

From: [Amelia Bellows](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Police budget
Date: Monday, May 18, 2020 7:22:08 AM

Hello,

I am emailing to voice my opposition to the \$245 million police budget, to be voted on this Wednesday.

Portland police have a long history of racial profiling and violence, and such a large budget would only increase the scope of these issues. Our tax dollars can be better spent.

Thank you,
Amelia Bellows

From: [Andrew Riley](#)
To: [Wheeler, Mayor](#); [Commissioner Fritz](#); [Commissioner Eudaly](#); [Commissioner Hardesty](#)
Cc: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Testimony on Portland Police Bureau Budget
Date: Tuesday, May 19, 2020 3:51:01 PM
Attachments: [Police Reform Network Letter to City Council on Police Budget.docx](#)

Dear Mayor Wheeler and members of Portland City Council,

In advance of tomorrow's hearing on the City's budget, I am submitting the attached letter of testimony on behalf of Unite Oregon, Pacific Northwest Family Circle, Portland-Metro People's Coalition, Portland DSA, Portland's Resistance, and Safe Routes to Schools National Partnership - Pacific NW Chapter, outlining what we believe the City's priorities should be with respect to the Portland Police Bureau budget.

I hope you, your staff, and your respective families & communities are safe, healthy, and well.

Cheers,
Andrew

--

Andrew Riley
Communications and Policy Associate



Office address: [1390 SE 122nd Ave., Portland, OR 97233](#)

Email: andrew@uniteoregon.org

Pronouns: they/them

Languages: English, Spanish

Want to support our work? [Become a member](#) of Unite Oregon today!

Please note: In accordance with our organizational policy, all of our staff have begun working remotely in light of the spread of coronavirus. As a partner organization, we hope that as one-on-one or small group meeting needs arise, that you will please accommodate our policy by making alternative call-in or video-conference options available.

Dear Portland City Council,

How we spend our public funds expresses our values as a city. Portland spends over 50% of its general funds on "public safety" of which the majority is for policing. The City of Portland is facing serious general fund shortfalls, both now and in the foreseeable future. In responding to this crisis, the Council should consider whether or not we, as a city, wish to continue overspending on police, while starving other crucial city services.

After our respective experiences participating in previous Police Budget processes, some of us serving on the PPB Budget Advisory Committee, reading auditor's reports, studying the PPA contract, and taking many other steps to understand PPB operations, we the undersigned make the following recommendations:

1. Slash \$15 million per year from PPB funding that is spent for unnecessary overtime.

As detailed in the recent City Auditor's report, PPB officers are using between \$13 and \$15 million in overtime per year. The North Precinct, for example, had overtime usage on over 40 percent of its afternoon shifts in the most recent year studied by the Auditor.

In addition to lax management of overtime, the Bureau has reduced staffing by allowing officers to work as private security for private corporations (such as the downtown Apple Store) and event venues. There is no policy in place that limits the amount of non-PPB work officers may engage in, boosting their own salaries, while depriving precincts of personpower which in turn leads to the necessity of staffing shifts through overtime.

A comparison that demonstrates the City's skewed priorities: the City of Portland's Housing Bureau is only receiving \$33 million in total Portland general funds this year, down from \$40.5 million. Prioritizing policing over housing is outrageous at any time, but especially now in this crisis.

In 2017, as reported by *The Oregonian*, 52% of arrests by Portland police were of houseless people for low-level offences. The City recently created an alternative to policing houseless people: Portland Street Response. That program has been proven in other cities to be both less expensive and more effective than policing. It should be expanded with savings from cuts to the PPB budget.

The PPB request for additional funds to pay overtime for policing protests should be denied. The use of riot gear, flash bang grenades and chemical agents against the public is unjustified and costly in terms of civil suits and high insurance costs.

2. Slash funding for special units (now listed as Programs on page 80 in the Mayor's proposed FY 21 budget) that have been shown to be ineffective in the long term, target low-income and people of color communities for over-policing, and are part of the school to prison pipeline.

