

## **Willamette Week**

### **Ted Wheeler Nets a Check From a Portland Timbers Executive**

*By Nigel Jaquiss  
December 18, 2019*

**It's the contribution of the week.**

Contribution of the Week

**HOW MUCH?** \$2,000

**WHO GAVE IT?** Mike Golub, president of business for the Portland Timbers and Thorns

**WHO GOT IT?** Mayor Ted Wheeler

**WHY IS IT INTERESTING?** Wheeler's re-election campaign has generated little buzz so far. His poll numbers are soft, reflecting a number of constituencies disappointed in the mayor's performance.

One unvarnished success: the expansion of soccer stadium Providence Park, approved in 2017 on Wheeler's watch. The Timbers and Thorns put up \$85 million and the city contributed about \$5 million. The addition of 4,000 new seats and other amenities is a big win for sports fans and the downtown economy, as both soccer teams continue to draw large, enthusiastic crowds. City officials also recently floated—and quickly dropped—a plan to ban homeless camping under the new grandstand, which extends out over Southwest 18th Avenue.

Golub is a regular contributor to local campaigns, but the \$2,000 he gave Wheeler is his largest contribution yet. He did not respond to a request for comment.

### **One of the Greatest Obstacles to Safer Portland Streets? Roadside Parking That Blocks Views of Oncoming Traffic**

*By Sophie Peel  
December 18, 2019*

Oregon state law actually forbids cars from parking within 20 feet of a crosswalk. But there's an exception.

Portland transportation advocate Izzy Armenta has a beef with the city. He doesn't understand why Portlanders park their cars right up to the edge of intersections where there are crosswalks.

For pedestrians crossing the street, "there's very limited visibility," says Armenta. "I have to peek out to make sure no one's coming."

Oregon state law actually forbids cars from parking within 20 feet of a crosswalk.

But Oregon law also gives individual cities "road authority," meaning they may choose how to enforce parking rules. And in a city where streetside parking is in short supply, the Portland Bureau of Transportation hasn't painted yellow lines at most intersections to forbid motorists from parking close to a corner.

Next month, Armenta and the pedestrian advocacy group he represents, Oregon Walks, will ask the Portland City Council to direct PBOT to comply with the state's 20-foot law. They say it's a necessary step to fulfill the city's commitment to eliminate traffic deaths, a policy called Vision Zero.

"It's odd they're doing this and they've committed to Vision Zero," says Armenta.

PBOT spokesman John Brady says his bureau is working to create more "daylighted corners," where cars are kept away from intersections that don't have a stop sign or traffic light. As of last year, crosswalks at new road projects are daylighted, as long as they're on the city's list of pedestrian-priority streets. And the city will retrofit streets if Portlanders complain and PBOT deems an intersection dangerous enough to daylight.

But paint yellow stripes along most of the city's thousands of intersections? Nope.

"It was Portland's choice to define the rules in this way," says Brady, who shifts the blame to city leaders' predecessors. "That was a decision of earlier policymakers, and we don't know what their rationale was."

Others think the benefits of daylighted corners are clear.

"Portland basically lacks the political will to take the heat that would come if they went through and said, 'You can't park here anymore,'" says injury lawyer Scott Kocher, an advocate for safer streets. "It boggles my mind that Portland would disregard that, and even if they thought they found some loophole, why on earth would they?"

Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, who oversees PBOT, says "both data and common sense tell us that daylighted corners are safer for everyone." But she also says she's pleased with the bureau's current approach.

The fight over daylighted corners is poised to become the latest way safety advocates can pressure City Hall to take more dramatic action to reduce traffic deaths, which have spiked this year ("Blindsided," WW, Aug. 21, 2019). But in this case, advocates risk provoking a powerful adversary: Portland motorists tired of driving in circles to find street parking.

Along thoroughfares like Northwest 23rd Avenue and Southeast Division Street, where residential streets bleed into commercial districts, car parking is already limited. Daylighting every troublesome corner in Portland would vastly decrease parking capacity, raising the ire of drivers and business owners who fear less parking would mean less business.

