

**Mayor Ted Wheeler
State of the City Address
Final - As Prepared for Delivery
April 12, 2018**

Thank you, Faith, for that tremendous introduction. I know I speak for everyone here when I say this:

We are inspired by your leadership,

And we are inspired by the work being done by your generation to transform your government and your country.

We were very intentional in our decision to move today's address from its traditional downtown location, here to East Portland at a place where young people are preparing for successful futures.

Thank you to Portland Community College, President Mark Mitsui, and Campus President Dr. Jessica Howard for hosting us today.

To those here and those watching or listening... my colleagues in government, honored guests, residents of the great City of Portland:

As I address you today on the State of our City, I ask you to join me in an examination of our current moment, the bigger picture, if you will.

At a time when young people like Faith are pushing society forward, government consistently finds itself two

or three steps behind the public that it is supposed to serve.

For example, overwhelming majorities of Americans say they want common sense gun legislation. Yet Congress does nothing.

Most Americans believe immigrants strengthen our country. And yet the rhetoric from Washington DC only serves to divide us.

Large majorities of Americans know climate change is real, that it is a threat to our planet and to humanity. And yet this administration is retreating from our global commitments.

Cities like Portland cannot wait on others. We must take this moment into our own hands. We must seize this opportunity and secure our own future according to our own vision and our own values.

We're lucky to be represented by a great City Council who understand the stakes of this moment. I am privileged to serve alongside Dan Saltzman, Nick Fish, Amanda Fritz, and Chloe Eudaly.

Thank you to our bureau directors and city employees who dedicate their working lives to the success of our city.

And thank you to City Auditor Mary Hull Caballero, who works with us effectively to keep our government transparent and accountable.

Portland is a global leader on many issues, among them is combatting climate change.

I was recently in Chicago with Rahm Emanuel, Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo, the Mayors of Vancouver, BC, Montreal, and the late Mayor Ed Lee of San Francisco. Together we recommitted our cities, along with more than 300 others, to the principles of the Paris Climate Accord, even as Donald Trump walks away from our nation's promises.

I was proud to talk to these local leaders about Portland's successful Climate Action Plan, and I was proud to tell them how our entire region is working together to get us on the path to 100% renewable energy by 2050.

Portland is also demonstrating to the world how to be a city that is welcoming to everyone, regardless of immigration status.

We have consistently reaffirmed our status as a sanctuary city, and have challenged the Trump administration in court to protect our ability to do so.

Some in the White House think that I, along with other like-minded mayors, should be arrested for our principled support of our immigrant communities.

I will continue to fight for our right to be an inclusive, welcoming city – yes, even if it means going to jail.

We are a pluralistic society. Immigrants have always been, and will always be, central to the fabric of America.

Moreover, we are abiding by the law. We're upholding the US constitution. Virtually every single federal court that has weighed in on this issue agrees with us and disagrees with the White House.

Portland, and other cities across America, are leading.

And that's a good thing. Most Americans live in cities. In fact, the last census found that more than 80% of all Americans live in urban areas... 80%. That's more than ever.

And as the trend toward growing cities unfolds, Portland is among the fastest growing cities in the United States. More than 100 people move to Portland every day.

There is a good narrative to be told. Again, this week, Portland made the short list as one of the most desirable places in America to live.

That's no surprise to any of us. People are moving here because, along with our natural beauty, they love our beer, our coffee, our donuts. They love the creative, entrepreneurial feel of the city, our maker culture.

They are coming here for economic reasons, too. The Seattle Times recently called Portland's economy "transformational." Forbes called Portland the best place in America for careers and business. The list goes on and on.

I think it's important that we be reminded now and then that a lot of things are right with Portland. These are

things for which we are rightly proud, and things for which people are rightly drawn to Portland.

But there is, of course, another side to the story. The challenges associated with rapid growth. Where are we all going to live? Where are we going to work? How are we going to get around with increasing traffic congestion? And, as we continue to grow as a city, how do we keep Portland affordable for those who have lived here for generations?