These programs contribute to the negative perception that residents have of Portland police—a recent survey conducted by the Police Bureau showed that over 71% of Portland residents have little trust of the police, with even higher levels of distrust among people of color.

Here are programs that the city would be wise to cut.

- Gang/"Gun Violence Reduction Team" (\$6 million)
- School Resource Officers/armed officers in schools (\$4 million)
- Transit police (\$4 million)
- SWAT/SERT/"Tactical Emergency Response" (\$7 million)

Gun Violence Reduction Team: This re-named Gang Enforcement Team continues to target communities of color for over-policing. Portland should invest instead in programs like New York City's Cure Violence which deploys outreach workers and violence interrupters who come from the communities they work in to mitigate conflict on the street before it turns violent.

School Resource Officers : According to the City Budget Office, in 2018 57% of arrests in and around schools were of Black youth who comprised 10% of the school population. Student organizers have made clear their opposition to armed police in their schools.

Transit police: TriMet can eliminate fare inspection (which as Bus Riders Unite points out essentially criminalizes poverty and targets youth) and fund alternatives to transit police, such as transit ambassadors trained in de-escalation techniques.

SWAT/SERT: If we are reading the budget correctly, the PPB is requesting funds to compensate for the addition of 7 FTE to this unit. There is no justification for the further militarization of policing in Portland. A militarized police force is not only unnecessary but also counter-posed to democratic values of equity and justice.

A time of budget crisis forces our city to think deeply and differently about public safety and about which programs will best serve our communities. The city cannot and must not continue to overspend on policing and instead use our public resources for programs that move us toward a safe and equitable Portland.

Signed,

Unite Oregon
Pacific Northwest Family Circle
Portland Metro People's Coalition
Portland DSA
Portland's Resistance
Safe Routes to Schools National Partnership - Pacific NW Chapter

From: [Camille Pass](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Written Testimony for May 20, 2020 Budget Meeting
Date: Tuesday, May 19, 2020 3:52:02 PM

Hello, my name is Camille Pass and I live in North Portland next to Jefferson Highschool. I work as an after school teacher for an Arts Education non-profit called Art 4 Life.

I feel compelled to give this written testimony in regards to the May 20th Portland City Budget Meeting because I believe that the amount of money that is proposed to be allocated to the Portland Police Bureau budget is far too high and deserves to go to other parts of our city that desperately need it. It has been proposed that 245 million dollars will go to the Portland Police Bureau, a bureau that is notorious for its dehumanizing practices against the houseless of this city and people of color. This money will be used to give our police better technology and resources to continue to discriminate and harass people of color and increase police presence in historically black communities like the neighborhood I live in and the historically black highschool, Jefferson, that I live next to. This money will continue to be used to fund police sweeps of houseless communities and encampments instead of providing dignified temporary and permanent housing or rent relief. This money if given to the Portland Police Bureau will not be used to improve our city's safety, but instead will fund a white supremecist system that continues to put those that are our community's most vulnerable at risk and in prison in the name of "safety". This is unacceptable and abhorrent.

It is inconceivable to me that our mayor, Ted Wheeler, would rather give money to the police than to life affirming and community enhancing services like our parks department, community centers, and public schools. The amount of money that we are giving and currently plan to give to the Police Bureau is 34% of the city's general budget. How can we be giving the police raises and new computers while the teachers in our public schools are electing to have their pay cut so that their schools can stay open? As an educator, I know first hand how important it is that we invest in our children. Investing in our children and investing in care for our communities, (affordable housing, health services, parks, community centers, rehabilitation centers) is investing in Portland's future. To live in a city that does not value these things makes me feel ashamed. I want to commend commissioner Hardesty for her work and also hold her to her word that she will continue to work to eliminate the most well known violent branches of the Portland Police; The Gun Violence Reduction Team, School Resource Officers Program, and Transit Police Division.

Giving more money to the Portland Police Bureau does not make our city safer, it shows that our city officials do not value their people or their quality of life. I would love for this statement not to be true. Please prove me wrong, and invest in our communities and in our children. Thank you for your time.

