

The Oregonian

Portland police more likely to arrest, search black people than white, analysis shows

*By Noelle Crombie
December 1, 2019*

An analysis of traffic stop data found that Portland police searched African Americans at more than twice the rate of white motorists and pedestrians during a 12-month period ending in June. During the same period, Portland officers also arrested black people at higher rates than whites.

Those were the key takeaway of the state's first-ever look at detailed demographic data collected by Oregon police agencies. The report was prepared by the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission, a state agency that serves as a clearinghouse for criminal justice statistics.

It is the latest study to underscore stark disparities in the treatment of black people by Oregon's law enforcement agencies and criminal justice system.

The commission's work comes on the heels of research released last week that found black and Latino people are overrepresented in nearly every stage of Multnomah County's adult criminal justice system. Researchers found that the racial disparity in arrests has grown since 2014.

A study done by the criminal justice commission in 2016 found that African Americans in Oregon were convicted of felony drug possession at more than double the rate of whites in 2015, a disparity that played out across methamphetamine, heroin and cocaine cases statewide.

The commission's latest work stems from 2017 legislation that requires police in Oregon to record the age, race, sex and other detailed information during routine pedestrian and traffic stops.

By 2021, every police agency will be required to submit the data; the state is phasing in the requirement, starting with Oregon's 12 largest police organizations. Those agencies are on the Interstate 5 corridor and the Oregon State Police.

The commission issued an executive summary of its findings on Sunday. The full report will be made public Monday.

Oregon joins an estimated 40 states in collecting and analyzing demographic data from traffic stops. The requirement was part of a law that reduced criminal charges for most first-time drug possession offenses from felonies to misdemeanors.

Ken Sanchagrin, research director for the commission, said states typically publish a basic racial and ethnic breakdown of traffic stops compared with census data for that state.

Oregon, he said, dug deeper into a dozen agencies' nearly 400,000 traffic and pedestrian stops between July 1, 2018, and June 30, 2019. Analysts examined three aspects of each encounter: a racial breakdown of officers' initial decisions to stop someone; whether those stops resulted in a citation, search or arrest; and whether they resulted in a seizure of contraband, like drugs.

The commission found racial or ethnic disparities in the citation, search or arrest data submitted by seven other police agencies. In Beaverton, Hillsboro, Salem and the sheriff's offices in Marion and Washington counties, Latino people received disparate treatment compared to white motorists or pedestrians. In the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office, the study found disparate treatment of black people.

Both ethnic and racial disparities also were identified in traffic and pedestrian stop data submitted by the Oregon State Police.

In all of those agencies, analysts identified disparities for either citations, searches or arrests

Only Portland police showed differences across the categories in the analysis, said Sanchagrin. Portland stood out for the disparate percentage of black people who were subjected to a search as well as arrest – differences analysts described in the executive summary as “robust.”

Portland police last week released its own the data from the study. Chief Danielle Outlaw in a statement said the analyses “help us to realize that overrepresentation of certain races continues to exist in the criminal justice system and in our stops. The real question is why.

“We recognize that data demonstrating overrepresentation by race in stops, arrests and other areas in the criminal justice system creates distrust and fear within the community,” said Outlaw. “It is time we move beyond reporting out on the data and into implementation of intentional strategies in an effort to create meaningful change, when appropriate.”

The Oregon State Sheriffs’ Association and the Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police issued a joint statement in response to the overview of the findings, saying both organizations supported the legislation that led to the data collection effort.

“Our law enforcement leaders in Oregon continue to make equity in policing a priority and we are committed to addressing any disparities that are identified in the report,” the statement said.

The law doesn’t mandate training or intervention for police departments with disparities in their traffic and pedestrian stops. It says only that the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training may provide advice or training to those agencies.

Bobbin Singh, executive director of the Oregon Justice Resource Center, which advocates for criminal justice reform, said the disparities raised in the commission’s analysis are longstanding, well known and the result of “structural racism.” He said the latest findings echo previous studies, which all point to the same unequal treatment people of color experience in the criminal justice system.

“The responses that we get from our local and state leaders is muddled, passive and I think ignores the urgency of the issue or doesn’t respond accordingly to the damage that it is doing to our communities.”

“There is a lot of interesting information here as far as the data and what it demonstrates, but my hope is that we don’t get into a conversation about pulling apart the data and overanalyzing the nuances of it” instead of holding leaders accountable for implementing meaningful policy changes that reverse the trend, he said.

“Again,” he said, “it is phenomenal the burden that is put on people of color and civil rights advocates to continue to show that this is a reality.”

Portland police develop mental health and wellness program for officers, civilian staff

*By Maxine Bernstein
November 30, 2019*

Portland Officer Leo Harris has responded to dozens of fatal car crashes.

But it's one hit-and-run accident that sticks in his mind.

A reckless driver struck a man who was out walking his dog with his wife in the St. Johns neighborhood. As emergency medics loaded the seriously injured pedestrian into an ambulance, Harris had to keep cool while driving the injured man's wife to the hospital.

On the ride, the man's wife shared with him her hopes and dreams for the coming years. Harris was unsure if her spouse was even going to make it.

"It was a bad crash. He's super injured, and she's talking about how they were planning to go hiking and how she wants to have kids in a few years," Harris recalled. "You want to comfort her, but you're also worried this person has very catastrophic injuries. Just mentally, a call like that can be more taxing than some tactical incident where you burn a lot of energy and you're physically tired."

"It still impacts me."

What's traumatic to one officer may not be to another.

In the past, police officers were told to hide their emotions, "suck it up, toughen up – don't let it affect you."