PBOT finds itself in a difficult position, satisfying neither of two influential groups: safety advocates who think daylighted corners could save lives, and motorists who struggle to find parking in an increasingly congested city.

Brady says it's "too speculative" to say whether daylighted corners prevent traffic injuries: "I don't think you can make a general statement about whether it helps or hurts an intersection."

But Brady does concede that national studies suggest daylighting reduces crashes.

Critics say it's obvious. "Corners are very important for both the pedestrian and driver," says Jonathan Maus, who runs the website BikePortland. "When you're in a car and trying to creep out and you can't see around another parked car, you pretty much have to enter the cross street in order to see. That puts you and puts others at risk."

In 2018, after advocates complained loudly to the city that some Portland crosswalks were dangerous, PBOT launched an online request process in which residents could report troublesome intersections.

Brady says 54 intersections have been daylighted this year, thanks to complaints and new construction.

But Kocher calls the complaint-driven process a "feeble half-measure." He says it caters to the city's wealthiest residents, adding that it's "ridiculous to make that incumbent on citizens."

Earlier this year, Oregon Walks launched a social media campaign to raise awareness of daylighted corners.

Armenta says his group received pushback to the campaign from business owners and some residents in congested areas like downtown and the inner eastside, fearing less parking would hinder business traffic. He disagrees.

"That's a misconception," Armenta points out, "because those roads could have increased bike parking if there weren't as many car spaces, and it would make it more walkable."

Kocher doesn't see the issue as polarizing. He thinks it's just common sense.

"This isn't a modal issue, this is essential for all people walking, biking, motorcycle, scootering," says Kocher. "But I don't think the city will change this practice until a court of law tells them to."

## **Landlords Wanted a Tenant Leader off a City Commission. So They Quit.**

*By Rachel Monahan  
December 17, 2019*

**Portland Tenant United co-chair Margot Black's advocacy for tenants at Milepost 5, an affordable arts community, became the latest flashpoint in the ongoing clash between tenants and landlords.**

### **What happened?**

Three members of a commission advising the Portland Housing Bureau on the city's landlord-tenant relations resigned this month.

The trio represents landlord interests on the Rental Services Commission, which advises the Housing Bureau on rental policy. They include Deborah Imse, executive director of Multifamily NW, the industry group for the largest landlords in the state, and Leah Sykes, a lawyer on the board of Multifamily NW.

It's the second round of resignations by landlord interests from the RSC. Last year, landlords resigned when Mayor Ted Wheeler sided with tenants in a debate over paying moving costs for evicted tenants.

### **Why are they quitting?**

In letters sent to the Housing Bureau, both Imse and Sykes complained about fellow commissioner Margot Black, who represents Portland Tenants United, a group that has organized tenant unions at eight buildings across the city, including at Milepost 5, an affordable arts community. (Sykes advises the landlord at Milepost 5.) Both letters asked the Housing Bureau, in veiled terms, to kick Black off the commission.

Black is Portland's most aggressive advocate for renters in a city where the balance of power is shifting between landlords and tenants ("The Most Dangerous Woman in Portland," WW, Dec. 7, 2016). Housing remains the most heated issue in Portland, and the effort to oust her makes clear Black still represents a danger to Portland landlords.

In their letters, both Imse and Sykes said they were treated rudely by Black, but cited few specifics. Imse noted "hostile mannerisms directed at me personally." Both said a Nov. 19 meeting was the final straw.

"I would request that the unprincipled treatment of Commissioner Leah Sykes at the Nov. 19, 2019, RSC meeting be formally reviewed," wrote Imse.

### **What's the underlying issue?**

Milepost 5. On Nov. 19, Sykes objected to Black reading aloud a letter from a tenant at Milepost 5.

"The email contained statements disparaging me personally," she wrote.

The email Black read alleged Sykes had advised the landlord at Milepost 5 on how to make it possible to evict a tenant organizer \$5 short on his rent.

Sykes says the confrontation was inappropriate and unrelated to any business the commission was considering. The real issue, she says, is the "harm to Portlanders when our leaders are prevented from considering more than one perspective when making determinations about complex issues."

