

**PORTLAND TRANSITION TEAM
PUBLIC COMMENT REPORT**

Date range December 1st – December 31st 2023

From December 1st through December 31st, the Portland Transition Team received a total of **10** public comments through our online comment form, via email and verbal public comment. **0** out of the **10** comments were submitted on behalf community-based organization(s). To date, we’ve received **2,621** public comments during the transition of Portland's city government.

Raw public comments received during December 1st through December 31st. Attachments are included at the end of the report. Replies from city staff are not included in the raw public comments. The * indicates the commenter reply to a city employee’s response.**

Raw Public Comments
I cannot find what I'm looking for. How about an easily downloadable map?
We need a new center of governance on the east side. City Hall East. Put it in the middle of the population of the city, so East Portland folks can come. For District offices, put the money into the district(s) that have been under invested in. Identify City-owned land or leasable properties — or even places you could drop secure mobile trailers for a start date of Jan 2025. Please don’t leave these decisions up to the first Council.
I have lived and worked in Portland for over 22 years. I believe this is my first time speaking to GTAC but I have testified before Council numerous times, including on Portland’s transition to its new governance structure. Included in materials posted for the 11/29 Education & Outreach Subcommittee Meeting , p. 12, is an outline of outreach roles and responsibilities. One of the activities shown is “Hard to Reach Voter Contract,” listing activities like “RCV experts, RVC messaging, media strategy, and collation outreach and management.’ The following firms are identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• United Way of Columbia Willamette• Portland United for Change• Democracy Rising• Hearts & Minds Communications This list immediately raised several questions for me.

First, I think Portlanders deserve to know whether these firms are shown as “examples” or have they already been awarded contracts? If the latter, what was the process used for their selection and when did Council approve the contracts?

Second, I am particularly surprised Portland United for Change is eligible to provide outreach services to the City. Portland United is a Political Action Committee (PAC). Portland United campaigned for a specific form of charter reform before it was adopted by the voters in November 2022. Since then, Portland United has taken numerous specific positions on contested issues before City Council (for examples, please see “appendix”, below). Portland United’s leadership includes individuals that are running for Council positions that will be filled in November 2024. One announced candidate for District 2 is shown on Portland [United’s web home page](#) (appendix). Portland United was, in June 2022, [warned by the City Auditor](#) that it was in violation of Portland campaign regulations. Even if Portland United has a nonprofit affiliate (perhaps via an association w/ United Way?), I still see this as a conflict, at least until further information is provided. Third, I see a mismatch of these firms and the transition team’s identified tasks. Are any of these firms particularly qualified as RCV experts or to explain RCV to older voters?

Fourth and last, what is the overall expenditure planned for these firms and how will success be measured? At its 10/25/2023 meeting, Council approved contracts with strategic communication firms that specialize in engaging with under-served communities. At that meeting, I read into Council minutes some of the work by one of these City-contracted vendor that was *supposed* to represent engagement with such communities. The quality of the work was mediocre at best; providing no better information than would be solicited via a City press release w/ a SurveyMonkey link. Not all outreach work can be expected to be impactful all the time, but this firm whose work I was describing was paid in the six figures. For transition team outreach contracts, will there be any performance incentives or at least a requirement to show performance metrics? Please note that I am not disputing the need for outreach to underserved communities, but Portlanders deserve qualified and unbiased firms that deliver services effectively. Thank you.

It is important that all district representatives have offices in city hall (shared if needed) and that deputy city admin have dedicated offices in city hall to access political power opportunities. Ideally situated with the deputy city admins or there should be ample informal interaction opportunities. This will help prevent hoarding of political power and encourage sharing of information to better run our city services.

Please confirm receipt of this email. I orally provided the attached comments at the 11/5/2023 GTAC meeting. Attached, please find my comments in written form and with references/links. I posed questions to GTAC in my comments. If there are transition

team or GTAC materials that address my questions, I'd appreciate if you could point me to them. If not, I ask that my questions get addressed at a future GTAC or at its Education and Outreach subcommittee. Thank you!

Can you tell me how many comments the Transition Team received which requested that a new Climate Officer be added to the Executive Leadership Team on the draft organizational chart?