But now officers recognize that's just not reasonable.

Portland police have designated a sergeant and one officer to work in the bureau's training division to develop a bureau wellness program – one of the pillars of a 2015 President's Task Force report on 21st century policing that the chief has touted, as well as the bureau's training advisory council.

The goal is to reduce police injuries and improve job performance and attitudes.

The bureau started training all officers - as well as non-sworn civilian bureau employees - during annual refresher training classes this fall, bringing in physical therapists to share tips on how best to stretch muscles or control breathing to reduce stress.

As the bureau struggles to retain veteran officers while being unable to fill more than 100 vacancies fast enough, Training Sgt. Todd Tackett and Harris are tasked with developing a program that will help police get through their law enforcement careers intact, both physically and mentally.

"There's a need here to support our folks and help build their resilience throughout their careers," Harris said. "We can be bouncing from a horrible crash scene to someone upset because they've had to wait a long time for a police response. How do we give our folks the ability to stay grounded?"

Portland's program is still in the formative stage. Tackett and Harris are hoping to follow the lead of other law enforcement agencies who have already set up similar programs successfully, such as the Bend police.

The Bend police officer resilience program includes a combination of physical and mental fitness programming, using yoga and mindfulness, as well as health screening. It's available to all officers, both on duty and off duty.

"We've demonstrated how you can attack your recruitment problem through having a department that embraces officer physical and mental health," Bend police Lt. Brian Beekman said.

Portland Police Bureau's Training Advisory Council, which is made up of community members, this year recommended a wellness program for cops.

Shawn Campbell, chair of the training advisory council, said it's all about making sure officers "are in top condition to do the job that we expect them to do."

The council expects the program will improve officers' contacts with the community, boost morale and reduce injuries and sick time.

"Everything – use of force, procedural justice, interactions with community – can be helped by this," Campbell said, at a recent training council meeting. "I think we forget that the officers themselves are people too. People who are in a very difficult job and situation. And if we want to make these things that we care about better, we have to take care of the officers who are doing them as well. We can't just continually put people into a situation and expect things not to go wrong."

Aside from the annual training, the police bureau is considering a pilot meditation class with division managers and setting up a wellness advisory council with representatives from around the bureau.

The officer's and sergeant's positions were already authorized in the bureau's budget, but reassigned to the training division to develop the program.

BREATHING AND STRETCHING EXERCISES

In a large room at the bureau's Northeast Portland training center, physical therapists Ryan Baugus and Curtis Dodson on a recent day encouraged civilian employees of the police bureau to learn how to regulate their internal physiology to handle stress better.

The therapists had the class stand up and get out of their chairs to do breathing and stretching exercises.

They talked about how to avoid staying in one position for long periods, regardless if they're doing desk work or computer work. They stressed the importance of getting enough sleep and hydration, eating properly and getting regular exercise.

Seated before them were an assortment of civilian employees: from records clerks and property evidence control specialists to fiscal managers and police auto mechanics.

"Knowledge is the most powerful tool we can provide to the police bureau," Baugus said. "People can have a high degree of perceptual ability to deal with stress but eventually the internal physiology catches up and you burn out, can't deal with it."

Someone in the class nodded knowingly, whispering to a colleague, "Fake it until you break it."

Matthew Burnett, 32, who works in the police evidence warehouse, said he agreed with the premise of the training.

"I think a healthy body contributes to a healthy mind for sure," Burnett said.

Burnett said he also appreciated that the police bureau included civilian employees in the training.

"It's easy for us to feel secondary to sworn officers," Burnett said, "and this helps bridge the gap."

BEND POLICE BUILD WORKOUTS INTO WORKDAY

The Bend Police Department has been recognized nationally for its officer wellness program.

A small team of officers began working to promote individual wellness training in the mid-2000s, and by 2010, the bureau began encouraging team-based workouts and soon got the OK to allow workouts for officers while on duty, Lt. Brian Beekman said.

Today, the department holds yoga and mindfulness classes about five to six days a week during the department's midday shift.

"Our philosophy is to build it right into the workday," Beekman said.

In 2014, the agency added a health screening program, named after a sergeant who died that year from a sudden heart attack immediately after his shift. As part of the Johnny Lawrence project, the bureau sends officers for diet, cardiac and sleep screenings to help identify potential problems early.

The bureau pays a yoga and behavioral health instructor, contracts with a physical therapist, and with the help of a community grant, St. Charles Medical Center has provided the health screenings. Almost half of the force volunteered for the screenings.

It's hard to quantify the impact of the wellness programs, but Beekman said the time officers are out of work, called time loss, is at a five-year low.

"We're just trying to get healthier cops so they can be better on the street," Beekman said.

Portland Fire Chief Sara Boone climbing historic ladders

By Everton Bailey Jr.

November 29, 2019

Sara Boone never thought a question about fire extinguishers would change her life.

A Marshall High School P.E. teacher in the early-90s, Boone was on her lunch break when a Portland fire inspector asked her where he could find the nearest extinguishers. The two struck up a conversation, which led to her confessing that she was questioning whether she wanted to be a teacher for the rest of her life.

Then in her early 20s, volunteering and giving back to her community was important to her. But she missed being part of a team. She had spent a large part of her life immersed in athletics, she explained to the stranger, and recently graduated from Boise State University on a track and field scholarship. Boone returned to her hometown to try positively influence kids as her coaches had. But she was discouraged that the help she could offer was limited to the gym.

"At some point he looks at me," Boone said, "and he said, 'Have you ever thought about going into the fire service?'"