-Camille Pass

From: [Dawn Smallman](#)
To: [Wheeler, Mayor](#); [Commissioner Hardesty](#); [Commissioner Eudaly](#); [Commissioner Fritz](#)
Cc: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: comment on budget priorities - please fund City's venues
Date: Tuesday, May 19, 2020 6:53:20 PM

Dear Mayor and Commissioners,

Thank you for leading us through this challenging time. I would like to respectfully request you reconsider funding support for our City's arts performance venues, *which are really much more than buildings - they are people's jobs and workplaces*. Theaters, music venues and live performance spaces - support the jobs of sound, lighting and projection technicians, box office managers and staff, arts programmers, arts education program staff, janitors, marketing managers, costumers, graphic designers, filmmakers, dancers, musicians, actors and so on.... It takes an army of people to make most live/performance art - and the way to do it for a decent, living wage - is to be able to do it in a professional venue. Otherwise, you're just left to busking on the streets or working in bars for tips! Professional performance venues provide the seating and the environment to monetarily support the arts and all the people working to bring it to the public.

Portland is blessed with a number of independently-owned performance venues. Venues are giant economic engines and cultural hubs of our City. Some great examples: the Hollywood neighborhood is named after the Hollywood Theatre - it is the economic engine of most of the businesses in the neighborhood. Revolution Hall was born from a neighborhood organizing to save a historic school as a community asset and re-purpose it for the community's benefit. If we lose our independent venues, we lose so many jobs - we lose our culture - and the City will lose our artists and arts workers.

Please don't let that happen - please find some funding to help financially support our venues while they're closed during this difficult time!

Respectfully,
Dawn Smallman
1148 SE 50th Ave.
Portland, OR 97215

From: [joni.mueller](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: testimony portland budget meeting may 20
Date: Tuesday, May 19, 2020 9:24:09 PM

hello there, my name is joni. i'm currently living in north portland in the humboldt neighborhood by jefferson high school. when the world isn't shut in i work as an after-school art teacher for a nonprofit called art4life.

i'm sending this message to say that the budget proposal to allot 245 million dollars to the portland police bureau shows a pretty deep lack of respect for this city and its people. this money could be used to promote education, to provide community services, to house the houseless, to feed hungry citizens, to rehabilitate those in need, instead you are proposing to promote a power that is already unbalanced and will most likely continue to use its advantage against the people of this city. I specifically want to point at a history of racial injustice that is honestly irreparable.

don't do this, it's a bad way to run this city.

From: [Greg Snider](#)
Cc: [Wheeler, Mayor](#); [Commissioner Hardesty](#); [Commissioner Eudaly](#); [Commissioner Fritz](#); [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Re: comment on budget priorities - please fund City's venues
Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2020 9:47:52 AM

Good morning,

Please reconsider funding support for Portland's arts performance venues. The number of jobs and the economic effect on the neighborhoods that these institutions draw people to is enormous.

Artists are a vital cultural and economic driver of the city. They should be at the top of any list that values what makes Portland livable and essential.

Thank you for all you are doing,

Greg Snider
1148 SE 50th Ave.
Portland, OR 97215

On Tue, May 19, 2020 at 6:53 PM Dawn Smallman <dawnsmallman@gmail.com> wrote:
Dear Mayor and Commissioners,

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Please don't let that happen - please find some funding to help financially support our venues while they're closed during this difficult time!

Respectfully,
Dawn Smallman
1148 SE 50th Ave.
Portland, OR 97215

From: [Emory Mort](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#); [Wheeler, Mayor](#); [Commissioner Eudaly](#); [Commissioner Hardesty](#); [Commissioner Fritz](#)
Subject: FY21 Budget Testimony - Public Letter and Call to Action
Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2020 1:45:19 PM

To Commissioners Fritz, Eudaly and Hardesty, and Mayor Wheeler, and staff
May 20, 2020

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Hello council good afternoon my name is Emory Mort

As you consider police related amendments today, I urge you to read the document on police budget accountability sent to you included in my submitted testimony.

Link: <https://medium.com/@pdxresistance/budgeting-for-safety-d30748b4652e>
(see pasted below)

I'll now invite you to drift back to a few stories from the year..