Black says she views the resignation letters as an effort by landlords to preserve their power. "The RSC gives me and other formerly silenced tenants an opportunity to speak truth to power," she adds, "and that makes power very uncomfortable."

### **What's the larger significance?**

Landlords are pressuring Wheeler to force Black off the commission as the mayor runs for re-election in May 2020. Real estate interests will be key to Wheeler's donor base.

In his first campaign, Wheeler was an enthusiastic supporter of ending no-cause evictions for tenants. He and City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly voted for a rule forcing landlords to pay moving costs for tenants evicted without cause. (Eudaly is also up for re-election next year, and landlords will probably support her opponents.)

Wheeler's spokesman wouldn't say whether the mayor would stand by Black.

"The mayor's office is aware of the resignations," says mayoral spokesman Tim Becker. "It's a priority of our office to ensure the continued operational success of the commission, so we are working closely with Housing Bureau staff to identify and address issues."

# The Portland Mercury

## Hall Monitor: Blame Game

By Alex Zielinski

December 18, 2019

### **When will the Portland Police Bureau be held accountable for killing people with a mental illness?**

Twenty people with a mental illness have been killed by the Portland Police Bureau (PPB) in the past decade.

The first, Aaron Campbell, was depressed and contemplating thoughts of suicide when he was shot in the back by an officer outside his apartment complex. The latest, Koben Henriksen, was homeless with an untreated mental illness when he was gunned down by police near Mall 205.

It was this same decade that the US Department of Justice sued the City of Portland for having a police department that disproportionately used deadly force against people experiencing a mental health crisis. Since that 2012 lawsuit, Portland has been operating under the terms of a settlement agreement with the feds—one that, through new training and increased police discipline, is meant to prevent similar fatal encounters.

Yet none of the officers responsible for those 20 deaths have faced criminal charges for their actions.

And out of the dozens of officers involved in these fatal shootings, only one has faced any kind of discipline from PPB: Officer Ron Frashour was fired after shooting Campbell in 2010.

He was rehired by PPB five years later.

The lack of accountability among these officers, many of whom are still active and armed members of the PPB, is stunning. But the way their superiors have shrugged responsibility is almost worse.

In a press statement issued four days after Henriksen's December 8 death, PPB Chief Danielle Outlaw blamed the local mental health system for the police shooting.

“There are a number of accountability measures in effect for the officers involved, which will scrutinize their every action and decision,” said Outlaw. “Where is the same level of accountability throughout the mental health system? Law enforcement professionals are put in an impossible position, and we need the public to help prioritize effective and humane mental health treatment and demand urgent and immediate action.”

A day later, Mayor Ted Wheeler parroted his police chief's criticism.

“I feel quite strongly that the mental health system failed Mr. Henriksen,” Wheeler told reporters at a press conference.

Wheeler, who serves as the city's police commissioner, somberly pledged to work harder to connect “vulnerable” Portlanders to the local mental health system, which is run by Multnomah County. He made no mention of addressing the growing number of vulnerable Portlanders who have died at the hands of his police force.

This year, Portland saw the highest number of fatal shootings of people in a mental health crisis since 2010. The four victims—Henriksen, Lane Martin, David Downs, and Andre Gladen—were all in need of critical mental health treatment the day they were killed. In the years and months

leading up to their deaths, some of them had voluntarily sought help from Oregon's notoriously under-resourced behavioral health care system, while others had to be forcibly committed to mental health treatment.

The state and county mental health system has, at times, proven to have fatal gaps. But, as Sarah Radcliffe, an attorney with Disability Rights Oregon tells me, "Even with a robust mental health system in place, there are still going to be moments of crisis that require a police officer response.

"And it's absolutely unacceptable to respond with deadly force," says Radcliffe.

Multnomah County spokesperson Julie Sullivan-Springhetti shared this stance in an emailed response to the city's insinuations. "Ultimately, anyone experiencing a mental health crisis should not have to face a violent death at the hands of law enforcement," wrote Sullivan-Springhetti.

Our community isn't safe when our police force believes they can kill someone with a mental illness without consequences. Until Portland police officers are held accountable for killing those in crisis year after year, city leaders are in no position to point fingers.