Boone was skeptical. She hadn't seen many African-American women as firefighters, and no one in her immediate family worked in the field.

But her parents encouraged her to learn more and she was intrigued by the idea of having a greater impact on her city.

In 1995, Boone became the first black woman hired by Portland Fire & Rescue. Though there have been barriers she's had to overcome, Boone said, she fell in love with the camaraderie of the fire bureau and helping make Portland better.

After 24 years, Boone was sworn in as chief in August, becoming the first African American to lead Portland's fire bureau in its 136-year existence.

Now 50, she leads Oregon's largest fire and emergency services provider with around 750 employees — in a sector where the demands continue to expand far beyond dousing building fires.

In recent years, Portland firefighters have deployed to California to help battle wildfires, for example. And in Portland, around 80 percent of the calls firefighters respond to are medical related, Boone said. On Nov. 21, the city approved a pilot program that will dispatch a two-person team from the fire bureau to respond to some non-emergency calls in Southeast Portland involving people experiencing homelessness and or having an apparent mental health crisis.

“We're in the midst of a health care crisis and not everybody has a health care provider, but they can call 911,” Boone said. “We still have to be technically proficient when it comes to putting out fires, but we also have to carry an entire other system when it comes to medical services, and there's a huge need.”

She said she believes her experience over the last quarter century moving up the ranks and working in several different areas of the bureau has helped her understand the agency's strengths and how it can improve.

Boone said some of her goals as the bureau's leader are to improve the health and safety of her members, help make the agency more inclusive internally, increase recruiting in under-represented communities and maintain relationships with other partner agencies to help make the city safer.

“For me, being chief is an amazing honor, but also a reflection of a larger systemic problem that since the inception of Portland Fire this is the first time a person of color sits at the top,” Boone said. “I wouldn't be chief of this bureau if I didn't have the internal support from my colleagues. And I think that reflects the dedication, commitment and hard work I put in every year that they recognize who I am as a person.”

Boone was born in 1969 in Oakland to a teenage mother and adopted at six months old by a couple living in a nearby part of the Bay Area.

Boone said the couple were stationed there because Boone's adopted father was a member of the Marines. They later moved the family back to their hometown of Portland. Boone and her older brother grew up in Northeast Portland.

As a child, she gravitated toward sports, relishing in competition and physical activity. She practiced ice skating, gymnastics tumbling, soccer and basketball. She excelled most at track and field.

As a Lincoln High School student, Boone dreamed of one day competing in the Summer Olympics. She was a member of the high school track and field team, competing in the javelin, hurdle events, long jump and on the 4 x 400 relay team. She earned all-state and all-American honors in track and field.

Boone was recruited to Boise State as a javelin thrower and also competed in the heptathlon in college. Her competitive athletic career ended after she graduated with a bachelor's degree in secondary education.

“There was a self-realization that I couldn't compete at the highest level and then you go through a journey of trying to rebuild what your identity is,” Boone said. “For me, I didn't know, because sports was everything to me.”

She moved back to Portland and began student teaching at Marshall High School.

When Boone met the fire inspector, she said he suggested that she join the bureau's firefighter apprenticeship program. It was a new initiative targeting women and people of color to teach them over six months about the fire service and to provide basic emergency medical technician certification. It was meant to be a pathway to getting enrolled in the fire academy and hired by the Portland Fire Bureau.

With encouragement from the fire inspector and her parents, Boone applied and was one of 24 accepted into the first class.

Wearing 50 pounds of equipment and climbing a ladder up a six-story tower during training with no safety harness, she questioned for the first time whether she should continue pursuing firefighting.

"I remember thinking, 'I don't think I'm afraid of heights,' but I'd also never been 50, 60 feet in the air on the outside of a building before," Boone said. "But there was an internal voice that was resonating louder that kept me going because some day I knew there could be someone at the end of the ladder that needs my help."

Boone was one of 12 people to graduate from the apprenticeship program. Two years after her conversation about extinguishers, Boone was hired as a Portland firefighter. There were four women firefighters in the bureau at the time, she said.

She'd go on to gain leadership roles in the bureau's safety, operations, medical service and training divisions and be promoted to battalion chief in 2014, the bureau's first African-American chief officer.

Upon joining the bureau, Boone said she found the sense of teamwork she'd loved in sports. You develop a special bond with others when you're putting your life in their hands, she said, and that trust is earned both ways.

She credits communication and listening for helping her navigate the agency.

"We do things as a team, it's the core of who we are," Boone said. "I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for my peers."

Boone was a 2019 Exceptional Wonder Woman awardee this spring. The award recognizes female City of Portland employees who've excelled as role models and mentors. In a letter nominating Boone for the award, Battalion Chief Dan Buckner wrote that Boone drove to the scene of a house fire while off duty in August 2018 to check on a firefighter whose breathing apparatus failed while he was deep inside a building.

Boone happened to have been listening to the bureau's radio traffic at the time and knew her colleague was in distress.

Buckner said she also went back to the office after the fire and provided advice on how to document the malfunction. She then updated Buckner on the investigation of why the equipment failed.

"We don't always see this kind of commitment from our command staff and I can't tell you how much I appreciated her efforts," Buckner wrote. "It is clear that she takes her position and the associated responsibilities seriously. More importantly it was very clear to me that she cares deeply about our members and their safety."

Mike Myers, Portland's previous fire chief, said Boone was instrumental in helping get funding for new breathing apparatuses replaced this year. Being fire chief is a round-the-clock, high

pressure, high demand job “where things can shift at a moment’s notice,” he said. He described Boone as an experienced, well-rounded leader who has earned widespread respect throughout Portland’s fire agency.

