



March 11, 2021

Mayor Ted Wheeler
Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty
Commissioner Dan Ryan
Commissioner Carmen Rubio
Commissioner Mingus Mapps

Dear Mayor and Commissioners,

I want to begin by thanking each of you for your service to our community in general and specifically in your roles as City Commissioners now. I also thank you for giving me this opportunity to address you about the important issue of the proliferation of gun violence. Given the continued activity on the street my message is about moving from intent to action to stop this situation which seems to be out of control.

During January and February of this year alone there were 163 shooting incidents, 43 shooting injuries, and 10 shooting homicides.

The Inter-Faith Peace & Action Collaborative (IPAC) is a united group of faith leaders, activists, social workers, police officers and community members. We came together beginning in July 2016 to address the crisis of violence on Portland Streets, specifically violence impacting communities of color.

We recognize your immediate need to address serious concerns about racial justice. We understand why the previous Council voted to make significant cuts and changes to the Police Bureau. We acknowledge the serious reforms and major changes that need to occur in policing. However, we also believe defunding the Police Bureau without replacement programs and interventions caused a vacuum and put many people at risk and caused others to assume there was no accountability.

Cuts to the Police Bureau created a vacuum that undermined public safety and the very communities whose voices the Council – and our community -- seek to amplify. We are deeply concerned about the dramatic increase in violence on the street. People are getting killed, injured, and traumatized. The cycle of retaliation will continue until we intervene and address the root causes of such violence.

We recognize violence is a public health issue and that when any person is injured or dies it affects family, friends, neighbors, co-workers and so many others. We need your help to implement solutions to “flatten the spread” of violence on the street. Please find attached a summary of IPAC’s immediate-, short- and long-term actions that we believe will help break the cycle of violence.

We ask that you support our proposed City investments, outlined in the attachments, to expand community-based programs and enhance police services to help end cycles of violence on Portland’s streets. We thank Mayor Ted Wheeler for inviting these proposals and for providing us with the technical support we needed to develop them.

Our requests to the City of Portland include:

Office of Violence Prevention

The Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) addresses the complex factors that drive violence. Rooted in a public health approach to violence prevention, OVP’s efforts are shaped by the voices of those most

impacted. This includes youth, community residents, key stakeholders, and many others. We propose increased investments in community-based interventions, including:

- Expanded Street Level Outreach Workers (SLO): Engage with more individuals and families to build relationships and address risk and protective factors.
- Increased Focused Deterrence: Expand the number of credible messengers who work with those who are at highest risk of being a victim or perpetrator of gun violence.
- Enhanced Hospital-Based Trauma Response: Increase OVP's ability to be present to support families during times of trauma and grief to and to help break the cycle of retaliation.
- Maintain California Partnership for Safe Communities (CPSC) Training: Ongoing trainings for life coaches and outreach workers, and ongoing consultation around evidence-based practices to reduce gun violence.

Portland Police Bureau

- Increase the Number and Speed of Gun Crime Investigations:
 - Fund the recently launched on-call team of officers who investigate shooting incidents.
 - Identify individuals at risk of violence (either as a perpetrator or a victim) for referral to the Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) for wrap-around services or other interventions.
 - Increase by up to five the number of detectives available to follow up on injury shootings and homicides.
- Re-establish a Uniformed Patrol Team to Engage in Violence Prevention and Response:
 - Conduct patrol operations to act on criminal intelligence gained in investigations, conduct follow-up for shooting investigations, respond to shooting scenes, and proactively engage community members at risk of gun violence.

Independent Oversight Committee

- Hire Staff Analyst for Independent Oversight Committee (IOC): Hire a data analyst, housed outside of PPB, who works at the direction of the IOC to research, gather, and analyze data to about the outcomes and effectiveness of this proposed work.

We have learned from City Council discussions and the Portland community that we need to address prevention services in a much better way. We promise you we will. Also, we must work hard to staff the prevention and engagement work with seasoned officers who are sensitive to and respected by members of the community.

We passionately support actions to address serious issues about racial justice and local policing. We want to push forward police reform while helping stop gun violence. That is why this proposal includes creation of an independent oversight committee that we propose be comprised of members without city or police bureau ties and staffed with its own analyst. We are serious about the importance of the Independent Oversight Committee. The committee must keep communication and accountability paramount. We envision some members of the Oversight Committee will be people who are or were affiliated with the gang community.

We know ending a complex issue like street violence requires a holistic approach that includes social services, job and skill development resources, housing, mental health, and on-the-ground de-escalation strategies. As we secure these needed City commitments, we will make complementary requests to the State of Oregon, Multnomah County, other local cities, and federal agencies. Finally, we have assurance from the

District Attorney's Office they will hold people to account when cases are referred with appropriate evidence.

Thank you for listening to our community's voices. Thank you for your leadership in ending the cycles of violence spreading harm and trauma across Portland. We stand ready to support you.

Sincerely,

J.W. Matt Hennessee

J.W. Matt Hennessee, M.Div; D.D.
Chair, IPAC



The Inter-Faith Peace & Action Collaborative

Goals related to ending the cycle of violence on Portland's streets

Immediate Goals

- Interrupt escalating violence on the streets of Portland
- Engage law enforcement and community-based organizations experienced with street violence interventions and de-escalation
- Build public trust by providing people most impacted by police interventions and street violence a strong oversight role in the work

Short Term Goals

- Immediate appropriations for programs and community interventions guided by police and non-police with lived experience in the communities they serve
- Transparency in funding allocations and investments

Long Term Goals

- Sustainable funds for community reinvestment programs
- Consistent oversight by and collaborative relationships with community members, particularly communities of color most impacted
Official mechanisms that permit collaborative and restorative policy making and regular dialogue among officials, police and community members