaly wants one-year extension in neighborhood rewrite process

*By Jim Redden
November 07, 2019*

The City Council will not take up the issue until next November under a resolution released Wednesday

Commissioner Chloe Eudaly wants a time out in the contentious process of rewriting the role of neighborhoods and other groups in the city's civic engagement process.

Eudaly will ask the City Council for a one-year extension of the process on Thursday, Nov. 14. The extension will push the final decision past the 2020 general election where Eudaly will be on the ballot if she is not defeated in the May primary.

During that time, she wants an inter-agency work group will be formed to review all civic engagement provision in the City Code and help prepare recommendations for the council to consider in a year.

Eudaly also wants the council to approve three years of funding the coalition offices that assist neighborhood associations.

A resolution to achieve these goals was released by the Office of Community and Civic Life, which is in charge of the rewrite, on Wednesday, Nov. 6. The office is overseen by Eudaly.

The proposed rewrite has divided the city. It is intended to increase civic engagement among all Portlanders. But it has been criticized for proposing to delete reference to neighborhood associations, neighborhood coalition offices and neighborhood business groups from the code.

"Portland is built on a history of active community engagement, and your participation has helped Civic Life to evaluate our assumptions, process, and engagement, and adapt to the needs of the community. We appreciate how many Portlanders are invested in this conversation, and we will continue to improve our own public involvement practices as we move Portland forward, together," read the Wednesday announcement.

The council meeting is scheduled to begin at 5:30 p.m. at Self Enhancement, Inc., 3920 N Kerby Ave, Portland

You can read the resolution at www.portlandoregon.gov/civic/article/746603.

Willamette Week

A Portland Police Officer Appears to Have Violated City Policy By Putting a Blue Lives Matter Bumper Sticker on a Patrol Vehicle

*By Elise Herron
November 6, 2019*

“We do not know who put the sticker on the vehicle, including whether or not it was an officer.”

Outrage spread across social media Monday when a user posted a photo of a Portland police car with a blue and white "Blue Lives Matter" sticker affixed to the back.

That's a violation of City of Portland policy. According to rules about visual markings for city vehicles, no "private decals or markings are allowed," on police vehicles.

Lieutenant Tina Jones, a Portland Police Bureau spokesperson, says PPB is "appreciative this has been brought to our attention and will continue to utilize our systems of accountability to ensure we perform within the highest professional standards."

She declined to comment on "what discipline would be imposed for a minor policy violation." She says "it depends upon a variety of factors, such as whether someone has had prior command counseling (which is not discipline) for a similar matter, or if someone has prior discipline it could result in unpaid time loss, for example."

She adds that the agency doesn't know who placed the sticker on the car.

"There is no 'officer in question' for several reasons," she says. "First, we share vehicles so we can be good stewards of the public money, which means officers are not assigned one vehicle for patrol. Second, we do not know who put the sticker on the vehicle, including whether or not it was an officer."

The Blue Lives Matter flag grew popular as a response to the Black Lives Matter movement. Some view it as support for police officers. Others see it as a racist attempt to belittle protests against police brutality.

Jones says PPB has "notified all staff to check for unauthorized stickers or markings and to notify a supervisor if something is found in violation of the policy."

The Portland Mercury

Mayor Wheeler Parts with \$16,000 in Campaign Donations from Trump Lackey Gordon Sondland

By Erik Henriksen

November 6, 2019

Last month, Portland hotelier/millionaire/Trump lackey Gordon Sondland lied to impeachment inquiry investigators, claiming that—despite being savvy enough to have purchased a key position in the Trump administration—he just couldn't remember major facts about his involvement in the scandal surrounding Trump and Ukraine. In addition to blaming that foggy ol' memory of his, Sondland also claimed he "didn't know why" aid to Ukraine was held up.

Yesterday, Sondland's memory miraculously recovered, with the ambassador releasing a four-page sworn statement that, as the New York Times summarizes, "directly contradicted his testimony to investigators last month."

Hours later, Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler announced he'd be returning roughly \$16,000 that Sondland had donated to several of Wheeler's election campaigns.

"The Mayor made it clear that he wanted to give Ambassador Sondland the opportunity to explain his involvement in the Ukrainian scandal," Jennifer Arguinzoni, the manager for Wheeler's re-election campaign, said in a press release. "Especially in light of the acknowledgment of a quid pro quo and the testimony of Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, it has become clear that Sondland's actions are potentially counter to the law."

As the Mercury's Alex Zielinski wrote two weeks ago, Sondland's influence over Portland politics has been evident for years. "Arguably Portland's most powerful Republican, Sondland's impact is everywhere: in Portland's swankiest galas, its most upscale hotels, its trendiest bars, and its politics," wrote Zielinski. "Campaign filings show that since 2010, Sondland and his associated LLCs have dumped a total of \$16,500 into Mayor Ted Wheeler's campaign fund. Sondland's wife and business partner, Katherine Durant, has added \$6,500 to Wheeler's campaign coffers."