“She’s a compassionate person, loves being in Portland and working on some of the harder projects that the fire bureau faces. And she’s a very passionate chief officer,” said Myers, who is now director of Portland’s Bureau of Emergency Management. “I’ve always been impressed with her. She’s the person you would want leading a bureau.”

During Boone’s swearing-in ceremony, Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty said Boone initially wasn’t interested in leading the entire bureau, believing she could be more of an asset to the agency elsewhere. Hardesty, who oversees the fire bureau, said Boone’s colleagues convinced the veteran firefighter otherwise and the next time she spoke to Boone, she was interested in how to apply for the position.

Hardesty told The Oregonian/OregonLive that she believes in Boone’s vision and experience to lead the bureau forward.

“I appreciate Chief Boone’s proactive, community health-driven vision for the fire bureau,” Hardesty said. “Nationally, the nature of firefighting is changing, and Chief Boone is taking Fire & Rescue into a future that reflects that change.”

On the third floor of Portland Fire & Rescue’s downtown administrative headquarters, 23 black and white framed portraits of the bureau’s fire chiefs line a wall. Boone walks by the photos daily on the way to her office. Her picture isn’t there.

A framed mirror occupies the 24th spot. “Next fire chief” the bottom of the frame reads.

Boone said she plans to have the historic photos moved to another part of the building and a mural to occupy the wall instead. She said the intended message of the art piece will be “we’re all in this together.”

“There’s a lot of history here and we will continue to respect and honor that,” Boone said referring to the photos of the chiefs. “We also want to reflect who we are today and who we want to be going forward.”

Boone said her bureau and others still have work to do to better reflect the communities they serve.

Fire bureau records show the agency recruited 686 people between 2000 and 2018, 89% of them men and 81% of them white. Half of the people recruited went on to be hired.

Boone noted that Portland’s fire department stopped being a volunteer service and became an official employer in 1883, before women were allowed to vote and before Oregon’s exclusion laws to prevent black people from settling in the state were repealed.

“It started based on discriminatory policies and practices and some of those legacy policies and practices show us that outcome today,” Boone said. “If we’re moving to a more inclusive, suitable fire service, then we need to undo that harm and better reflect what the bureau is today.”

Boone said she wants the Portland fire bureau to market more to children in all languages. When she was growing up in Portland in the 1970s and 80s, she didn’t see many firefighters who looked like her, so she never considered it as a possibility. She wonders how many others also overlook firefighting as a possible career for similar reasons.

“I will always champion the men and women of Portland Fire & Rescue because we didn’t build this system,” she said. “We’re trying to live within the system and change it to make it more just, fair and inclusive. My hope is that our actions today and going forward will set the next generation up for success.”

Homeless advocates sue Portland over permit limiting meals served in city parks

By Molly Harbarger

November 27, 2019

Advocates are trying to stop a new Portland policy that limits their ability to feed homeless people in parks.

The Oregon Justice Resource Center announced Wednesday that volunteers from Free Hot Soup and other organizations that provide free meals in city parks plan to ask a Multnomah County judge for an injunction against a new permit system.

Portland Parks and Recreation introduced a new “social service” permit that limits activities, such as distributing meals or providing shower trucks, mobile medical and dental care and other outreach, in parks to once a week. It also requires the person or group providing the service to pay a \$137 application fee and buy insurance, which is at least \$75 per event.

The permit is largely targeted at groups like Free Hot Soup, which is a loosely organized group of volunteers who serve a hot meal to about 100 mostly low-income and homeless people at Director Park in downtown Portland five nights a week.

Commissioner Nick Fish’s office instituted the policy when it took control of the bureau this year. Officials from Fish’s office and the parks department say that the permit is necessary to force groups to spread out meals at different parks and to minimize the effect on one park. They claim that the groups create an administrative headache and require extra cleaning crews afterward.

However, members of Free Hot Soup and other organizations see it as a way to appease businesses and neighbors who don’t want the presence of poor people driving away foot traffic.

Director Park is surrounded by ritzy restaurants and boutique stores. The Southwest Portland park generated more than \$33,000 in event and permitting fees in fiscal year 2017 and more than \$42,000 in the first nine months of fiscal 2018.

Members of the volunteer groups say the park is centrally located for people who rely on free meals because they cannot afford food and rent -- or both. Volunteers say they have stepped in where city and county services have failed.

Members of these groups have threatened to continue to serve meals until they are fined or arrested. The lawsuit, which had not been filed as of Wednesday night, would potentially delay that standoff.

“There are too many people counting on us to provide this food for them -- people who have no other source of food -- for us to stand by while this service is threatened,” said Jo Foraker, one of the plaintiffs and a volunteer with Free Hot Soup and Help 4 Houseless, another organization that travels between campsites to provide food.

The permit went into effect Oct. 14, and parks officials say that a few larger organizations have already started the process to obtain permits.

Juan Chavez, Oregon Justice Resource Center's civil rights project director, said that the city is trying to block volunteers' free speech.

The lawsuit will likely argue that the permit system is unconstitutional on the grounds that providing meals is protected by the First Amendment.

"Our clients' rights to band together to help people in their community who are hungry are being infringed by this new policy," Chavez said in a statement. "The city cannot place these types of speech restrictions on Portlanders who limit their engagement to peaceful, socially useful activities such as feeding people. Compassionate assistance for the houseless may not translate into dollars and cents in revenue for the city like business activities do, but its high value to the community should be protected. As we enter the holiday season, a policy like the one being proposed fundamentally shocks conscience and is seemingly contrary to the professed values of the city. We demand more and expect better from our elected leaders."

