

The Portland Tribune

Graffiti removed from war memorial after Portland protest

By Zane Sparling

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Clean-up costs estimated at \$4,000 for Soldiers Monument, a sculpture in Lownsdale Square in central Portland.

A plinth slathered in paint during a political protest is nearly good as new — restored to not-quite pristine condition less than a day after it was vandalized.

Soldiers Monument, as the outdoor sculpture is usually called, has kept watch over downtown Portland's Lownsdale Square since 1906. A century or so later, it went viral.

A video with more than half a million views on Twitter shows several people spraypainting anti-police slogans across the obelisk during the tail end of an anti-KKK demonstration on Saturday, Feb. 10.

At 6 a.m. on Sunday, contractor crews using hot pressure water scrubbed the statue, leaving faint outlines of what was once there. The graffiti had been cloaked by a tarp overnight.

"We have a process for dealing with these type of incidents. They're not uncommon," said Heather Nelson Kent, a spokeswoman for the Regional Arts & Culture Council, which is tasked with taking care of the city's publicly-owned art.

"This is a granite monument, which is one of the hardest stones, so it typically doesn't absorb paint," she added. "We don't expect any lasting damage."

Designed by famed California artist Douglas Tilden, the statue formally known as "Spanish–American War Soldier's Monument" honors the overseas deployment of the 2nd Oregon Volunteer Infantry Regiment at the turn of the century. A nearby fountain honors those killed during the Philippine–American War.

The cost of the restoration work was estimated at \$4,000, not including city or RACC staff time.

"It's owned by the public," said Kent. "We wish people would take care of it."

RACC says it will continue to restore the artwork as needed.

The vandalism happened during a protest that drew hundreds of anti-fascists known as Antifa to downtown Portland in order to protest a planned rally by the Klu Klux Klan that had been called off at the last minute.

Portland police officers on bikes interceded moments after the conclusion of the 10-second viral video, chasing down and then arresting a 25-year-old, whose address on court docs leads to a center for homeless youth.

Police are offering a cash reward for info on another masked vandal who escaped into the crowd.

The Portland Mercury

City Elections Data Reiterates Portland's Political Inequities

By Blair Stenvick

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New data featured on Portland's Honest and Accountable Elections webpage isn't very surprising—but it does help make the case for why Portland's form of government needs a re-vamp.

The website's new data tool, launched Monday, uses campaign finance data from candidates participating in the new elections program—which matches small donations in an attempt to level the playing field for Portland City Council candidates—to map out where in the city candidates' contributions are coming from.

You can use the tools to narrow the map by political race and candidate, though the data isn't exhaustive. So far, it's limited to candidates participating in the Open and Honest Elections program, meaning some candidates, like Mayor Ted Wheeler, aren't included. Candidates in the special election to replace the late Commissioner Nick Fish also aren't included as of now, because the city is still tinkering with the financing rules for that race.

Still, the data available does offer some insight into where and how Portlanders are—or aren't—making political contributions. Sarah Iannarone, Wheeler's opponent who is running on a progressive "Mayor of the People" campaign, has by far the most numerous contributions at 1,633. Meanwhile, Carmen Rubio, the favorite in the race to replace retiring Commissioner Amanda Fritz, has raised the highest total dollar amount: \$83,317. Iannarone and Sam Adams, the former Portland mayor who is running against sitting Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, tie for the highest single contribution of \$5,000.

The site also uses a city map to show where donations are coming from. This map shows donations for all candidates and races by dollar amount:

A quick glance at each of these maps confirms what you probably could have guessed: Most donations come from closer within the city center, where Portland's more affluent neighborhoods are located. Those donations decline in both frequency and amount the further away from the center you get—particularly in East Portland, historically the most economically disadvantaged and politically under-represented part of the city.

The data doesn't reflect people's motivations for contributing or not contributing, so we can't know if East Portlanders contributed less because they lacked the means or desire to do so, or because they are being targeted less in donation requests. But these maps do prompt the question: How different would they look if Portland changed to a more geographically representational form of government?

Last February, Mercury news editor Alex Zielinski wrote about a new report from the City Club of Portland, a civic-minded nonprofit, about how Portland's commission form of government—in which the entire city votes on five Portland City Council seats, rather than electing councilors who represent different districts in the city—is responsible for "keep[ing] Portland's biased policymaking in place." More from Alex:

Convincing an entire city to elect any one candidate requires money, time, and powerful friends—which is why the vast majority of those elected to Portland City Council are well-connected white men who live in the city's richest communities. (In city council's 105-year

history, only three people of color and nine women have been elected.) That's left many Portlanders feeling ignored by commissioners who can't understand what it feels like to be evicted, or threatened with a racist slur, or denied an opportunity based on your gender identity, or forced to live in a neighborhood without paved roads, sidewalks, or reliable public transportation.

Meanwhile, Portland continues to work really well for the people who look the same as the folks on city council.

In other words: It may more difficult for people in lower-income neighborhoods to run for office—or feel politically engaged enough to make a donation of any amount—when they know they'll have to compete against well-funded candidates from wealthier neighborhoods.

The City Club is now exploring a campaign for a ballot measure that would overhaul the city's form of government, and bring it closer to what the vast majority of major American cities have. It has hired local nonprofit Coalition of Communities of Color to lead that effort.

If those groups decide to go forward with a ballot measure, it will likely appear on the November 2020 ballot.

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