



## Office of the City Administrator

Raymond C. Lee III, City Administrator

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December 31, 2025

To: Mayor Keith Wilson, Council President Pirtle-Guiney, Council Vice President Koyama Lane and Portland City Council

From: City Administrator Raymond C. Lee III and Chief Engagement Officer Amanda Garcia-Snell

Subject: Follow-up on Government Transition Advisory Committee (GTAC) recommendations to the Administration

Hello Mayor Wilson, Council President Pirtle-Guiney, Council Vice President Koyama Lane and Portland City Council,

This memo is the final quarterly update regarding the [recommendations](#) from the Government Transition Advisory Committee (GTAC). The GTAC advised then City Administrator Mike Jordan and the transition team on many aspects of charter change implementation from March 2023 to March 2025. The City is grateful for their insights, commitment and service. Their [recommendations](#) were focused on the new executive and legislative branches.

In [February](#), [April](#), and [September](#) 2025, the administration provided written status updates to the recommendations. One year into the new form of government, this is the final update from the administration on GTAC's recommendations; we look forward to continued engagement with all interested members via other city engagement channels. This final update is specific to the recommendations aimed at the Administration; there were additional recommendations shared with Council, Council Operations and the Auditor's office, not reflected here.

In addition to the updates provided in earlier memos, the administration offers the following updates:

### **Recommendation: Embed community engagement in our new government's culture**

*Update:* The new Chief Engagement Officer, hired in February 2025, is leading the effort to revamp our city's approach to community engagement by developing citywide strategies for comprehensive community engagement and aligning engagement work across the city. The Engagement officer is working closely with Council in the context of budget note implementation and has hosted listening sessions and other forms of engagement around the project with professionals in the city. Recommendations about next steps are expected in early 2026.



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- More information: The monthly City Administrator's Report to Council includes a budget note tracker, in November there was also a specific update on the Community Engagement Realignment, included below as Appendix A.

### **Recommendation: Citywide Strategic Planning**

*Update:* On December Council confirmed the Mayor's nominee for the new City Administrator, Raymond C. Lee III. One of his priorities is a citywide strategic plan; conversations will continue as he begins in the role (his first day was December 29). Also in late December, the City Council passed a resolution for annual Council strategic priority setting. Conversations are ongoing; this process may serve as a basis from which to develop the larger plan. Otherwise, work on this topic remains on hold while the City is focused on priority operational and policy efforts.

### **Recommendation: Participating in the city's new budget process**

*Update:* Looking ahead to next year's budget process, the city is committed to continuing partnerships with community-based organizations to ensure that all Portlanders have the chance to engage. As part of the Advisory Boards Enhancements project, the city is also looking at what the next steps may be for budget advisory committees, in alignment with the new form of government. Beginning mid-2026, staff will develop recommendations and provide options to Council for their consideration.

The city will start budget education and engagement earlier in the FY 2026-27 budget development process. CBO is reviewing this plan with the Finance Committee on January 5, 2026. Feedback on expanded budget education content has been provided via an advisory body and materials will be released in February 2026.

### **Recommendation: Recruiting the City Administrator**

*Update:* The new City Administrator, Raymond C. Lee III, was nominated by Mayor Wilson and confirmed by Portland City Council on December 10, 2025. He began in the role on December 29, 2025. The search for this new leader was nationwide, and the job description and job posting were rooted in the charter and informed by community engagement efforts that were conducted in 2024. Onboarding for the new City Administrator, including robust community engagement, is underway.

- More information: [Unanimous: City Council Confirms Lee as Portland's Next City Administrator | Portland.gov](#)



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### **Recommendation: Find savings in the new form of government.**

*Update:* In early 2025, the city began a strategic assessment aimed at realigning operational services including communications, engagement, equity, procurement, human resources and technology. The projects will restructure and streamline core services under Portland's new citywide organizational structure. These efforts aim to enhance service delivery while addressing the city's ongoing financial challenges. The City Administrator set 20% savings targets for those operational services. Council made several related budget decisions during this year's budget process, which are currently being implemented.

The communications realignment was approved by City Council in November 2025 as part of the fall budget adjustment, achieving 20 percent cost savings – equating to about \$1.8 million per year across all funds. Beginning in January 2026, all communications staff will be organized under the umbrella of a City Communications Office, with some staff embedded in service areas. Work continues on the equity and engagement realignment projects. Implementation is anticipated in early 2026.

The additional core services realignment effort focuses on redesigning and implementing changes to Human Resources, Technology, and Procurement services. Core bureau directors, shared service managers, Business Operations leads from each service area, and deputy city administrators are collaborating to develop proposals that meet both centralization goals and reduction targets. Leadership emphasized that future service structures should be shaped and led by those accountable for service outcomes.

### **Recommendation: Implement findings and recommendations in the Budget and Finance Staffing and Budget Process Transition Report**

*Update:* Key action items from GTAC's recommendations and report include implementation of a strategic planning process, developing the capacity and methodology to track metrics related to the strategic plan, and implementation of budget process reforms. Although strategic plan development is on hold (see "Recommendation: Citywide Strategic Planning" section above) CBO has worked to build the performance systems and processes to track and report metrics related to a strategic plan. These systems and processes can be adapted to a new strategic plan once it is ready.