A representative of Fish's office said that the city had not yet seen the lawsuit, so could not immediately comment.

The Portland Tribune

Tourism taxes could fund homeless services

By Jim Redden

December 01, 2019

Multnomah County Commission scheduled to consider change already approved by Portland and Metro on Thursday.

Using tourism-generated tax dollars to reduce homelessness will be considered by the Multnomah County Commission on Thursday, Dec. 5.

The proposal to dedicate a share of the hotel, motel and motor vehicle rental taxes to social services has already been approved by the Portland City Council and Metro Council. The dedicated funds will pay for service providers to help very low income residents with mental health and other issues stay in housing to be built by Portland and Metro affordable housing bonds.

If approved, the change will initially allocated \$2.5 million a year to livability and safety and supportive services for people experiencing homelessness, or at risk of experiencing homelessness. That number will grow with over time.

"This funding will pay for livability and supportive services, and related operations costs, supporting programs and projects funded by the proceeds of the City and Metro bonds approved by voters in 2016 and 2018, respectively, to create affordable homes for low-income individuals," reads an analysis of the measure to be considered by the county.

Uses of the taxes are determined by the city, county and Metro.

When the City Council approved the change last week, Mayor Ted Wheeler said, "I've made it clear that we must not only continue, but also intensify our efforts to address the homelessness crisis we're facing with a great sense of urgency. The allocation of new resources raised from

tourism in our region will help us do just that. This additional revenue stream will strengthen our ability to ensure that everyone has access to an affordable, safe place they deserve and can call home, and to the services they need to stay in their homes."

After the Metro Council approved the change, Metro President Lynn Peterson said, "We know the solution to our housing crisis is to build more housing. We also know that some people need wrap-around services to help them stay in housing and break the cycles of homelessness and housing insecurity."

Anticipating approval of the change, Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury said, "People living outside are getting older and struggling with disabilities and chronic health conditions. They don't have the luxury of waiting and neither should we. We know the federal government isn't going to swoop in and give us the funding we need. So we have to think creatively and identify new revenues across the region, just like this one."

The new agreement will also fund renovations to the Veterans Memorial Coliseum and Portland's Centers for the Arts.

"Tourists spent \$5.3 billion in greater Portland in 2018," said Scott Cruickshank, general manager of Metro's Visitor Venues. "Tourism is a huge part of our economy, and we need to make sure we continue to draw visitors from around the world to our great city."

You can find the county agenda item [here](#).

3-day notice: Headwaters Apartments tenants forced to leave

*By KOIN 6 News
November 29, 2019*

In a letter sent to residents, Headwaters Apartments explained, "The roof's condition combined with the potential for snow may create an unsafe situation."

While many spent Thanksgiving around the dinner table, others were forced to leave their partly city-owned Portland apartment complex.

On Sunday, Nov. 24, city officials told fourth-floor residents at the Headwaters Apartments on Southwest 30th Avenue they had to be out by Wednesday. Notices posted throughout the halls explained the roof on the four-story apartment building is deteriorating and in need of urgent repairs.

The city owns the workforce housing complex. It said residents won't be able to move back in for up to 11 months.

In a letter sent to residents, Headwaters Apartments explained, "The roof's condition combined with the potential for snow may create an unsafe situation."

Residents have noticed things throughout the building's fourth floor, like cracks in the foundation. They also shared photos with KOIN 6 News after they said contractors ripped through the ceiling during an evaluation.

Staff at Headwater Apartments offered to pay the hotel fees for the nearly two dozen displaced residents until they can find new places to live. The city is also offering to pay for moving costs.

The city did not immediately respond to our request for comment.

Willamette Week

Latest Notable to Show Interest in Wapato Jail for Housing Homeless People? HUD Secretary Ben Carson

*By Rachel Monahan
December 1, 2019*

Housing and Urban Development's regional administrator Jeff McMorris is scheduled to visit at 1:30 Monday.

One of President Donald Trump's cabinet members is reportedly showing interest in Portland real-estate investor Jordan Schnitzer's efforts to turn the never-used Wapato Jail into a facility to address homelessness.

That federal official? U.S. Secretary for Housing and Urban Development Ben Carson.

That's what Schnitzer says, anyway, in an email obtained by WW. The email was sent Nov. 26 by Schnitzer, who owns the North Portland jail and surrounding property.

HUD regional administrator Jeff McMorris is scheduled to visit Wapato at 1:30 Monday, Dec. 2, after Carson became interested, according to the Nov. 26 email.

"Secretary Carson is interested in seeing whether Wapato could be used as a pilot project for homeless," wrote Schnitzer in the email to Mayor Ted Wheeler, State Sen. Betsy Johnson (D-Scappoose) and others.

It's not clear from the email what exactly Carson's project is. But President Trump in September threatened to intervene in California to address the problem of homelessness, and Trump administration officials have floated the idea of razing homeless camps and moving people from the streets into updated government facilities.

Wapato Jail, which was built by Multnomah County during an expansion in the prison population, was never used for its intended purpose. Multnomah County sold the jail last year after deciding it was too costly and not an ideal location for a homeless shelter.

For years, and at least one election cycle, the jail has been the focus of an effort by downtown businesses, the Portland police union and others to identify a ready-made solution to homelessness.

Schnitzer, who has repeatedly postponed plans to demolish the jail while he seeks a workable plan to use it for addiction or other services, declined to comment Sunday.