I have complete confidence that Portlanders are ready to take on the critical challenges we face right now. It won't be exclusively the work of government, but the efforts of our people that will cement our progress.

We know the key challenges that confront us in the present – homelessness, housing, policing, economic development – but we also recognize these challenges as opportunities to live our values, put them into action, and let them serve as an example to others.

I believe that every one of us is entitled to a warm, dry place to sleep at night.

We can't continue to call ourselves a progressive city as so many of our neighbors live, and too often die, on our streets. Homelessness represents nothing short of a humanitarian crisis. It is unacceptable to me, and I hope to you, and I expect us to continue to lead and innovate to find humane solutions to significantly reduce this problem.

This isn't just a Portland problem, we all know that. But when I recently convened the West Coast Mayors in Washington, DC at our Annual US Conference of Mayors, my colleagues made it clear that they look to us for ideas and inspiration. Again, we have an opportunity to lead.

That's why the first dollars allocated in my proposed budget will be dedicated to preventing homelessness, providing shelter for those living outside in the elements, and – most importantly – guiding people into permanent housing while connecting them to the services they need to get off and stay off the streets.

The City of Portland has a challenging budget and I've asked all bureaus to show me what 5% reductions in service would look like. My commitment to you is this: we will maintain the record investments we've made in the Joint Office of Homeless Services.

I would like to thank Chair Deborah Kafoury, for sharing a vision with me and for seeing it through. The Joint Office of Homeless Services is perhaps the greatest collaboration between the City of Portland and Multnomah County ever conceived and I'm energized to help lead it to greater successes in partnership with the Chair.

Just look what those record investments have accomplished.

The total shelter capacity in our community has doubled during the last couple of years, and during the last winter numbered over 2,300 beds. That's significantly more capacity last winter than I committed to reaching by next winter.

There has been a payback in results: We were one of the only cities in America that saw a reduction in the unsheltered population over the last two years—which we decreased by 11%. Don't get me wrong – the problem of homelessness is very serious and it continues to grow, but having fewer people living outside, exposed to the elements is proof that we can make progress.

We reduced our unsheltered population by increasing shelter capacity, placing more people into permanent housing, and by reducing the number of people who become homeless in the first place.

Almost 5,000 people obtained housing last year, hundreds more than the goals our partners in A Home for Everyone set before the year began, and more than twice the number placed before the coalition was created. That is 5,000 people who are no longer living outside, and no longer living in shelter. They have a place to call home. 5,000.

In addition, more than 6,000 people started receiving prevention services last year, almost 2,000 more than the year before. That is 6,000 who are right on the edge that we are preventing from becoming homeless in our community.

We know that homelessness is a challenge for our entire community. I get hundreds of calls, cards, emails, related to homelessness. Government cannot address it alone. I have called on the community repeatedly to give us all the ideas, the resources, and the expertise our community has to offer, on this problem and others.

Just this week, we announced a partnership between the private sector, government, academia, and philanthropic organizations that will get people experiencing homelessness off the streets, into a warm dry place with water and sanitation, and connect them with the help they need to stay off the streets.

The private sector is taking the lead with government as the partner. A generous contribution of \$1.5 million has been made by Tim Boyle to Harbor of Hope to get this project off the ground.

The plan is to create a shelter and service navigation center adjacent to the Broadway Bridge on the West side of the river. It will have room for more than one hundred people; access to showers, laundry and bathroom facilities; and, most importantly, will connect people to the specific services they need for their individual circumstances.

There is a real need for this type of programming in nearly every Portland neighborhood, and Downtown specifically. And this project will serve as proof-of-concept that public/private partnerships in Portland can work.

I know so many around this city agree with me about the need. However, we cannot only support shelter if it's not in our own back yards. We cannot only support more affordable housing as long as it's not in our neighborhood.

As we make progress on homelessness, we must also address the factors that lead people to homelessness in

the first place. We must ensure that Portland remains a city that is accessible and affordable for everyone.