Thanks very much, ____

I'm following up on my initial question about the proposal for a new climate officer to be added to the new government organization chart in Portland. The final chart shows a Chief Sustainability Officer under the City Administrator. I understand that PBS' current Chief Sustainability Officer was promoted to this new position. Will the person in this position be permanently assigned to the new City Administrator's office? How was this determined? Is there a meeting on record which delineates the discussion to disregard the request for a new Climate Officer and instead position the current CSO under the CA's office? I realize that your transition team may not have been part of this decision. However, it's important to all of us who submitted the 960 public comments requesting a new Climate Officer position to understand how this decision was made, and by whom. Please let me know how this decision was made and who was responsible. Thank you,

You made it clear in our meeting that the HR component takes a lot of time. What you were careful to do in our meeting was to not confirm or deny that a new position for a Climate Officer, positioned in the Executive Leadership Office, would be created. Megan stated in our meeting that she had access to the King County job description for a Climate Officer. If you compare it to the job description of Portland's Chief Sustainability Officer, you will notice the large discrepancy between the two job descriptions. The 960 plus comments requested were in support of a **new Climate Officer**. Both Mayor Wheeler and Commissioner Rubio told me during my testimony that they would look at that job description. Did they do this? As I requested, I want to see the meeting records where this decision was made, and who made it. Was the Mayor involved? How about

Commissioners Mapps, Ryan and Gonzalez? I am asking for full transparency regarding this decision.

The information looks incorrect, I believe the budget conversation has already affected the staff allocation for the 2025 Council.

I cannot find what I'm looking for. Looking for a link to show all candidates who have filed for the four district city council races.

Yes, thank you. How promptly is it updated? Last I heard, voters can rank up to six when voting. Is that correct, regardless of the number of candidates who file in one's district?
Thank you, _____

Dear Members of the Portland City Council and Bureaus of Parks & Recreation and Environmental Services:

I first learned about the formation of a new "Citywide Operational Natural Area and Tree Management" bureau while sitting in City Council Chambers the afternoon of November 1 when you decided on the fly to create this new bureau with no public input other than the November 1 testimony. I testified at that hearing that we needed more time to evaluate what was proposed since we, the public, have no idea what was proposed. From my perspective, my Neighborhood Association is a stakeholder in this process because we have three natural areas and two Portland Parks within our small neighborhood boundaries in SW Portland and I am President of the Neighborhood Association, although I'm writing to you today as a personal comment. After the hearing I asked BES and PP&R staff if we could have a conversation about this new bureau during our upcoming January 10, 2024 Crestwood Neighborhood Association meeting and BES staff replied that they were still in internal conversations and not ready for an external conversation. I am very thankful that BES staff responded to my inquiry but disappointed that as of this writing I still have no idea what is being proposed for this new bureau. I later learned that even your own bureau advisory committees have not been consulted (see attached letter from the Portland Utility Board dated December 12, 2023). I also learned that when neighborhoods in SW Portland through the SWNI Parks Committee asked for a conversation about the new bureau, SWNI was directed to the City Council Work Session scheduled for January 25, 2024 (which does not allow testimony). That item directs me to Commissioner Ryan's Chief of Staff, Kellie Torres, so I assume Commissioner Ryan is in charge of this proposal??? Neighborhoods in SW Portland are community stakeholders with natural areas, parks and trees, and we

founded and continue to support the Westside Watershed Resource Center to enhance stewardship of our natural areas and better manage stormwater on private as well as public properties. What will happen to WWRC??? Why is everything behind closed doors? What ever happened to the days when city staff believed in having a conversation about issues that affect stakeholders in the community with those affected stakeholders? If this effort is being run by Portland Parks and Recreation, what ever happened to the value of "connection": The parks and recreation system connects people to places and each other. We build collaborative partnerships that energize our public spaces. PP&R's December 19, 2023 news release notes the insufficiency of funding to maintain and operate our parks, which was one of my concerns I noted in my November 1 testimony. Nothing in the PP&R news release indicates any conversation with affected stakeholders or bureau advisory committees. I admit that this lack of civic engagement in developing this new bureau is the most recent of many examples in charter reform and the transition process that has eroded my trust in Portland's government.

I ask that you please at least engage the Portland Utility Board in the development of this new Natural Resources bureau at one of their January meetings.

Sincerely,

Government Transition Advisory Committee Meeting

December 5, 2023

Public Comments of Alan Comnes

My name is Alan Comnes, pronouns he/him. I have lived and worked in Portland for over 22 years. I believe this is my first time speaking to GTAC but I have testified before Council numerous times, including on Portland's transition to its new governance structure.