Council, recall the Jeremy Christian trial. You likely recall a detail, as I do, from the night before the tragic day on the train. On this night, Christian was on a train harassing and attacking a black woman. She testified about the events, which included him throwing a full heavy bottle directly into her eye. The police were called and an officer arrived. The black victim told the court the officer treated HER as if she was the perpetrator, while Christian simply walked away uncited.

A small, typical moment, council. But ask yourself about the organization that produces such a tragic outcome, despite hundreds of millions of dollars per year in salary alone, and despite a near-decade under a DOJ consent decree.

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Now remember another story, the December police shooting of Koben Henriksen in East Portland. One can read the 900 pages of grand jury transcript, and hear from people like a mother sitting in line at Starbucks, with her 3 year old in a car seat behind her. She describes the same thing as everyone, a man walking slowly, unwell and out of it. She sees the officers arrive, pull their truck up close, one gets out, pulls out a large rifle, and unleashes three explosive shots within seconds.

A woman gets out of her car and starts running around hysterical, shouting they didn't need to do that, what could we have done!? In the transcript, the DA who ultimately acquits the officer verbally re-directs the witness away from this scene

In the transcript, a seemingly younger officer describes showing up and fulfilling his duty to go to the body shot by the specially-certified senior officer. He says Unfortunately the department uses these rifle shells designed to expand when they hit human bodies, and unfortunately this is so they do a lot of damage. He describes a body with two of these bullets ripping open the chest, and one that went right into the victim's mouth.

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The final story, council, is that of black Portland auto auction employee Michael Fesser. It's been breaking in the Oregonian for months now. I know some of you found it disturbing, as well you should. Despite deserved attention on West Linn PD, much of the action, including the cover-up by the chief, was done by highly trained former Portland GVRT and SERT officers known for decades of scandal.

A Lieutenant in West Linn - former Portland gang officer - organized the half dozen gang cops to apprehend Fesser and take his stuff, as retaliation for his totally obvious complaint of workplace racism. The Lt later retaliated again when Fesser refused to drop a lawsuit. He ordered his old colleagues to officially designate Fesser a dangerous person.. Meaning they should have guns ready in any interaction with him, endangering Fesser's life.

The Lieutenant participated in this whole scandal and quit West Linn PD soon after, hired the next day, Council, by Oregon's police training academy, where he is now on suspension from training every new officer in the state.

When Mr. Fesser held an event in N Portland I met a couple family members of a young man who was killed by West Linn's current chief, a former Portland cop who upon taking the West Linn job attempted to pull a keystone cops cover-up that ultimately failed thanks to Mr Fesser, his community, and attorneys.

—

Council, these senior officers running these special police programs in Oregon's largest police force don't need more money, so that they can train each other to finally get it right one of these days.

There are essentially 2 options:

1. Make fringe changes while committing to building the force in budget and numbers.
2. Or follow the letter sent to you signed by a multitude of varied community groups, and hold the police accountable in a real way: execute governing power over their budget and special elite units.

If not you, who else are Portlanders and Oregonians supposed to go to, to get real action on these problems?

Dear Portland City Council,

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proposed FY 21 budget) that have been shown to be ineffective in the long term, target low-income and people of color communities for over-policing, and are part of the school to prison pipeline.

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Signed,
Unite Oregon
Pacific Northwest Family Circle

Portland Metro People's Coalition
Portland DSA
Portland Forward
Portland's Resistance
Safe Routes to Schools National Partnership - Pacific NW Chapter
As the Spirit Moves Us
Right 2 Survive
Portland Jobs with Justice
SURJ PDX Black Lives Matter Action Group
350PDX
Alliance for Democracy, Portland
Nasty Women Get Shit Done
Portland Tenants United
Hygiene 4 All
Powdermilk Equipment and Supply Team
Oregon DA for the People

From: [marisol mora](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Fwd: Refusal to PPB Budget Increase & Budget Demands
Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2020 2:53:53 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: marisol mora <moramarisol86@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, May 20, 2020 at 1:50 PM
Subject: Refusal to PPB Budget Increase & Budget Demands
To: <Mayorwheeler@portlandoregon.gov>, <Amanda@portlandoregon.gov>, <Chloe@portlandoregon.gov>, <JoAnn@portlandoregon.gov>

My name is Marisol Mora. I live on the traditional lands of the Multnomah, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Molalla, and many other tribes, also known as Portland, Oregon. I just graduated from Portland State University and I am currently working as a Census Organizer with the We Count Oregon Campaign, through the WOC led organization Forward Together.