I don't want millionaires to be the only people who can afford to live downtown. I don't want service industry workers to have a two-hour commute.

I want a city where we actively create housing options at every income level and for people of all ages.

And I am confident saying that the City Council is united on this. Some may confuse the inherently complicated and messy decision-making process with the decisions that are ultimately made, but your City Council has consistently voted in favor of more housing despite otherwise important and competing values.

Housing is important. People are highly engaged on the issue. Everyone has an opinion. But I want to be clear about our results.

Annual production and permitting levels are higher than at any point in the last 15 years. In 2017, there were 14,000 units in the production pipeline, including permits.

More than 600 affordable housing units came online in 2017—more than double the number of units in the prior year.

And this year will be another record year. There are currently more than 700 newly affordable units under construction and slated to open in 2018. This will be the largest number of affordable units ever produced by the City of Portland in a single year in modern history. An

additional 1300 units are beginning construction and will open their doors in 2019.

City Council will soon approve a plan to allow for greater height and density in the Central City to create more housing, all of which will be subject to the Council's inclusionary housing program. That alone has the potential to create thousands of units of workforce housing.

We passed the MULTE program, incentivizing those with market rate developments in the pipeline to include affordable housing units in their projects, so we can more quickly put more affordable housing units on the ground. I urge our County colleagues to join the City Council in taking this up and passing the program at the levels that the city has put forward.

We passed major tenant protections this year, including making permanent an existing policy requiring landlords to provide relocation assistance to tenants they evict without cause or who cannot afford a double digit rent increase. We expanded the pool of tenants who are eligible for this greatly needed protection.

And we are investing the housing bond dollars approved by Portland voters. Proponents of the housing bond promised that 1,300 units of permanent affordable housing would be created at a variety of affordability levels within 5 – 7 years. And, we are on track to accomplish that.

As of today, in the first 18 months, we have nearly half of the units promised to voters in process, in both new

developments and acquisitions of existing buildings – providing new housing opportunities and preventing displacement.

But I think we have an opportunity to do even better. I went to the legislature to seek passage of a referral to the ballot of a constitutional amendment that would allow us to invest in affordable housing in partnership with private sector and institutional partners.

If voters approve it in November, our bond dollars will go much farther. We might be able to double, or even triple, the number of units created by the affordable housing bond. If metro moves forward with their housing bond, this would allow us to leverage those dollars, too.

These kinds of state-wide and region-wide efforts are essential to solving our housing emergency.

I'm asking you to vote for the constitutional amendment when it comes to the ballot in November. Will you do that? Can I count on you?

While we address access and affordability in the rental market, we must also provide more opportunities for home ownership. A home represents the ability to create wealth, not just for your family today but for generations to come.

Our current efforts are falling behind. I was very disappointed in the findings of the recent N/NE Housing Report. The program, created four years ago, has not had the kind of results that meet my expectations.

“We have come some of the way, not near all of it. There is much yet to do.”

These were the words shared by President Lyndon B. Johnson fifty years ago. And these words still ring true, as we recognize and celebrate the passing of the 1968 civil rights act, most commonly known as the Fair Housing Act.

To the housing experts here today, to the employees of the council offices and bureaus, and to our community activists, your tireless work and unsung heroics both past and present have helped craft the guiding narrative to increase housing choices for the most vulnerable residents. Thank you. Your energy and creativity have always called to question whether our best actions meet the best of our intentions. As the Mayor of Portland, this is what I define as the Portland spirit.

As I mentioned before, there is much left to do. Yet I am convinced, we can get there, I know we can, but we can only do that together. It will take a recommitment from all of us, to the next fifty years and beyond to ensure equal and fair housing accessibility to all Portlanders.

In mentioning this, I want to be clear here; Portland has a very storied history of discriminatory practices that eliminated housing opportunity for many of our brothers and sisters of color; we know how de-facto and de-jure segregation and restrictive covenant practices eliminated the choices of many Portland families.

We know that some of the very neighborhoods we live in are the result of those same housing practices that lasted generations.