Included in materials posted for the [11/29 Education & Outreach Subcommittee Meeting](#), p. 12, is an outline of outreach roles and responsibilities. One of the activities shown is "Hard to Reach Voter Contract," listing activities like "RCV experts, RVC messaging, media strategy, and collation outreach and management.' The following firms are identified:

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Thank you.

APPENDIX

Portland United for Change (PAC #22158)

Public Posts from [web home page](#) and Twitter:

“Portlanders are ready for transformative change, and examples near and far demonstrate that this measure is the change that Portland needs.”

— DEBBIE **KITCHIN** AND ANDREW SPEER



Portland United for Change @charter_reform · Jul 20
Just in from @sophiegreenleaf @wweek: [wweek.com/news/city/2023...](https://www.wweek.com/news/city/2023...)

The people spoke up loud and strong and Commissioner Dan Ryan had no choice but to step back. Keep up the good work, Portland!

Ryan Says He Will Not Vote for Two Charter Reform Referrals at Next Week's City Council, Seeks Mayoral Veto on May 2024 Ballot

Commissioner Rene Gonzalez's last-minute plan to alter the charter reform measure appears to be on life support.

Expand

4 14 44 1.6K

Portland United for Change reconnected

Portland United for Change @charter_reform · Jul 17
See you there, Portland?

Wear blue! 💙💙💙💙💙💙💙

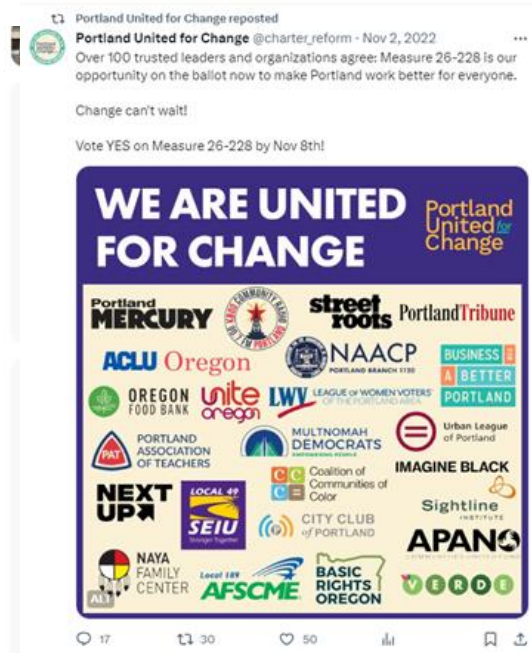
...to show support for bluer skies in Portland politics. City Council has the opportunity to do the right thing by upholding the will of the 58% of 283,480 voters in November 2022 who approved this measure. #PDX #PortlandOR

HELP US DEFEND MEASURE 26-228: Join us at PDX City Hall on Tuesday, July 18 at 9am!

We will be gathering to tell City Council to do their jobs: uphold the will of the voters and don't interfere with implementation.

Next Up Action Fund and 9 others

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To: Mayor Ted Wheeler Commissioner Mingus Mapps Commissioner Carmen Rubio
 Commissioner Dan Ryan Commissioner Rene Gonzalez Auditor Simone Rede

Cc: Dawn Uchiyama, Farshad Allahdadi, Gabriel Solmer, Jacq Tjaden, Tim Grewe, Michael Jordan

Re: Issues with Recent Decision-Making Process by City Council

Date: December 12, 2023

The Portland Utility Board (PUB) serves as a community advisory board for the Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) and the Portland Water Bureau (PWB). Please accept this letter documenting feedback regarding Natural Resources including the PUB's:

- Opposition to Ryan Amendment 1 to Resolution 37635 passed at the November 1, 2023, City Council meeting without sufficient process and legal review;
- Distress and concern regarding the lack of effective public process and engagement with the Board and other members of the public regarding Natural Areas and Tree Management, an area which is central to the PUB's purview and purpose; and
- Request for increased and coordinated engagement of the PUB and other key stakeholders as the planning for Natural Resources continues.