In her statement, Outlaw called on the public to "demand urgent and immediate action." It's up to you, Portland, to decide who to demand it from.

## **Central Eastside's Shuttle Has Shut Down**

*By Alex Zielinski  
December 17, 2019*

A free shuttle meant to cut down on car emissions on the Central Eastside is no more, after proving to have low ridership and not be cost-effective.

The shuttle was the brainchild of the Central Eastside Industrial Council (CEIC), a nonprofit chaired by a group of business owners, neighborhood association presidents, and developers who, among other things, recommend projects that the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) should fund with parking fees collected in the Central Eastside. The Water Ave Courtesy Shuttle was one of those projects.

CEIC can only use the monthly parking permit funds to bankroll projects that will discourage vehicle use in the Central Eastside. That funding often goes toward installing new street signs, discounted transit passes for employees of neighborhood businesses, bike racks, new crosswalks, and sidewalk cleanups. Last year, CEIC's transportation committee, Transportation and Parking Advisory Committee (TPAC), put \$250,000 of its estimated \$1,744,000 budget into buying a small bus to operate as a weekday free shuttle on Water Ave. The shuttle began running in July 2018.

Yet the investment didn't pay off. According to TPAC's records, the shuttle saw just over 1,500 riders in its year-long pilot program. In comparison, TriMet's route 6 bus line—which runs parallel to the Water Ave shuttle about four blocks east—saw an estimated 310,000 weekday riders in 2018. In July 2019, TPAC estimated that, due to the shuttle's low ridership, the program was costing approximately \$144 per rider.

The program ceased operation on November 1.

"The service was basically underutilized," said Brad Malsin, president of the CEIC board, in an interview with the Mercury. "I still think a shuttle is an important idea. It just may have been a little early."

In notes from TPAC's July meeting, members contemplate the value of keeping the shuttle running, questioning whether pulling the plug will damage their organization's reputation.

And, members noted: "There is also a feeling at [PBOT] that the shuttle is ineffective."

In December 2018, Portland City Council passed new, stricter rules for what groups like CEIC could use parking permit fees on. "Permit Surcharge Revenue shall be used to encourage mode shift away from single occupancy vehicles," the new policy read. It included a detailed list of programs that would fit this definition.

CEIC's shuttle might not have met the city's review standards. Half of the stops on the Water Ave. shuttle route were nearby public parking lots, suggesting that people using the program had already driven to the Central Eastside. None of the stops aligned with nearby public transportation routes.

CEIC has instead redirected its focus to funding "transportation wallets"—or plans that include discounted passes for TriMet and the Portland Streetcar, and discounted membership to Biketown, car share programs, and e-scooter programs. These plans will be made available to anyone who lives or works in the Central Eastside. CEIC has more than doubled its investment in transportation wallets in its latest budget.

At the same time, Malsin says, CEIC's looking into funding a shuttle bus powered by electricity—and has already commissioned researchers to conduct a in-depth "parking study" of the area.

"The idea is: 'Let's try as hard as we can with transportation support and see if we can accomplish things we want that way,'" said Malsin. "We're experimenting a little bit."

## **After Outcry From Portland Leaders, State Delays Decision on I-5 Widening Plan**

*By Blair Stenvick  
December 17, 2019*

The Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) has delivered a small victory to Portland environmental advocates and politicians hoping to slow down a plan to widen Interstate 5 in the Rose Quarter.

At its Tuesday meeting, the OTC commissioners had a decision in front of them regarding the Rose Quarter Improvement Project, a \$500 million Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) plan to add two auxiliary lanes to a 1.7-mile stretch of I-5. (OTC is ODOT's governing body.) The question: Would the plan be allowed to move forward as-is, or would it first be subject to a more rigorous study of potential environmental impacts? ODOT has already conducted an environmental assessment for the project, but city leaders and environmental activists had requested the state conduct an environmental impact statement (EIS)—a more in-depth study that requires more community input than an assessment.