As part of the FY 25-26 budget development work, CBO piloted a new system of record for performance metrics called Scorecard. This system allows for more advanced and less burdensome reporting, which includes better integration of narrative to better explain the data



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to the public. Last year, CBO also piloted a citywide- and service area- approach to performance, with an emphasis on high-level strategic outcomes and population-level indicators. To wrap up this data systems work, this year, CBO is completing the transfer of existing bureau- and program offer-level metrics to Scorecard.

Other process reforms that are in progress include those around staffing, budget engagement, and integrating equity in the budget process. The city is also continuing to explore different budget and finance staffing models, beginning with CBO's collaboration and communication with service areas through service area budget leads. The city is working toward formalizing organizational changes starting next calendar year. These organizational changes are intended to support clearer and more consistent budget data and analysis that will give decisionmakers better information throughout the budget process.

CBO is also starting budget education and engagement earlier in the process for FY 26-27 (see "Recommendation: Participating in the city's new budget process" above). And, the Office of Equity and CBO have been convening a group in the City to begin identifying tools, policy, and process changes to enhance equity in the budget process, including through updates to the budget equity tool.

- More information: [Performance Portland | Portland.gov](#)

### **Recommendation: Review and reform the City's overall approach to advisory bodies in the context of the new form of government, district representation, and a renewed emphasis on system-wide community engagement.**

*Update:* Since the spring, Community and Civic Life has been working with partners across the city on the Advisory Boards Enhancement Project to align the Advisory Bodies program with Portland's new form of government, standardize processes, and promote meaningful participation in advisory bodies moving forward. The project presented to Governance committee on December 8 and December 15, the proposed code changes are expected to be heard at City Council in mid-January. A project overview, status updates, opportunities for input and a final summary report can be found on the website below.

- The final report and supporting materials are posted to the project website. More information, including the timeline and reports, can be found here: [Advisory Bodies Enhancement Project | Portland.gov](#)

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# Appendix A: Core Service Realignment Project

## Spotlight: Community Engagement

### Background

The City of Portland is in the process of realigning core services to improve community experiences and outcomes, develop efficient and effective delivery models, and help address the City's budget challenges. City Council requested oversight of the communications, engagement, and equity realignments, as outlined in multiple budget notes: Morillo 10 and Koyama Lane 9 (which incorporates Avalos 9). The budget notes also requested engagement in the work of the Chief Sustainability Officer, although that discipline is not undergoing short-term organizational changes.

After consulting with Council President Pirtle-Guiney and the three councilors who drafted budget notes, the administration agreed on the following actions:

- Councilors who offered the budget notes will participate in a workgroup with the officers representing these disciplines, conducting a monthly deep dive on one topic.
- Following the monthly workgroup meeting, the relevant officer will provide an update in the City Administrator's Report to City Council.
- Our officers are happy to provide individual briefings upon request for councilors who would like additional information.

### Monthly Spotlight

Chief Engagement Officer Amanda Garcia-Snell met with the offices of Vice-President Koyama Lane and Councilors Morillo and Avalos in mid-October. The summary below reflects the information discussed.

### Realignment Process

- The community engagement alignment process began in early March 2025, shortly after the Chief Engagement Officer joined the city in late January. However, this work was paused from May – August 2025 as the future of centralized engagement was being considered within the budget process and unexpected staffing adjustments occurred in the Office of Community and Civic Life.
- To date the community engagement alignment process has included:
  - Leadership engagement, 13 meetings, including some with individual DCAs, one each with service area leadership teams, and seven different bureau directors
  - Staff engagement, 12 different meetings with various managers, supervisors and key engagement staff across the organization; and an introductory presentation at the City's monthly internal Citywide Equitable Engagement talk with 88 staff in attendance
  - An inventory and analysis of current engagement staffing, capacity, budget, strengths and weaknesses across all bureaus and offices

- Analysis of existing recommendations, reports and community input from efforts like Portland Engagement Project and Citywide Practices for Engagement Project, and other centralized engagement considerations
- Analysis of best practices research, with a focus on peer cities who operate similar forms of government
- Next steps in the process include:
  - Update to Council chiefs of staff
  - Conduct additional staff engagement, including listening sessions beginning in November to inform organizational staffing structure and the first citywide community engagement strategy
  - Share a proposed staffing model
  - Provide detailed implementation timing

## Draft Citywide Community Engagement Functions

The first citywide engagement strategy will serve as an anchor for staffing and resource decisions. While the strategy is still in development, the staffing and resources are being categorized in these three types to better understand potential impacts and considerations of a new organizational structure.



## Brief Status Updates on Other Citywide Practices

### Communications

The communications realignment is included in the fall Technical Adjustment Ordinance for the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget, which was presented to full Council in a work session Oct. 25. This pathway will

provide an opportunity for City Council to review the proposed communications staffing model and financial impacts. For additional details, see the main City Administrator's report.

### **Equity**

The major elements of the equity realignment have been on pause for the last several months, but work will be resuming soon to build upon the staffing and capacity inventory that was completed last Spring. Administrator Jordan has resumed the recruitment process for the City's inaugural Chief Equity Officer and a more detailed status update with opportunities for Council participation will be provided in the coming weeks.