Appointed by Council as a volunteer community board, our members spend hundreds of hours each year providing independent community oversight regarding policy, operations, and budgetary decisions for the utility bureaus as well as advise Council on how to navigate the difficult decisions regarding the utilities. Natural Resources have been major components of the BES' services for years and the PUB has engaged with the bureau regarding related program and policy issues. The PUB was aware that Natural Resources and Trees were under review at the City and clearly communicated our desire to be engaged in review and decision-making regarding related proposals, both with the bureaus and to Council in prior communications (refer to our September 29th letter to Council for the most recent details).

BES has been engaged in the Natural Resources working group and has updated the PUB when appropriate regarding status and next steps. As mentioned in prior communications, the Board was supportive of work to consider consolidation of programs and functions recognizing the potential opportunities as well as flagging some of the risks that needed to be addressed. Considering the work under way, it was shocking to learn on the day of the public hearing of a new proposal to transfer services to a new service area. It is outrageous that this proposal was made public just the night before the hearing and that it passed without adequate review and planning. This was unexpected, surprising, and stressful to the community as well as for City staff, both those working hard for many months on the issue at Council's direction as well as the many staff potentially impacted by the change. It was unacceptable, poorly thought out, contrary to the overwhelming majority of public input received, and disrespectful to staff, the PUB, other advisory boards, and the community. This is not the first time something like this has occurred, in fact the PUB's letters to Council have a recurring theme requesting earlier and more transparent communication and engagement. The PUB is supposedly convened to advise on issues related to the utilities, yet our input has not been sought when Council introduces significant changes. It is insulting to volunteer our time and then not be consulted, or at least informed, with adequate time to discuss and provide feedback. Much like during the rate setting earlier this year, after months of development, engagement and public dialogue, proposals were introduced with no opportunity for authentic public dialogue before a decision was final. When this was pointed out to Council, the PUB representatives were met with dismissal and defensiveness rather than reflection by the Mayor and Council members. The PUB maintains that a decision cannot be fully informed if it lacks adequate time for transparency, thorough evaluation of impacts, and opportunity for authentic engagement with experienced staff and the public. Although we recognize that it is a politicized process, we believe the Council's introduction of significant changes in the final hours/day/days is contrary to the goals of democracy and the City's stated core values. It certainly is discouraging to us as your volunteers and discourages public participation. The PUB exists directly in response to correcting the City's past decisions that resulted in

misuse of rates and to ensure adequate oversight of services and resources. It would be negligent not to learn from the past, utilize the knowledge and experience of staff to develop recommendations, and seek the PUB's and other stakeholders' feedback to make informed decisions. Despite the frustration of being overlooked, the PUB remains a resource that is committed to fulfilling our role as much as feasible of ensuring responsible, effective, and efficient services with the utilities. There are many questions that need to be addressed including how the City will meet regulatory, legal, and financial obligations. The PUB is eager to understand and provide feedback on the continued work of the Natural Resources Workgroup and their resulting recommendations. The Board requests the following:

- Willingness and commitment from Council and leadership to ensure adequate time to research, problem solve and plan for the most effective configuration of Natural Resources to ensure that goals are met within regulatory, legal, and financial constraints. Allow the Natural Resources Workgroup to continue their coordinated efforts and develop authentic recommendations, even if recommendations require a Portland Utility Board –Concerns regarding decision process Page | 3 shift from the rushed decision by Council on November 1st.

- Coordinated joint meeting and future updates with the PUB, the Parks Board and/or other relevant advisory groups to ensure consistent information sharing with coordinated and collaborative planning and feedback.

- Invitation and opportunity for the PUB to engage and provide feedback during planned Council work session(s) on Natural Resources.

- Timely and transparent communication with the PUB regarding issues related to the utilities under consideration, upcoming decisions, and options being considered. In particular, updates regarding the Natural Resources Workgroup recommendations but also budget and other policy issues.

- If Natural Resources consolidate under Parks, establish a clear goal of natural areas moving towards “good” or “excellent” asset condition as defined using City asset management principles, and make funding decisions that advance that goal. The Natural Resources budgets held harmless in the future ensuring neutral or increased budgets to improve asset condition, avoiding any risk of sacrifice to the financial strain experienced by other existing distressed Parks assets.

The Board will continue to engage with the bureaus to consider and inform decisions to effectively implement changes while attempting to mitigate the negative impacts. The PUB expects Council to more respectfully and effectively utilize our skills, expertise and willingness to serve.