As a Latinx, Immigrant woman who is involved in supporting BIPOC communities in Portland, and as someone who has directly experienced the way my communities have had to advocate for themselves time and time again when their own state continues to fail them, here I am once more doing just that: advocating for our survival.

I support the elimination of the gun Violence reduction team, School resource officers, and transit police. I demand the money saved be allocated for life affirming resources, like the Housing Bureau, Parks and Recreation, and Portland Public Schools. Not policing. These police officers should not be reincorporated into the PPB.

If you are taking anything away from this global pandemic, let it be the ways this crisis has further highlighted the deep-rooted wounds in the systems that make up our state and who is left at the intersections of this violence, including the impacts communities must face when their state fails to allocate funds where they are needed. Crises stem from a lack of infrastructure to support the people and a lack of recognition of who is most vulnerable and who is pushed to the margins in the wake of the city's decision making. That is what we are experiencing right now. In this critical time, that this global pandemic has further disrupted the livelihood of thousands of Low-income, Houseless, Undocumented, Immigrant, Black, Indigenous, People of Color in disproportionate ways, I demand that the council reject any and all increase to the PPB budget, and actively divest a larger percentage than 5.6% from their budget.

Our communities are hurting and have been hurting, as State violence continues to harm them, police them, incarcerate them, strip them of their humanity, and both hypervisibilize them through racial profiling and other criminalizing tactics, while simultaneously invisibilizing their needs for life affirming care.

How can you sit there and say that *we all count*, when you are actively divesting funds away from the very resources that support our health, housing and education? We demand that you listen to our testimonies and take the necessary action to ensure that our communities are

being *supported* and *cared* for, instead of being *policed*, *criminalized*, or *harmed*.

Now is the time to translate your language of support and inclusivity, into concrete and transparent action.

From: [Rachel Dailey](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Fwd: City Budget Proposal
Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2020 2:54:39 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Rachel Dailey <rabdailey@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, May 20, 2020, 2:51 PM
Subject: City Budget Proposal
To: <mayorwheeler@portlandoregon.gov>

My name is Rachel and I live in the Vernon neighborhood of Portland, please listen when your constituents ask for care, NOT cops.

I support the elimination of the Gun Violence Reduction Team, school resource officers, and transit police.

These officers should not be reincorporated into the PPB.

I demand the money saved be used for life affirming resources like the Housing Bureau, Parks and Recreation, and Portland Public Schools. Not policing.

In addition, I ask that the council reject any and all increase to the PPB budget and actively divest a larger percentage than 5.6%.

I've personally been a witness to the harmful and ineffectual tactics used by police in response to houseless members of our community while they're in crisis. We need to do better. Please steer away from policing in our city, it doesn't work!

Rachel

From: [Piper Gibson](#)
To: [Wheeler, Mayor](#); [Commissioner Fritz](#); [Commissioner Eudaly](#); [Commissioner Hardesty](#); [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Divest from policing, invest in community
Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2020 2:57:33 PM

Hello,

My name is Piper Gibson and I live in inner SE Portland.

I support the elimination of the Gun Violence Reduction Team, school resource officers, and transit police.

I demand the money saved be used for life affirming resources, like the Housing Bureau, Parks and Recreation, and Portland Public Schools. Not policing.

These police officers should not be reincorporated into the PPB.

In addition, I ask that City Council rejects any and all increase to the PPB budget, and actively divest a larger percentage than 5.6% from their budget.

