

July 6, 2020

Mayor Ted Wheeler
Commissioner Fritz
Commissioner Hardesty
Commissioner Eudaly

Mayor Ted Wheeler and Members of the City Council,

As leaders of the advisory councils to the Office of Portland Police Chief, representing very diverse communities that include indigenous people, people of color, refugees and immigrants, we have been following very closely the events of the last five weeks. We do believe that it is a vital right for anyone to express their opinion in an open forum, and therefore we show our strong support for and solidarity with thousands of Portlanders who are peacefully demonstrating and calling for justice reform. We wholeheartedly believe in and support the freedom of speech, engagement, and advocacy of the civil rights movement and peaceful marches and protests against systemic racism and injustices.

However, we are extremely concerned about the ongoing violent protests and riots. We condemn the actions of those people who are engaging in criminal activity and inciting others to commit acts of violence, thus undercutting the very just cause of the peaceful protests. These unlawful actions impact the safety and livability of our communities. The downtown of our beautiful city has been defaced; it is incredibly sad to see the buildings boarded up because either the windows were broken, or they were looted, or in fear of being looted; our families are afraid to go to some parts of the city.

We've witnessed many peaceful protests and marches, with thousands of community members participating, that did not resort to ANY violence and were successful in self-policing and preventing any damage and violence. We encourage our community members to engage in peaceful protests and advocate for change and police accountability!

We are committed to ensuring police accountability and are ready to engage in the process of police reform and transformation that would encompass training enhancements, policy reviews, and increased community engagement and oversight. We are willing to facilitate a dialogue with communities we represent about how to reform the criminal justice system and how make our city a nice and safe place to live in. However, this process of change has been stalled because of violent actions of specific groups that are not associated with the local African American justice movements and are not supported by the rest of our peaceful communities. We understand that the Portland Police Bureau and its officers are unable to return to normal operations and serve their communities, assist victims of crime and, most importantly, start engaging with our advisory councils and other community stakeholders on real police reform. We are aware that police officers are working around the clock, with limited support and resources, which all creates additional barriers to enacting change and addressing systemic issues related to racism and inequities.

We all must make every effort to stop violent protests and create an environment conducive of a constructive discussion, with participation of all interested parties, about the criminal justice system reform, eradication of institutional racism, and implementing policing practices through community partnerships. We all must do everything to stop this violence before the damage to the city and its residents, both physical and emotional, becomes irreparable.

We urge the City leadership to take actions to stop those people who are committing criminal acts, such as vandalism, arson, looting, assaults of both community members and police officers, and destruction of private and public property.

YES to peaceful protests! NO to violent actions! We are the City of Roses, not the City of violence!

Respectfully,

On behalf of the PPB Slavic Advisory Council:

Andrey Shulik, Tatyana Bondarchuk, Bill Richard, Semyon Gurvich, Karina Rutova, Lana Dingman, Ihor Ambroziak, and Olga Parker

On behalf of the PPB Latino Advisory Council:

Marta Guembes Herrera, Rev. Linda Jaramillo, Rafael Arellano Barrera, Romeo Sosa, Dr. Fernando Carrillo, Edith Harris Hernandez, Celicila Gutierrez, Cyntia Carmina Gomez, Marvin Peña, Maria Guadalupe Pizano, and Maria Makowski