

from: **Wheeler, Mayor** <MayorWheeler@portlandoregon.gov> via  
portlandoregongov.onmicrosoft.com to: "info@\_\_\_\_.org" <info@\_\_\_\_.org>  
date: Jun 16, 2020, 3:14 PM subject: RE: question about jailing people with mental

Hello,

Thank you for contacting Mayor Ted Wheeler's office – we appreciate you taking the time to write. The Mayor's office is receiving thousands of emails from the community each day. To make sure that the Mayor's message is consistent to everyone that has reached out to our office, our team has tried to make a complete response to the questions and concerns most often brought to our attention. We appreciate your patience and understanding.

### Police Budget and Reform

Ensuring police accountability is imperative, and is one of the Mayor's top priorities, especially in light of current events. The Mayor appreciates you taking the time to write to advocate for this change in PPB's practices and budget. The Mayor, the Portland Police Bureau, and the City are working with urgency on how we as a City can build a safer future for our Black communities and communities of color.

The Mayor understands that the City budget reflects our values. This is why the Mayor's proposed budget prioritizes Portland's unsheltered population, undocumented immigrants, and organizations that work to prevent hate crimes. Given the budget shortfall due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mayor called for a 6% reduction across all City bureaus, including PPB.

The Mayor is listening to the concerns from the community. In an effort to act immediately to interrupt systems of institutional racism and injustice, the Mayor is removing School Resource Officers (SROs) from Portland area schools and diverting \$1 million a year from the Police Bureau budget to invest in a community-led program to support and nurture a more positive educational experience for Black children. The Mayor has also signed a nationwide pledge to review police use of force policies with the community's input and reform those policies supported by the review's findings.

On June 9, the Mayor announced additional reforms. That includes dissolving the Gun Violence Reduction Team and the PPB's Transit Unit, along with redirecting \$7 million from PPB's budget and \$5 million from the City's budget to communities of color.

For more about these reforms, please see the press release here:

<https://beta.portland.gov/wheeler/news/2020/6/9/mayor-wheeler-police-reform-action-plan-june-9-2020>.

For years, the Portland Police Bureau has been working to create a more equitable and just policing system in Portland. The City has achieved substantial reforms under its Settlement Agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice, and recognizes that there is more work to be done to ensure a safer and more equitable future for Portland. You can read the Portland Police Bureau's equity goals and strategies here: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/642771>.

Regarding body cameras the Mayor and PPB spent time working towards the development of a body-worn camera pilot program, engaging the Portland community in 2019 about policy specifics. Significant work was done to implement this long overdue tool for police accountability. Unfortunately, however, the pilot program has been placed on hold due to a significant deficit in the City's budget – right now, the City must prioritize programs that focus on community health due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We're still hopeful that we will be able to implement a body-worn camera program, and we will continue to engage other City Council offices in developing support for the program. I encourage you also to reach out the City Council advocating for such a policy. I will let the Mayor and policy advisors know that you and many others have been writing and calling about this important issue.

## 8 Can't Wait

Ensuring police accountability is imperative and is one of the Mayor's top priorities, especially in light of current events. The Mayor appreciates you taking the time to write to advocate for changing the practices of the Portland Police Bureau (PPB).

PPB already has policies in place that address the three issues that the 8 Can't Wait campaign has highlighted for Portland. Below is an explanation of these policies and how they are put into practice.

### -Ban Chokeholds and Strangleholds

PPB stopped teaching the "carotid hold" technique following an incident in 1985 in which an officer's use of a carotid hold led to the death of a subject.

Officers are authorized to use whatever means necessary to protect the lives of themselves and others. Among other techniques, that includes a "vascular neck restraint." This technique is considered deadly force and is treated with equal gravity as other uses of deadly force, like using one's firearm. Officers are always instructed to begin providing medical assistance as soon as the subject is under control, as their wellbeing is the officers' responsibility.

### -Ban Shooting at Moving Vehicles

The only situation in which an officer is authorized to fire upon a moving vehicle is when "an immediate risk of death or serious physical injury to the member or others exists" (Directive

1010.00). Officers learn to avoid “intentionally positioning themselves in the path of a moving vehicle or in a location that is clearly vulnerable to vehicular attack,” and are instructed to move out of a vehicle’s path rather than firing at a moving vehicle or its occupants, whenever feasible.

Officers receive extensive training on the tactics of positioning, including the directive that “members shall not use poor tactics or positioning as justification for shooting at a moving vehicle.”

Additionally, all officers in firearms training learn the Cardinal Firearms Safety Rules. One of these rules is “Be aware of your target, your backstop and what is beyond.”

Shooting at a moving target is more dangerous than shooting at a stationary target due to the increased risk of missing the target and striking an unintended target. Additionally, firing at a moving vehicle poses additional risks: A moving vehicle with an incapacitated driver is still a threat to anyone in its path.