Especially during a pandemic, our communities desperately need support and resources. Divesting from the PPB and investing in community resources is absolutely crucial.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Best,
Piper Gibson
they/them/theirs pronouns



Chloe Eudaly *Commissioner*
Suk Rhee *Director*
1221 SW 4th Avenue, Room 110
Portland, OR 97204
Phone: 503-823-9333
portlandoregon.gov/cannabis



May 20, 2020

SENT VIA E-MAIL

Portland City Council
1221 SW 4th Avenue Room 340
Portland, OR 97204

Mayor Ted Wheeler
mayorwheeler@portlandoregon.gov
Commissioner Chloe Eudaly
chloe@portlandoregon.gov
Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty
joann@portlandoregon.gov
Commissioner Amanda Fritz
Amanda@portlandoregon.gov

RE: Proposed FY 2020-21 budget changes to Recreational Marijuana Tax Fund

Dear Mayor Wheeler and Portland City Commissioners,

We are writing today to express our concerns about the proposed budget changes to the use of the Recreational Marijuana Tax Fund (local cannabis tax revenue) outlined in the Mayor's budget for FY 2020-21. As the City of Portland's Cannabis Policy Oversight Team (CPOT), this advisory body is tasked with advising the City and engaging with Portlanders around cannabis policy. We find the distribution of our local cannabis tax revenue in the Mayor's budget to be inconsistent with Portland voter's intended use of the fund and out of alignment with Recommendations 1 & 2 of our [2019 Cannabis Policy Report](#): (1) Immediately improve the transparency in tax allocation decisions and outcomes; (2) Develop and adopt a comprehensive social equity framework- to ensure that cannabis policies exist within a framework that prioritizes restorative practices, reparative justice.

Our 2019 Annual Cannabis Policy Report emphasized the need for increased communication, community engagement, transparency, and accountability around the allocation and use of the City's cannabis revenue. These characteristics are fundamental to restorative justice work. We were surprised to discover that the proposed budget continues to allocate the majority of cannabis funds to public safety and transportation safety despite a lack of post-legalization data to justify such a high allocation. We were also disturbed by the potential shift of the entirety of the Cannabis Social Equity Grant Fund to other City programs. The process and decision-making around this year's budget and allocation of the

local cannabis revenue does not appear to address or acknowledge the advising that the Cannabis Policy Oversight Team (CPOT), community partners, and many engaged Portlanders have provided over the past year.

We support and applaud accountable reinvestment of these funds into City and community programs that are working to support resiliency through COVID-19, and to build wealth and power in communities who have been disproportionately impacted by enforcement of cannabis prohibition. For decades, Portlanders from our Black, Indigenous, and Communities of Color have been more likely to be arrested and convicted for cannabis-related offenses than other Portlanders. The ripple effect of an arrest, even for simple possession, was often devastating for these individuals and their families. Now that the City is profiting from the legal sale of cannabis, we have a responsibility to reinvest the funds towards repairing harm in impacted communities.

In Fiscal Year 2020-21, the available local cannabis tax revenue is estimated to be close to \$7 million dollars. Portland is entering its 4th year of reinvestment of cannabis tax revenue. How have the funds been used to repair and restore justice? What are the expectations, purpose and measures of accountability put on the Bureaus, programs and community organizations that receive these funds? How are the decisions around allocation of this revenue made? Council's budget work session on March 9, 2020, and this year's proposed budget document have done little to highlight or address these important questions. Additionally, the processes and documents related to the budget must be more accessible and support diverse methods of civic engagement.

Ballot Measure 26-180 provided a foundation for allocation of this fund but lacks the direction needed to prevent misinterpretation and ensure targeted reinvestment. A comprehensive social equity framework and cannabis tax steering committee are needed to ensure allocation and use of funds remain aligned with the spirit and intent of the measure and restorative justice.

The cannabis industry in Portland has been deemed essential and sales remain strong. Cannabis will continue to be a valuable source of tax revenue (including revenue generated by business and payroll taxes) while our economy and communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Mayor's proposed budget states, "Even while we reduce budgets, we must be thinking about the City we want to become." We look forward to learning more about the City's Equity Tool and the plans to increase the Bureaus' accountability to outcomes. We urge Portland City Council to review our 2019 Cannabis Policy Report and consider allocating funds to create, empower and support a cannabis tax steering committee and process to develop a comprehensive framework for reinvestment of the City's cannabis tax revenue.

