

TO: Mayor Wheeler
FROM: Government Transition Advisory Committee
CC: Commissioners Gonzalez, Mapps, Rubio, and Ryan
DATE: September 25, 2023
SUBJECT: Extension of City Organization Public Comment Period

ATTACHMENT: Letter from the four nonprofit District Coalition Offices to CAO Jordan, Mayor Wheeler, Commissioner Ryan, and Interim Director Ratbi.

On September 12, 2023, Chief Administrative Officer Mike Jordan shared his proposed draft of the City's future organizational chart and opened a public comment period set to close September 29, 2023. Per your August 23, 2023 letter to the Government Transition Advisory Committee (GTAC), we understand that advising on the City's organizational structure is outside the scope of the Committee. This letter does not intend to do that. We instead write to you in our role as the main public body for engagement on the City's transition. As such, it is our intent to share public comments we have received and encourage the City to consider extending its public comment period on the City Organization Draft Proposal.

Among the public comment we received was a request from the City's four nonprofit District Coalition Offices asking to extend the public comment period to "afford [them] the ability to schedule a public forum with your collective offices to provide much-needed information so your constituents throughout Portland may submit more thoughtful and informed public comments."

This request aligns with additional questions that the GTAC has heard from the public, specifically about the newly created functions of 'Portland Solutions' and 'Community Relations.'

We have heard a mixture of both positive and critical comments about the draft proposal and GTAC does not intend to offer a position in support of or against the proposed organizational structure. Instead, our goal is to build trust and support in the process by encouraging adequate engagement and public education. From the public comments we have heard, we do not believe that there are sufficient engagement opportunities to provide education or allow parties to contribute their perspectives on these newly created functions in the draft City organizational chart. **Therefore, we support the request to extend the public comment period that is currently set to close on September 29, 2023 to October 31, 2023.**

We appreciate the opportunity to help uplift the voices of all Portlanders and look forward to continue to work with you and share insights from the general public as the transition process continues to progress.

Sincerely,

Leah Benson and Jose Gamero Cassinelli, Co-Chairs

On behalf of the Government Transition Advisory Committee

Chief Administrative Officer Michael Jordan
Mayor Ted Wheeler
Commissioner Dan Ryan
Office of Community & Civic Life Interim Director Mourad Ratbi

September 20, 2023

Dear Chief Administrator Jordan, Mayor Wheeler, Commissioner Ryan, and Interim Director Ratbi:

We, the leadership of the four nonprofit District Coalition Offices funded by the city to help Portlanders connect with their government, write with great urgency to request that you extend the public comment period for the recently-released draft city structural reorganization.

As stakeholders, we are hearing from many in our communities a desire to understand the rationale for placing neighborhoods and district coalitions under the future Mayor's office, and the city's other "community relations" programs under the incoming City Administrator. Extending the public comment period to *at least* 30 days is not only governmental best practice, the extra time would afford us the ability to schedule a public forum with your collective offices to provide much-needed information so your constituents throughout Portland may submit more thoughtful and informed public comments.

We appreciate the speed at which the city is working to prepare for the voter-approved new form of government. However, there is only one public information session scheduled on this topic and it is slated to take place just two days prior to the public comment deadline on September 29. This is an insufficient amount of time to build understanding and trust in the city's reorganization process, or to ensure a meaningful opportunity for the public's voice to be heard.

We call upon your leadership to extend the public comment period to *no earlier* than October 31st, 2023. We also invite you to collaborate with us on scheduling a community forum well before any new deadline to specifically share information about the placement of the city-funded community engagement programs within the proposed new city structure.

Thank you for considering this time sensitive request. We look forward to working with you for the common good!

Stacey Tipp, President
Alison Stoll, Executive Director
Central Northeast Neighbors

Jimmy Wilson and Sean Green, Co-Chairs
Jona Davis, Interim Executive Director
Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods

Vadim Mozyrsky, President
Darlene Urban Garrett, Executive Director
Neighbors West/Northwest

Dave Weaver, President
Nanci Champlin, Executive Director
Southeast Uplift Neighborhood Coalition