

Update on meeting with law enforcement about ongoing criminal destruction

This message should be attributed to Jim Middaugh, director of communications for Mayor Ted Wheeler.

Today, Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler met with leaders of local, state and federal law enforcement agencies to collaborate on new and more effective ways to combat ongoing criminal destruction being done by small, organized groups of people.

The Mayor is committed to addressing the significant harm being caused to local businesses, their workers, and to the community at large. The frequent clean-up and repair work this activity requires is pulling critical resources from COVID response and recovery work, and from other community needs. And these events pull us apart from each other.

The Mayor heard from partners and agreed that the actions of these small groups are different than free speech protests. They are organized criminal acts and should be treated accordingly.

The group agreed that the current tactics being used by those engaged in criminal destruction have evolved and that the response from law enforcement and other public agencies also needs to evolve.

The Mayor understands that the media and our local community are hungry for immediate solutions. If this situation were easy to address it would have been addressed already. The Mayor is committed to finding effective solutions, even if it takes time.

The criminal tactics Portland and other cities are confronting are new. Creating workable, effective solutions requires thoughtful and constructive collaboration across multiple agencies and stakeholders.

The group agreed to continue collaborating to increase accountability for offenders, to strengthen mutual aid, to repair our partnerships with the federal government and to evaluate opportunities around both documenting and investigating criminal activity.

Additionally, the Mayor will consult with other partners who bring new and different expertise, experience and perspective to help identify new and better solutions and tools.