Wheeler spokesman Timothy Becker says the mayor does not plan to attend the tour. "The Mayor's schedule has been filled out for some time and given the short notice, he does not have plans to attend," Becker texts. "Also, having toured the facility several times, he's already very familiar with it."

Email below:

Date: November 26th, 2019

To: Mayor Ted Wheeler, Senator Betsy Johnson, Kay Toran, Alan Evans, Jeff Geisler, Peter Northrup, Skip Langley

From: Jordan D. Schnitzer

Subject: HUD Tour at Wapato on Dec. 2nd @ 1:30

"Last week I received a call from a friend in Los Angeles who is close to secretary of HUD Ben Carson. He indicated that he had been sending Secretary Carson articles about Wapato. Secretary Carson is interested in seeing whether Wapato could be used as a pilot project for homeless and instructed his Chief of Staff to call my Los Angeles friend to see if they could contact us. We since have received a call from Jeff McMorris who is the political appointee of one of HUD's ten regions, the Seattle region. He would like to visit the facility with the head of HUD Portland on Monday, December 2nd at 1:30 p.m. He encouraged me to invite as many supporters of Wapato as possible. Please come and give your thoughts as to why Wapato is important for our community. Furthermore, please feel free to invite others who may be interesting in showing support for this initiative.

Very Truly Yours,

Jordan D. Schnitzer

Portland-Area Governments Inking Deal to Funnel Tourist Dollars to People on the Edge of Homelessness

*By Aaron Mesh
December 1, 2019*

But striking a deal between governments wasn't easy.

Local officials have finalized an innovative deal to direct Portland tourist dollars to assist people without stable housing.

The deal, championed by Multnomah County Chairwoman Deborah Kafoury, will take visitor dollars—collected through lodging taxes and rental-car taxes—and send some of them to providing housing and services to people on the verge of homelessness. That's a new use for money that had previously been dedicated to visitor facilities like the Oregon Convention Center and Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall.

"I've made it clear that we must not only continue, but also intensify our efforts to address the homelessness crisis we're facing with a great sense of urgency," said Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler in a Nov. 19 statement. "The allocation of new resources raised from tourism in our region will help us do just that."

But striking a deal wasn't easy.

When the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners votes next week to ink the deal, it will be nearly a year since WW first reported on the idea. Much of the delay—and the bickering that surrounded it—could be traced to disagreements about how much money should be allocated to housing in the event of an economic downturn (and how that would be decided). Three local governments had to sign off on the agreement, but struggled to reach terms.

The deal announced last week, first reported by the Portland Tribune, maintains funding for the Veterans Memorial Coliseum and Portland's concert venues. It dedicates \$2.5 million to "livability and safety and supportive services for people experiencing homelessness, or at risk of experiencing homelessness."

The agreement comes as Portland is enjoying record spending by tourists: more than \$5.3 billion last year. It also comes amidst whispers in political circles of a potential tax measure to fund social services that keep vulnerable people housed.

"We know the federal government isn't going to swoop in and give us the funding we need," said Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury in a statement. "So we have to think creatively and identify new revenues across the region, just like this one."

Volunteers Sue Portland City Hall Over Requiring Permits to Serve Free Hot Soup

*By Aaron Mesh
November 27, 2019*

Food service to homeless in downtown Director Park drew the ire of nearby businesses and led to the rule change.

A dozen volunteers who serve meals to homeless people in Portland parks have sued the city over a rule that would restrict such meal service to one day a week.

Most of the 12 people who filed the suit Wednesday evening in Multnomah County Circuit Court are volunteers with Free Hot Soup, the group whose food service in downtown Director Park drew the ire of nearby businesses and led to the rule change.

The suit asks a judge to block the rule change and allow the meal service to continue.

"There are too many people counting on us to provide this food for them, people who have no other source of food, for us to stand by while this service is threatened," said Jo Foraker, a volunteer with Free Hot Soup.

The lawsuit was filed Nov. 27 on the volunteers' behalf by the nonprofit Oregon Justice Resource Center. It argues that the city rules—requiring volunteer groups to get a permit from Portland Parks and Recreation and hold events no more than once a week—violate the volunteers' constitutional rights to free speech and due process.

"The City cannot place these types of speech restrictions on Portlanders who limit their engagement to peaceful, socially useful activities such as feeding people," says OJRC director Juan Chavez in a statement. "Compassionate assistance for the houseless may not translate into dollars and cents in revenue for the city like business activities do, but its high value to the community should be protected. As we enter the holiday season, a policy like the one being proposed fundamentally shocks conscience and is seemingly contrary to the professed values of the city."

The suit names the city of Portland, Portland Parks and Recreation director Adena Long, and City Commissioner Nick Fish, who oversees the parks bureau. Fish said he had not yet seen the lawsuit and so couldn't comment on it. A parks bureau spokesman also declined comment.

WW first reported on the permit requirement—and last week revealed the emails from downtown businesses like Elephants Deli and Pastini, who complained to city officials that Free Hot Soup was frightening away their customers by attracting homeless people to gather.

City-Owned Affordable Housing Complex Gives 22 Households Three Days to Move Out Because of Roof Failure

*By Rachel Monahan
November 28, 2019*

"The roof's condition combined with potential winter snowfall may create an unsafe situation."

Headwaters Apartments, a city-owned complex erected in 2007 in Southwest Portland, gave every resident of the top floor three days to get out after the roof showed signs of failing.