We know that the involuntary displacement and the discrimination of entire communities resulted in a legacy of lost opportunity, of lost wealth creation, and created an environment for a lack of trust.

This gap in trust, can only be addressed if we honestly recognize these actions of the past, some of which are still playing out in many ways in our present, and are willing to discuss them, and take alternative actions to the best of our abilities, to right these wrongs.

The spirit of Portland is that of solutions. That pioneering spirit that runs through the veins of all those who call Portland home.

Join me in reaffirming our commitment to fair housing for all. To locking hand in hand and arm in arm and moving towards a reality that affirms our commitment to the intent of the Fair Housing Act both in spirit and in practice.

That intentionality around equity in housing has also been my goal in ensuring public safety.

When I ran for Mayor, I promised that I would conduct a national search for a new police chief. One who would lead us to a more effective, accountable 21st century police bureau. One who would build trust with the community. One who would put increased emphasis on professionalism, training and de-escalation strategies. One who understood the tension many in our community feel about policing and police tactics. One who would help

us live up to our commitments under the DOJ settlement agreement.

We conducted the search. We included community voices every step of the way. And our search reflected the community's voice. Through surveys and focus groups, we not only learned what the community wants in a police chief; we also homed in on what the community expects of law enforcement in this city.

A national debate ensued because right there in a job posting that went out across America, I stated that the successful police chief in our city had to understand and be prepared to address our own racist history, and the implications it has had for policing today.

Because, just like policing in America is experiencing a transformation, policing in Portland is experiencing a transformation too.

You told me that you wanted a police chief who is community and people-oriented, who values diversity, and understands the importance of community policing. You also told me that you wanted the next police chief to prioritize community engagement. In fact, throughout the survey, the community made it abundantly clear that its primary expectation of the Portland Police Bureau was community policing. The community made this demand.

A few months ago, I welcomed new Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw.

She and I share a vision for community policing in Portland. You should know your neighborhood officer by

their first name. Your neighborhood officer should partner with you in building your community. Our officers should be engaging youth through after-school activities and youth-based programs. Community policing and engagement can't be limited to just showing up for events. The Police Bureau can and should do a better job informing you all about their policies and practices. But it doesn't stop with the simple sharing of information – the Police Bureau needs to collaborate with you. You need to have a say in what community policing in Portland really means.

That is why the Portland Committee on Community-Engaged Policing – PCCEP – will be so important. For the first time, there will be formal and direct collaboration between the Police Bureau and a citizen body on policy development. This goes beyond the Settlement Agreement, and straight to the heart of what Portlanders have been demanding for years. It's long overdue. So, I'll announce here today, that the application for the PCCEP will be made available next Friday, April 20. If you care about this city, and believe in the changes that need to be made, I encourage you to apply. Portland needs you.

How the Portland Police Bureau carries out their duties matters. Earlier I mentioned Portland's racist history, and the implications for policing in 2018. I expect our officers to be culturally competent and aware of their biases when interacting with community members who do not look like them. Implicit bias training for officers is scheduled to begin in May, and will include direct conversations with invited community members on their perceptions and experiences.

I expect recruitment and hiring to be equitable to ensure that we are working towards an inclusive police force. In short, I expect equity to radiate through every part of the Portland Police Bureau. That is why I am including in my proposed budget funds that will support PPB's Office of Equity and Diversity in hiring an analyst to move the Police Bureau forward in analyzing its data – particularly stops data – and making hiring decisions with an equity lens.

Chief Outlaw leads a bureau with fewer officers today than a decade ago, despite a 10 percent increase in Portland's population.

Dispatched calls for service increased by 25 percent in the last five years—including a 97 percent increase in stolen vehicle calls.

Over the past five years, the trend for total response time for all calls has increased significantly.

That's why, when I release my proposed budget at the end of this month, I will ask my council colleagues to allow the Police Bureau to hire more officers. Here's the truth: person crimes – so, that includes assaults, homicides, sex offenses, etc. – have increased and are rising at a higher rate than last year; property crimes have also increased and are rising at a higher rate than last year. We are seeing more fatal traffic collisions, in addition to more injury collisions and hit and runs. Portland's population is exploding, crime is in fact rising, and it is irresponsible for any elected official to pretend otherwise.