#### -Require Exhausting Other Means Before Shooting

During Patrol Procedures training, officers learn many tactics that are designed to de-escalate situations. These techniques include creating distance and barriers between officers and subjects, using time and patience, using clear and calm communication, having the appropriate amount of resources to address the situation, and disengaging from the call under certain circumstances.

Whenever possible, de-escalation is the first tactic used, and per PPB Directive, “members shall take proactive steps to eliminate the immediacy of the threat, establish control and minimize the need for force.” Training also includes using “only the objectively reasonable force necessary to perform their duties and overcome the threat or resistance of the subject under the totality of the circumstances.”

Probationary officers receive many hours of scenario-based training, and tenured officers continue to receive scenario training annually.

Training includes techniques in physical control, pepper spray, conducted electronic weapon (i.e., Taser), and collapsible baton, along with firearms training. Members must provide warnings whenever possible to provide an opportunity for subjects to change their behavior before force is used. Officers learn what type of force is authorized by policy based on the subject’s behavior and how to use the least amount of force necessary to gain control or stop a threat.

PPB’s policy on deadly force is as follows: “Members may use deadly force to protect themselves or others from what they reasonably believe to be an immediate threat of death or serious physical injury; or, if necessary to prevent escape, a member may use deadly force where the member has probable cause to believe that the subject has committed a felony crime

involving the infliction or threatened infliction of serious physical harm, and the member believes the subject poses an immediate threat of death or serious physical injury to the member or others.”

It is important to note that PPB Policy is more restrictive on the use of deadly force than both state and federal law.

Unfortunately, there will be times when, due to life safety, officers are not able to incrementally increase their levels of force as suggested. Situations can be dynamic and rapidly evolving, requiring officers to make what they believe to be life-or-death decisions to protect themselves or another person in a matter of seconds. PPB officers are taught to respect the sanctity of life – whether that of subject, a victim, or their themselves.

You can find the Portland Police Bureau’s Directives Manual: Use of Force Policies and Procedures here: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/article/751998>.

The Mayor is listening to community concerns about the PPB. In an effort to act immediately to interrupt systems of institutional racism and injustice, the Mayor is removing School Resource Officers (SROs) from Portland area schools and diverting \$1 million a year from the Police Bureau budget to invest in a community-led program to support and nurture a more positive educational experience for Black children.

On June 9, the Mayor announced additional reforms, all of which can be read about in this press release: For more about these reforms, please see the press release here: <https://beta.portland.gov/wheeler/news/2020/6/9/mayor-wheeler-police-reform-action-plan-june-9-2020>. He is committed to creating meaningful and lasting change in the bureau. The Mayor, the Portland Police Bureau, and the City are working with urgency on how we as a City can build a safer future for our Black communities and communities of color.

## Homelessness

The Centers for Disease Control has issued specific guidance for local jurisdictions regarding encampments and unsheltered individuals. In compliance with those public health guidelines, the City’s Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program (HUCIRP) has placed several emergency hygiene units in the community and is doing everything possible to allow people living in encampments to stay in their current locations, and to avoid collecting personal property for storage.

While there is no moratorium on campsite cleanups requiring people to move, HUCIRP has significantly increased the threshold. The only sites where movement might be required are those that pose a significant public health and safety risk, including those set up in the middle of a street blocking traffic and emergency vehicle access or next to fast-moving traffic such as a

highway on/off ramp. HUCIRP will continue to monitor situations at camps through community reports. Please continue to file reports using one of the following methods (HUCIRP recommends once or twice a week):

1. Campsite Report Form: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/campsites>
  2. PDX Reporter: <https://pdxreporter.org/> and then select the “campsite reporting” icon
  3. Calling City/County Information & Referral: 503-823-4000
- Filing a report through any one of these methods will automatically dispatch a team to pick up garbage and assess the situation.

## COVID-19

Oregon is reopening on a county-by-county basis. On June 5, Multnomah County applied to begin reopening. On June 11, Governor Brown announced that due to a rise in COVID-19 cases in Oregon, she was putting a hold on all county reopening applications for at least seven days. To find more information on Multnomah County’s reopening status, please visit the county’s dashboard here:

<https://multco.us/novel-coronavirus-covid-19/reopening-multnomah-county-amid-covid-19> or contact Multnomah County directly.

For more information about the reopening plan outlined by Governor Kate Brown, along with detailed reopening guidelines, please visit this website:

<https://govstatus.egov.com/reopening-oregon>.

For health information, please visit the Oregon Health Authority’s COVID-19 page here:

<https://govstatus.egov.com/OR-OHA-COVID-19>, or contact the Oregon Health Authority or your county’s health department.

## Other Requests

If you are requesting a meeting with the Mayor, please submit an online form through our website here: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/wheeler/72666>.

If you are requesting a proclamation, please email Sierra Ellis at [Sierra.Ellis@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:Sierra.Ellis@portlandoregon.gov).

Please send council testimony to the City’s Council Clerk’s office at [testimony@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:testimony@portlandoregon.gov).

Thank you again for your email. We hope you are staying safe and healthy.

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