Sondland has given to others, too, including a total of \$1,500 to City Commissioner Nick Fish (who told the Mercury he hasn't spoken with Sondland since 2013) and \$22,500 to the failed 2018 gubernatorial campaign of Knute Buehler.

"Wheeler is the first elected official of either party to announce a redirection of funds from Sondland," notes Wheeler Deputy Campaign Manager Amy Rathfelder.

The funds will be split among a number of beneficiaries, including Transition Projects, Basic Rights Oregon, Portland Parks Foundation, Portland United Against Hate, immigrant rights organization CAUSA, DePaul Treatment Centers, environmental advocacy group SOLVE, and Portland Audubon. The largest chunk of cash, \$4,000, will go to "organizational partners of the grassroots ImpeachNow.org coalition," a coalition working to... well, impeach now.

While Wheeler has repeatedly and publicly clashed with Trump, he and his administration have been less transparent about his stance on Sondland's involvement in the impeachment scandal—possibly because, according to former Gov. Ted Kulongoski, it was at Sondland's urging that Kulongoski appointed then-county commissioner Wheeler as Oregon's state treasurer in 2010.

Others have been more forthcoming in their condemnation of Sondland. Following Sondland's initial testimony to impeachment inquiry investigators in October, Rep. Earl Blumenauer called for a boycott of Sondland's businesses in Portland. Even earlier in October, shortly after Sondland's role in the Ukraine scandal was revealed, Portland activist Sarah Iannarone—who's running against Wheeler in the 2020 election—called on Wheeler to return Sondland's donations. The next day, Wheeler spokesperson Timothy Becker told the Mercury that Sondland is "an integral part of our business community," adding, "The Mayor would hope and expect that Mr. Sondland would testify truthfully before Congress, when he is called to do so."

OPB

Portland Water Bureau Could Lose Big Customers As It Builds \$1 Billion Filtration Plant

By Amelia Templeton

November 6, 2019

Roughly one in four Oregonians gets their drinking water from the same remarkable source: the protected Bull Run watershed in the Mount Hood National Forest.

For years, the Bull Run has provided most of the drinking water for the city of Portland — and a steady revenue source for the Portland Water Bureau, which sells city water to dozens of smaller communities.

These wholesale customers currently make up about 40% of the demand for water and about 10% of the bureau's gross annual revenue.

But the demand for Portland's water is shifting dramatically as the city prepares to build and pay for a new treatment plant that will cost in the ballpark of \$1 billion. Four of the five largest wholesale customers are looking at switching to other sources and scaling back or not renewing their 20-year purchase agreements with the city.

Several factors are driving the shift, including a new plan to use the Willamette River to supply drinking water to the growing communities in Washington County and the steep cost of Portland's proposed filtration plant.

If wholesale customers end their contracts — and in the process avoid sharing in the capitol cost of the new plant — that could mean even higher future bills for residential customers in Portland.

The Portland City Council voted in 2017 to build a water filtration plant after state and federal regulators revoked an agreement allowing the city to rely largely on the pristine natural environment in the Bull Run to guarantee the safety of its drinking water.

The Bull Run watershed is approximately 100 square miles of protected land in the Mount Hood National Forest, much of it old growth forest, that drains into a river and the city's two reservoirs. The public isn't allowed in the area, and the area is carefully managed to protect water quality.

Testing in 2017 found very small amounts of cryptosporidium, a microscopic parasite and potential pathogen, in the Bull Run reservoirs. There were no indications the parasite was making people ill, but the EPA stringently regulates all crypto in drinking water because of the risk it can pose, particularly for people with compromised immune systems.

Putting A Price On Water

The project is facing new skepticism after the Water Bureau revealed substantially higher cost estimates for in September. Bureau officials initially told city leaders the plant would cost at most \$500 million, but the estimate is now \$850 million to \$1.25 billion for the most robust version of the plant. That more expensive design combines water filtration with treatment with ozone, a common disinfectant, and it includes two main conduits running in and out of the plant.

Andrew Degner, the water resources manager for the city of Gresham, calls the filtration treatment plant "a necessary investment," but he worries about the potential impact on lower income customers in his city if his department is forced to pass along the cost of the new facility to ratepayers.

"Obviously the impact is going to be substantially increased water costs at the wholesale level," Degner said.

Gresham, which has been buying water from Portland since 1912, is exploring developing new groundwater wells as a cheaper alternative to renewing their purchase agreement for Bull Run water.

"Water is essential," he said, "and we don't want to price people out of an essential product."

The neighboring Rockwood Water People's Utility District serves about 62,175 people in Gresham, Fairview and East Portland and is another of Portland's largest wholesale customers.