"The roof's condition combined with potential winter snowfall may create an unsafe situation," reads a Nov. 24 letter given to Headwaters residents at a meeting to inform them of the problem. "We are very sorry this is happening to you, and this has to happen to you so quickly." (The residents had to be out by Nov. 27.)

The 100-unit building in Multnomah Village cost \$14.7 million to provide high-quality, environmentally sustainable housing for tenants making no more than median income.

Renters from the 22 occupied top-floor units were offered help by building managers to find an Airbnb or hotel, in a letter from the complex. "Costs associated with moving will be covered by the owner of the property," the Nov. 24 letter states.

The letter estimates it will take nine to 11 months to fix the roof.

Portland Housing Bureau spokeswoman Martha Calhoon say they don't know yet what caused the roof problems.

"Structural engineers advised swift precautionary action," adds Calhoon, who says the city does not yet have an estimate of how much it will cost the city.

The Daily Journal of Commerce

Affordable housing units' arrival celebrated

*By Josh Kulla
November 27, 2019*

The largest affordable housing development to arrive in Multnomah County in the past half century is now open.

The Louisa Flowers is a 12-story, 240-unit mixed-use building operated by Home Forward in Lloyd, at 515 N.E. Holladay St. LEVER Architecture and LRS Architects designed the building to meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design gold standards. O'Neill/Walsh Community Builders, served as the project's general contractor.

The building has 88 studio apartments, 109 one-bedroom apartments and 43 two-bedroom apartments; all are affordable units. Ground-floor space is occupied by on-site property management and retail shops.

Louisa Flowers and her husband Allen were two of the leaders of Portland's small African-American community in the 1890s, according to Oregon Black Pioneers. After first operating a

farm in the Lents area, Louisa purchased land in lower Albina and built four homes there – not far from the new building named for her.

“The process we undertook to name this building is different than the way we’ve approached it in the past,” Home Forward Executive Director Michael Buonocore said. “We took our time recognizing that the contributions of people of color and women in this city are often disregarded in the naming of our buildings, streets and landmarks.”

Buonocore expressed gratitude to the Oregon Black Pioneers and YWCA for assisting the process.

“Their history, their contributions to this city will not be lost, and we will all understand ourselves a little better as Portlanders for knowing about the Flowers family,” Buonocore said.

Crews in late 2017 broke ground on the building that has provided the local market the most new affordable units since the 286-unit Hollywood East building opened in 1969.

The \$74 million project was funded through a mix of public and private sources. The single largest chunk was \$28.7 million via federal low-income housing tax credits. An additional \$18 million came from bond funding, and \$5.1 million more came from the city of Portland.

The Jim Smith Garden open-air courtyard, named in honor of Home Forward’s former board chairman, highlights the ground floor and connects the building’s lobby, commercial spaces and the building’s north and south sides, via covered walkways.

The Portland Observer

New Approach to Homeless

*By Beverly Corbell
November 26, 2019*

City approves first Street Response Team

The city of Portland is trying a new approach to helping the city’s homeless population by stressing compassion and crisis prevention with designated first responders instead of strictly law enforcement by police. The Portland City Council last week approved the plan advocated by City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty that outlines a pilot program called Portland Street Response.

A two-person team will form the first Street Response team and will respond to 911 calls in the Lents neighborhood of southeast Portland that don’t involve weapons or use of violence, and will be qualified as trained crisis workers rather than police officers. Examples of non-emergency calls could be about someone lying in the street, people making excess noise in city parks or suspected drug use.

The council approved \$500,000 in May for the pilot program, which is set to start next spring, also drawing support from Mayor Ted Wheeler.

“Historically, it’s been up to the police to shoulder most of the responsibility as first responders in crisis calls, but in many cases, police are not the right resources to respond,” Wheeler said.

Darren Golden of the Urban League of Portland told Oregon Public Broadcasting the new Street Response effort could help with the relationship between communities of color and the police.

“It’s no secret that the black communities in Portland have deep-seated, well-earned mistrust with the Portland police and that is magnified for our black houseless neighbors,” Golden said. “It’s time for Portland, being the progressive city that it is, to stop taking active steps to criminalize poverty and instead adopt a public health approach to begin repairing our community.”

Portland’s Newest Street

November 26, 2019

South Waterfront build-out a big investment

Officials from the Portland Bureau of Transportation, Prosper Portland, Oregon Health and Science University and Business Oregon, the state's economic development agency, joined local neighbors and community members to celebrate the opening of Southwest Bond Avenue.

One third of a mile in length, the street supports the continued build-out of South Waterfront and the OHSU Schnitzer Campus, including the recently completed Knight Cancer Research Building and drastically improves access to the medical offices, other new buildings and four future development sites between the Marquam Bridge and Tilikum Crossing.

“We are pleased to celebrate the opening of this important South Waterfront connection,” said Prosper Portland Commissioner Dr. Alisha Moreland-Capuia, during the Nov. 14 ribbon cutting ceremony. “Moving forward, we will continue to work with city bureau partners and the community to determine how best to deliver on the priorities of affordable housing, regional streets, the greenway, parks, and a strong employment base.”

“OHSU has grown over the last hundred years because our missions of research, health care, and education remain critically important to the health of Oregonians,” said OHSU President Dr. Danny Jacobs. “Like the research we do at the Knight Cancer Institute and our other centers of excellence, the more discoveries we make, the more we can do to help Oregonians and people everywhere live longer, healthier lives. This road provides critical access for those who come to OHSU to learn, make discoveries, and seek care.”