Should Council want to discuss the contents of this letter further, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

The Cannabis Policy Oversight Team (CPOT) for the Cannabis Program, City of Portland

Al Ochoa (Chair)

Stephanie Neil (Vice-Chair)

John Monteleone III (Vice-Chair)

Dr. Rachel Knox

Dr. Nicole Bowles

Madeline Martinez
Danny Rowland
Laura Valden-Vega
Tim Zimmerman

[Link to full CPOT roster](#)

Cc:

Suk Rhee, Director, Office of Community & Civic Life

Michael Montoya, Strategy, Innovation & Performance Manager, Office of Community & Civic Life

Christina Coursey, Interim Supervisor, Cannabis Program, Office of Community & Civic Life

From: [Jennings, Gayla](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: FW: Portland Police purposes and budget
Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2020 3:43:45 PM

From: Betsy Toll <betsy.toll@gmail.com>
Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2020 at 3:41 PM
To: "Wheeler, Mayor" <MayorWheeler@portlandoregon.gov>, Commissioner Fritz <amanda@portlandoregon.gov>, Commissioner Hardesty <joann@portlandoregon.gov>, Commissioner Eudaly <chloe@portlandoregon.gov>
Cc: "City Auditor, Mary Hull Caballero" <AuditorHullCaballero@portlandoregon.gov>
Subject: Portland Police purposes and budget

Dear Mayor Wheeler and Commissioners,

Amid the challenges of Covid-19 and its impact on the community, we must not lose sight of longstanding issues that provide the context for challenges we face today. As a Portlander since 1988, I've seen many changes in our city. Many have been for the better, but others have hardened the lines between haves and have-nots, and hardened the lives of immigrants, people of color, and especially hardened conditions for the unhoused in our community. Providing safety and simple human decency for the most vulnerable members of our community is more vital now than ever.

This time of pandemic can also be a time when we bring to an end the criminalization of houselessness in our city and harassment of those who have nowhere to live. Your leadership is vital to that goal. It is time to reassess and redesign the role of police in our community. Short of acts of violent crime, street interactions with unhoused people should be handled by social service workers, mental health support teams, and health care providers and community agencies.

This change of focus can be accomplished by shifting funding out of the police budget into community resources and services. We cannot afford to keep adding to our costly police force and the immense burden that police services put on our budget.

Police offices serve vital functions and I'm not advocating for eliminating the police force. But its mission must be reconsidered and more clearly circumscribed, so existing resources can be allocated to professionals who can actually help solve problems and provide services, not simply frighten, shame, and punish those who are living in desperate conditions. The police force needs to serve our city, not the other way around. Many of the needs in our city can best be served by skilled human services professionals and mental health professionals. Their value can also be amplified through partnerships with trusted nonprofit agencies who serve at-risk and unhoused populations in Portland.

The police bureau's existence must serve the vision and needs of the city, not the

other way around. City and state budgets face massive shortfalls. The police force budget can be reduced through officer attrition and in some cases, job elimination. Let's stop doubling down on an archaic and dangerous system that has clearly not worked. We can and must reduce programs such as the Gun Violence Reduction Team, the PPB School Resource Officers, and transit police, all of which tend to target black and brown communities and further marginalize the poor and mentally ill in our city.

Courageous, creative rethinking of the function of police in our community will include and embrace officers who truly want to serve Portland, and who, in extreme situations, are willing to protect Portlanders from active danger. But the perverse model of continually growing a quasimilitary police budget and workforce creates fear and division in our city and does not serve any of us well.

I strongly encourage the Council to reject any motions to increase the Portland Police Bureau budget. Further, I strongly urge the Mayor and Council to actively reduce the Police Bureau budget and related expenditures by more than 6.5%, and direct any savings above 6.5% to supporting non-police services for the most challenged members of our community

Respectfully,

Betsy Toll

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