But rather than making a decision one way or the other, OTC decided to kick the question down the road to its January meeting. This decision comes after several public figures have expressed

concerns about the project in the past week, include Mayor Ted Wheeler and Governor Kate Brown. Robert Van Brocklin, OTC's chair, said Tuesday that the delay will allow ODOT time to make sure the project plan is "as close to right as we can get it, whether that takes a little more time or not."

"In light of all of the input we've received just in the last several days," Van Brocklin added, "and given particularly a letter we received from the governor yesterday, my own view on this is that we need time to absorb those comments."

The project has been the focus of intense scrutiny and opposition in Portland for much of 2019. During an open ODOT public comment period on the project this spring, activists organizing under the name No More Freeways mounted an opposition campaign and encouraged people to submit public comments urging for a full EIS. While ODOT has maintained that the project will improve safety and reduce carbon emissions by fixing the state's worst traffic bottleneck, several different transportation and environmental experts have cast doubt on that assessment. That includes Brian Davis, a Portland urban planner and transportation engineer who spoke at a rally outside ODOT's Portland building last week.

"At the end of the day, the [environmental assessment] was a half-assed effort that was quite obviously prepared to reach a pre-ordained conclusion," Davis said. "Our region has not taken a serious and sober look at this project. We are firing blind here. We have no idea what this freeway expansion will do to traffic volumes on the freeway, to the air quality near it, to the lungs of the schoolchildren alongside it."

Since April, a long list of local movers and shakers have joined the call for an EIS, including: Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, who oversees the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT); Portland Public Schools (PPS) board; Albina Vision Trust; Oregon Speaker of the House Tina Kotek; and Milwaukie state Rep. Karin Power.

Last week, a joint letter to ODOT and OTC from Wheeler, Metro Council President Lynn Peterson, and Multnomah County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson also called for a full EIS, putting the weight of the area's three different governmental jurisdictions behind them. A spokesperson for Wheeler told the Mercury that Wheeler signed the public letter because he felt ODOT hadn't taken his previously expressed concerns about the project into account.

"The OTC has yet to articulate how our input would be addressed or how our recommendations would be incorporated," the letter reads. "We continue to have concerns about the stewardship and outcomes of the Project."

On Monday, Brown entered the conversation by sending a letter to OTC members—in the middle of day one of their two-day meeting—asking them to delay their decision on whether to conduct an EIS for a few months. According to Van Brocklin, the letter stressed "the importance of working with our regional partners"—i.e., local government in Portland, which is largely against moving forward without an EIS. The letter also asked OTC to consider ways to make the project less environmentally harmful, such as highway tolling and freeway covers that would allow for new buildings and less disruption from traffic in the neighborhood.

The board decided to keep the item on their meeting agenda and hear from public commenters about the project.

About a dozen public commenters turned out for Tuesday's meeting, split equally between those in favor of and critical of the I-5 plan. Many commenters were part of Sunrise Movement PDX, a youth-led climate activist group that is staunchly against the project on the grounds that it will accelerate the effects of climate change. But commenters representing labor unions and

contractors said the project presented an opportunity for more well-paying jobs, and investment in the neighborhood.

Nate McCoy, director of the Oregon chapter of the National Association of Minority Contractors, said the plan would “ensure economic development” in the Rose Quarter, a “historic African American community.”

Robert Hamilton, a member of the Portland Coalition of Black Men, also voiced his support for the project moving forward without an EIS.

"This project represents a significant investment in the Rose Quarter area," Hamilton said. "The much-needed infrastructure improvements will ease some of the vehicular congestion. Equally as important, the project will provide jobs and will be built in the historic Albina community that displaced African Americans."

After hearing public comment, OTC commissioners briefly deliberated before delaying a decision over an EIS until January—or possibly as late as March 31. They plan to make a list of things they want ODOT to accomplish in the next few months, including working more closely with Portland regional governments, PPS, and Albina Vision Trust to address their worries about the project.

Commissioner Alando Simpson said at the meeting that he thought ODOT was operating within a broader “broken system” that pits contractors of color against environmental advocates, and that “ODOT has become that punching bag for society.”