The newest OHSU building, the Knight Cancer Research Building, is a state-of-the-art facility focused on early detection and treatment of cancer. The \$11.6 million city investment in Bond Avenue served as the city’s contribution to the Knight Cancer Challenge, in which philanthropists Phil and Penny Knight promised a donation of \$500 million if the public sector could raise the same amount. Former Mayor Charlie Hales made this commitment to infrastructure in response to the challenge.

Once complete in its entirety, Bond Avenue will become a “couplet” with Southwest Moody Avenue handling southbound car and bike traffic. In the interim period, phase one will create a shortcut between the Tilikum Crossing and downtown Portland for pedestrians and people biking or scooting. It will also extend the Willamette Greenway path, allowing people to walk, ride, jog, or roll from the Tilikum Crossing to the Broadway Bridge—a distance of 2.2 miles—completely separated from car traffic.

Bryan Guiney, Business Oregon’s regional economic development officer for the Portland Metro Area, said the infrastructure development by PBOT, Prosper Portland and OHSU, in addition to the commitment by OHSU to create 225 new jobs and retain 315 existing jobs while growing the

advanced manufacturing and biomedical industry cluster, are all key to growing and diversifying the state's economy.

OPB

Oregon Traffic Stop Data Shows Disparity At Portland, Hillsboro Police

*By Conrad Wilson
December 1, 2019*

Among most of the largest law enforcement agencies in Oregon, there was little evidence of racial or ethnic disparity for drivers who faced traffic stops by police, according to a first-of-its-kind state report.

However, the report did find disparities for how two police departments — the Portland Police Bureau and the Hillsboro Police Department — treated black and Hispanic drivers after a traffic stop occurred.

“The takeaway is somewhat of a mixed bag,” said Ken Sanchagrin, deputy director for the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission, which authored the report. “It is good news for many of our law enforcement agencies that a lot of the work that they’re doing is not, from our data prospective, disparate in its application.”

The Criminal Justice Commission analyzed more than 396,000 stops across 12 police departments and sheriff’s offices between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019. The agencies included most of the Portland metro area’s law enforcement, as well as Oregon State Police, the Salem Police Department, the Marion County Sheriff’s Office and the Medford Police Department.

“What we’re able to look at is for systematic, agency-wide disparities,” Sanchagrin told OPB. “We’re not able to test for individual instances of discrimination. We’re not able to look at individual cases. So, we can’t really discount an individual’s personal experience with discrimination in the past.”

While the commission didn’t find there were disparities behind initial stops, it did find issues in Portland and Hillsboro after a traffic stop occurred.

The Portland Police Bureau searched black drivers at twice the predicted rate, according to the report. After a traffic stop, 11% of black drivers faced a search, but the report predicted the rate should be 4.8%.

Predicted rates are based on comparing similar drivers’ characteristics, such as gender, age, reason for the stop and time of day. The only variable is race or ethnicity.

PPB declined an interview request. Instead it referenced stop data it published Nov. 25, acknowledging the search disparity for black drivers.

“It is important for us to continue to dig deeper into the context of the data and identify opportunities to improve the service we provide,” PPB Chief Danielle Outlaw said in the Nov. 25 release.”

The Hillsboro Police Department cited Hispanic drivers notably higher than the report’s predicted rate. According to the report, Hillsboro Police cited 27.6% of Hispanic drivers after a traffic stop. The report’s predicted rate for those drivers was closer to 20.2%.

“We’ve just received this report, and we are digesting and analyzing its contents,” said Hillsboro Police Sgt. Eric Bunday. “We’re grateful for objective data and feedback, and we’ll be looking at this in the coming days and deciding what changes, if any, are needed to best serve our community.”

This report is the first of several planned by the Criminal Justice Commission. By 2021, the CJC’s report will include stop data from every law enforcement agency in the state and will be published annually.

Nonprofit Central City Concern Wants Out Of Portland Sobering Center

*By Kristian Foden-Vencil
November 29, 2019*

A Portland center where intoxicated people can safely sober up for a few hours is facing significant changes — and maybe even closure.

For years, Central City Concern has had a contract to run the sobering center at 444 NE Couch St. on behalf of the Portland Police Bureau. There’s a room where people can clean up, sleep or get some food. There’s also a van that picks people up if they’ve had too much alcohol or drugs.

But Amanda Risser, the senior medical director with Central City Concern, said they’re helping fewer drunk people in recent years and more people who are violently acting out on drugs like methamphetamine.

“Methamphetamine use contributes to a lot of behavioral crises that can be very dramatic and very severe,” Risser said. “And that really threatens the health and well being of the patient that’s experiencing it. And that can also lead to unsafety and risk in the setting.”

She said people on drugs like meth need medications and monitoring to sleep things off, and the sober center doesn’t offer such care.

Risser said they’re talking to nonprofits and community leaders about handing over control of the sobering center when their contract ends in June.

It wasn’t long after the sobering center opened in 1977 that CCC was helping 20,000 people a year. Last year, the sobering center helped just 3,700 people.

Risser said what Portland needs are crisis stabilization centers where people can get treatment, not just somewhere to sleep things off for a few hours.

“We don’t have enough crisis stabilization services here in town. We’re interested in talking to various community members about how sobering should look in the future. We’re just not interested in operating our center as is,” Resser said.

The sober center contract amounts to between \$1 million and \$2 million, depending on how many people receive assistance.

In a statement, the Portland Police Bureau said it’s published a request for proposals, which closes soon, and it’ll see what options are available.

“There is a public safety need to have a location to take individuals who are intoxicated and unable to care for themselves,” the bureau said in a statement. “We will continue to explore options and work with community partners to fill this critical need.”