

Fall Budget Monitoring Process Vote Remarks — Mayor Ted Wheeler

November 17, 2021

I want to begin by thanking the hundreds of Portlanders who shared their voice over the last few weeks on this Fall Budget Process. In recent weeks, my office and I hosted 10 virtual forums, meeting with over 500 Portlanders, including employers large and small, service providers for houseless people, neighborhood leaders, and community advocates to share my Fall Budget Monitoring Process (BMP) proposal.

Council had the opportunity to hear from nearly 100 Portlanders who testified over the course of about four hours during Wednesday's council session. Another 521 Portlanders provided online testimony. Thank you for your time, your heartfelt feedback, and thoughtful suggestions. Perhaps most importantly, thank you for continuing to show up and speak out for our City.

As is to be expected, we heard a variety of perspectives on how to best address the issues deeply affecting our city. We heard your concern for houseless Portlanders in need of resources and shelter. Your fear and the reality of being harassed or harmed as you move about the city. Your rightful demand for investments in police reform, not just restaffing. Your accounts of businesses, sidewalks, and natural areas overrun by trash and graffiti.

There are many paths to improvement, but the uniting sentiment throughout these testimonials was an overwhelming want for *meaningful and immediate action*.

This is an action-oriented budget built to help address Portlanders' greatest concern. Houselessness, Community Safety, Livability and Shared Economic Prosperity—these are my priority areas as Mayor, and they are the key areas we agreed to prioritize as a Council in spring of this year. Each priority area is clearly reflected in the Fall BMP proposal that we are voting on today.

We have \$62 million dollars to allocate as part of our Fall Budget Monitoring Process. These unexpected funds provide us with a crucial opportunity to address our most urgent needs, assist our most vulnerable community members, and stabilize Portland while the upstream investments we made earlier this year, and will continue to make in the next fiscal year, take shape. \$62 million dollars can help make the hope we heard from Portlanders over the last few weeks a reality.

As a Council, we begin to realize that hope today by committing to do good work with the immediate resources at hand. I hear and echo the need to uphold our City's core value of fiscal responsibility. As a Council, we are equally bound to deploy funds and resources in a way that helps meet the urgent needs of Portlanders. Fiscal responsibility is rooted in clarity, commitment, and sustainability.

The issues we are facing are evident and Portlanders have been clear in their call for urgent action and improved results. Our houseless community needs resources and access to sanitary and stable shelter. Portlanders in crisis need the right responder to show up and assist them in a reasonable timeframe. And small businesses need to know that sidewalks covered in trash, boarded windows, and vandalism will not be the norm as we strive to support our local economy. This funding package is our opportunity to make an immediate financial commitment to creating greater, sustainable change in the long term.

Here is a quick review of what Council is voting on today:

Over \$18 million dollars to create a cleaner and more compassionate houselessness response.

More than \$7 million dollars to Refocus, Reform, and Restaff a public safety system that works toward prevention AND intervention.

And \$2.2 million dollars to strengthen our shared economic prosperity in a way that moves us towards a carbon neutral economy.

This Fall BMP represents the good work we can do right now with the resources at hand to address our most urgent housing, safety, and economic needs.

Houselessness

This budget funds action to help provide more humane and impactful assistance to houseless Portlanders. In partnership with Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury and Commissioner Dan Ryan, the City will invest \$18.4 million dollars into a cleaner and more compassionate response to houselessness.

This 11-part plan invests in every aspect of our houselessness response effort – adding more outreach and clean-up workers, enhancing service coordination, and increasing availability for transitional shelter spaces. These investments will enable houseless Portlanders to more effectively access resources, receive treatment, and connect with sustainable shelter options.

Public Safety

This budget invests in actions to help diversify and expand our public safety response network.

We are allocating \$7 million dollars to improve and expand a public safety system that works towards both prevention AND intervention. These funds will better equip first responders with the tools, training, resources, and personnel needed to be effective in their roles. Pieces of this funding package invest in a more transparent and accountable Portland Police Bureau.

We need to invest in meaningful police reform, like modernizing training, providing body worn cameras, and improving response times. This funding package also includes robust investments

in unarmed response alternatives like Public Safety Support Specialists and Portland Street Response.

Investments to Refocus, Reform, and Restaff our public safety system can and do support and compliment the incredibly valuable role community-based organizations play in our violence reduction efforts. A both/and approach is the heart of comprehensive and sustainable change.

Shared Economic Prosperity

This budget invests in actions that help address the income inequality, increased competition, and ever-changing work models challenging our workforce and local businesses.

This proposal puts \$2.2 million dollars to supporting more equitable and sustainable economic prosperity. While smaller in scale than other aspects of this package, these investments will provide an economic roadmap to focus future investments and prepare our city for economic success.

In conclusion, Portlanders want *meaningful and immediate action* on our greatest challenges. This budget works to accomplish just that.

I'd like to extend my thanks to my Council colleagues and your staff, bureau directors and staff, and the City Budget Office, for the weeks of conversation and collaboration that went into crafting this proposal.

Thank you for supporting this Fall BMP package and investing in our resilient, compassionate, and forward-thinking community.