

Richard Dickinson
13737 SE Ellis Street Portland, OR 97236

Dear Mayor Wheeler and Commissioners Hardesty, Mapps, Rubio, and Ryan,

As a concerned citizen of East Portland, and someone who is highly active in my neighborhood and community, I'm writing to express my support of expending the revenue discovered during the fall Budget Monitoring Process wisely. **The social fabric of our community has been torn apart during the last couple of years by a raging pandemic, surge in homicides and other violence, dramatic increase in homelessness and mental health issues, overwhelming amounts of trash and graffiti, and polarization of ideas combined with lack of civil dialogue.** To these ends I want to further encourage exploration and support for Commissioner Mapps' proposal for these funds:

Adding 300 well-selected police officers over the next three years, and supporting them with training in cultural competence, mental health, and de-escalation techniques.

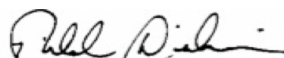
While I agree that we need a dramatic change in the way we enforce our laws and more awareness of the way police have been used through history to support dominant culture, simply defunding the police has serious unintended consequences. We appreciated Chief Charles Lovell's thoughtful engagement with the Powellhurst-Gilbert community during our Neighborhood Association town hall last year, and appreciate that there are no simple and easy solutions. Violence has disproportionately affected our ethnically and culturally diverse neighborhood, and so has the increase in 911 and police response times. Low level crimes often snowball into serious incidents when not addressed. Supporting a life where people feel like they belong and everyone has something to lose is a start. Restoring Behavioral Health Units, Public Safety Support Specialists, launching a Focused Intervention Team, and expanding the Portland Street Response will start us on our way to reducing homicides as well as less violent crimes as we move through 2022.

We need to reduce the number of people sleeping in unsanitary conditions through both the expansion of sanctioned camps and availability of transitional housing. It is important to protect the rights of people experiencing homelessness, but we also need to expand resources for those housed nearby that are impacted actions of the houseless. While only part of the puzzle, we also need to support some of our vulnerable low-income citizens through utility assistance, or we will find that they, too, will end up on the street.

The intense amount of garbage and graffiti that has subsumed the city is not just a symptom of larger problems, but itself is creating a culture of resignation and despair. We are simply letting our lives get trashed. While I believe that we should all contribute to our community, to ask volunteers to do the heavy lifting in what has become too permissive an environment is simply unfair. Please make substantial investments in the way our city looks, which in turn will have a positive impact on all of our well-being.

Thanks for acting now to set us on course for a better future!

Sincerely,



Richard Dickinson
East Portland community member and activist
Powellhurst-Gilbert Neighborhood Association Board Member