“I believe [ODOT] can actually become a global leader,” Simpson added. “Right now, I think we’re at a place where we have to decide what’s most important to the whole ecosystem, as we have to share that all together.”

## **The Daily Journal of Commerce**

### **Broadway Corridor’s ‘Main Street’**

*By Chuck Slothower  
December 17, 2019*

One day, residents and visitors alike will be able to travel on an unbroken path from Portland’s Union Station through Old Town Chinatown and the Pearl District all the way to the West Hills.

What is this magical thruway? It’s Northwest Johnson Street.

As the design and planning process advances for the massive \$1 billion-plus Broadway Corridor redevelopment, Johnson Street has emerged as the “Main Street” for the whole 32-acre area.

“I think the connection of Johnson is going to be more significant than we can imagine,” said Nolan Lienhart, director of planning and urban design at ZGF Architects, the local firm that is heading up Broadway Corridor planning.

At present, the United States Postal Service’s sorting facility blocks Northwest Johnson Street at Ninth Avenue. Planners and city officials believe demolition of that facility will unlock the broader redevelopment, including Johnson Street.

“I think we’ll all be stunned, when that facility goes away, what a hub of energy it will be,” Lienhart said at a November luncheon hosted by CREW Portland. “It’s going to be a vibrant part of our city that doesn’t exist today.”

Planners envision development of a new commercial corridor on Johnson Street, which will divide the Broadway Corridor in half. To the north will be parcels set aside for commercial space totaling approximately 1 million square feet. That could go to one large company as an urban corporate campus, or it could be divided for smaller office users. The zoning is flexible, allowing for the market to help determine what goes there in years to come.

Buildings north of Johnson Street could be built up to 400 feet high. To the south will be mixed-income housing, retail and perhaps some office space, with a maximum height of 250 feet. The corridor would provide three contiguous blocks of ground-level activation.

“We really want buildings to front onto it,” Lienhart said in an interview. He noted every other east-west street in the Broadway Corridor either crosses over Interstate 405 or runs into it. Northwest Johnson Street will offer a continuous, at-grade route into neighboring areas.

At street level, planners envision Northwest Johnson Street as an 80-foot-wide right of way with two-way vehicle traffic and a two-way cycle track where bicyclists will be separated from cars by a landscaped buffer. The street will be a designated neighborhood greenway, and connect directly with the city’s planned Green Loop.

While cars will be allowed on Johnson Street, nearby Irving and Kearney streets will be the primary east-west vehicle carriers in the area.

The Portland Housing Bureau is eyeing affordable housing projects, and there will also be space for market-rate projects that would include rent-restricted inclusionary housing units.

Broadway Corridor planning also offers an opportunity to build a fitting end for the Park Blocks. As they stand now, the Park Blocks terminate south of the Postal Service site in a surface parking lot bounded by Northwest Hoyt Street, Park Avenue, Glisan Street and Broadway. The Park Blocks currently have an “unceremonious ending,” Lienhart said. The Pacific Northwest College of Art, which neighbors the property, has been involved in discussions about a future park there.

ZGF is engaged in a \$2.375 million contract with Prosper Portland for Broadway Corridor planning. Continuum Partners, the Denver-based company serving as development adviser, has helped shape plans behind the scenes. Continuum is negotiating a development agreement with Prosper Portland. The developer did not respond to a request for comment.

Demolition of the Postal Service facility is considered a crucial step. Prosper Portland last week issued a request for proposals for a demolition design team. In January, the agency plans to issue an RFP for a construction manager/general contractor to handle the demolition.

The demolition is tentatively slated to begin in early 2021. It’s expected to take 12 to 18 months, so construction on Johnson Street wouldn’t begin until 2022 at the earliest.

“It’s a complex demolition,” Prosper Portland project manager Sarah Harpole said.

A retail shop for the U.S. Postal Service will be moved to an adjacent parking structure, as part of the city’s \$88 million deal to buy the site from the federal government.

Prosper Portland is also working with various groups on a community benefits agreement, Harpole said. The agency hopes to encourage small, local retailers to take space in the Broadway Corridor area.

“I think of it as an affordable main street,” Harpole said.