Rockwood Water already operates three of its own groundwater wells and is working with Gresham on a strategy to add more wells and move away from needing to purchase water from Portland.

"The goal is to be able to make that transition in the next five years," said Tom Lewis, a member of the Rockwood Water Board of Directors. "When you see a big filtration system coming, with some good guesswork of the expense, then for ourselves it was, How much would it cost us to supply our own water?" he said.

To Renew Or Not To Renew

Gresham and Rockwood both have 20-year purchase agreements with the Portland Water Bureau that expire in 2026. They must indicate by 2021 whether they plan to renew the contracts and give the Portland Water Bureau an estimate of their minimum water purchase.

The Portland Water Bureau plans to bring the new treatment plant online by 2027. Under the terms of their agreements, wholesale customers would only pay their share of the treatment plant cost after it comes online. In the near term, the bureau plans to finance construction by increasing water rates for its Portland customers and issuing revenue bonds.

Chris Wanner, director of operations for the Portland Water Bureau, said cost estimates for the plant are still "speculative." He hopes wholesale customers will hold off on making any

decisions until the bureau has better design specifications and more precise cost estimates for the plant.

“By 2021, the bureau will have much more defined costs of what that filtration system will look like,” he said.

Wanner acknowledged that the potential departure of large wholesale customers — and the hundreds of thousands of households they serve — could mean higher rate increases for the Water Bureau’s remaining customers.

“There would be an incremental increase in the cost for our own retail customers, and the remaining wholesalers on our system,” he said. “It is a complicated equation to say that everyone’s rate would go up a set amount.”

The water bureau has estimated that the most expensive version of the plant will add \$132 to the average annual residential water bill by 2028. But that estimate doesn’t take into account the potential loss of customers in Gresham, Fairview and East Portland.

While Gresham and Rockwood are scrambling to put together plans for alternative water sources, Portland’s biggest wholesale customer, the Tualatin Valley Water District, is much further along with a plan to develop its own supply of water to serve the growing population in Washington County.

The Tualatin Valley Water District buys water from Portland and sells it to 215,000 customers in parts of Beaverton, Hillsboro and Tigard.

But the district is partnering with Hillsboro to develop a new source of drinking water: the Willamette River near Wilsonville.

That project is expected to cost \$1.2 billion, a total that includes a new filtration plant in Sherwood to treat the river water. It’s slated to come online in 2026.

An Evaporating Pool Of Customers

Tualatin Valley has notified Portland that it won’t be renewing its wholesale agreement, and the Water Bureau has factored that into its long-term projections for supply, demand and rate increases.

Less certain, though, is how many other smaller customers the Portland Water Bureau might lose as the Tualatin Valley source comes online.

Michael Grimm, general manager of the West Slope Water District, said his utility is weighing the cost of renewing its agreement with Portland versus switching. His utility serves around 11,000 people in the hills between Portland and Beaverton and has a 20-year agreement with Portland that expires in 2026.

“All the planets are aligning at the same time,” Grimm said.

While the cost of paying for Portland’s new filtration facility is one consideration, Grimm said the most critical issue for utilities to Portland’s west may be security of their water supply in the event of an earthquake. Many of Portland’s pipes are a century old, while Tualatin Valley is building its new treatment plant and distribution pipes to withstand a major subduction zone quake.

“Cost is going to be a concern of our customers. Water quality. Resiliency. Long term stability. All those things are key,” Grimm said.

The Benefits Of A New Plant

Some of the Portland Water Bureau's wholesale customers question how carefully the Portland Water Bureau and the City Council are managing the filtration project, given the ballooning cost estimates.

But even skeptics of the project said they see Portland's filtration plant as a fundamentally sound investment.

"No matter what West Slope does, the city of Portland is going to be well served for decades to come," Grimm said.

A filtration system is particularly valuable, wholesale customers say, because it will help the Water Bureau continue to provide drinkable water in the case of an earthquake or a fire in the dense forests that surround the Bull Run.

The city and the forest service say a large fire in the Bull Run could trigger a multi-year water supply emergency for Portland and its customers.

Two years ago, water managers got a taste of just how real that threat is when a fire ignited by a stray firework ripped through the Columbia Gorge and the Mount Hood National Forest, and burned right up to the edge of the protected forest surrounding the Bull Run reservoirs.

"Having a treatment plant will help deal with the taste and odor and water quality issues that are associated with that," said Degner, with the city of Gresham.

For its part, Water Bureau officials said that whether whole customers continue their purchase agreements, they will maintain relationships with all of them at minimum for disaster relief.

"We still have a valve we could open and provide water to them, or conceptually they could provide water to the city of Portland retail customers as well," Wanner said.

"We will remain regional partners in, if nothing else, the ability to back each other up."