When anyone in the community calls 911, at a minimum, they expect the police to show up on a timely basis. Chronic understaffing of our police bureau has made it difficult, and sometimes impossible, to live up to this basic expectation.

We are reaching the tipping point. Not only are there more emergencies, but there are more concurrent emergencies which result in situations where the victim of a crime is forced to wait an hour because there are literally no officers available to help them.

The police are compensating for this lack of authorized personnel by working the ones they have longer and harder using overtime funds. This is very cost-ineffective and leads to burnout.

As police bounce from call to call, they cannot take the time they need to get to know the community, build trust, or hear from the people they serve in the ways they want.

The vision is to return to a full community policing model. Where officers are out of cars and walking in every neighborhood, meeting residents and business owners, attending neighborhood meetings and events, and interacting with and building trust with the people they serve.

This is the vision I promoted when I ran for office. I asked Chief Outlaw, who shares that vision, to put together a long-term plan – not for one year or one budget cycle – to achieve this vision. But we've got to start right now.

I ask you to support this plan. Getting back to a full community policing model will improve public safety in Portland and build community trust.

As we think about that foundation of trust, it allows us to think about the future city that we will give to the next generation, like Faith. I believe that every young person should have the opportunity to connect to a job, and eventually to a career, to support their economic prosperity as well as that our community's residents and businesses.

Yet there are over 30,000 young people ages 16 - 24 in the Portland Metro area who are not connected to school or work. This is a huge opportunity lost for our residents and our businesses.

My council of economic advisors, representing many small and large Portland businesses across industries, along with Worksystems and Prosper Portland, identified having access to a diverse, qualified pipeline of talent as their number one priority for a prosperous growth outlook.

Together, we will launch Connect 2 Careers, a new program that connects young people to job opportunities, and Portland area employers to a diverse young talent pool. It's a smart solution that support individual prosperity as well as business competitiveness.

Tomorrow, April 13th, over 40 employers, 30 community organizations and 100s of volunteers will join together for the Inaugural Opportunity Youth Job Fair. The City is proud to be a major sponsor of this event which strives to

bring opportunities to those who will define our economic and future growth, young people.

I'm calling on businesses to hire through this program and join the Connect2 Careers partnership.

The city is supporting, through our 25X25 Jobs plan, the education and career training that is essential to qualify for the jobs that will grow here in technology, health care, construction and other fields.

I'm so proud of the work we did this year on the CEIP Community Equity and Inclusion Plan to ensure that as the city builds, minority contractors and women will get their fair share of the work, and that their workers will get the training they need to build good careers.

We are a changing city. And the question before us is this: Do we want to lead this transformation or do we want it to take place – for better or worse – without us?

I say we lead the transformation together!

I sought the office of Mayor of Portland because I believe Portland can lead while others have stagnated. I believe Portland can create partnerships while others sow divisions. I believe Portland can take the void created by empty rhetoric, and fill it with tangible results.

Despite declining federal and state funding, we are leading a revitalization of our crumbling infrastructure. The plan, called Build Portland, will invest to \$600 million over 20 years to maintain our roads, parks, and other civic infrastructure.

The current infrastructure gap represents a significant long-term liability for the city and threatens to deprive future residents of the services that make Portland one of the world's most livable cities.

City Council recently approved the first seven projects selected for Build Portland. These investments will improve the safety of our roads, the accessibility of our amenities, and will strengthen our economy.

Together, we are not merely building a city. We have a chance to build a community.

Imagine what we can accomplish together.

We will be a city of complete neighborhoods, that include housing, jobs, active transit, good schools, and a wealth of food options.

Transportation infrastructure will respond both to the needs of today and the challenges of the future.

We will leverage our understanding that housing, education, and economic prosperity are all linked, and that prosperity will be shared by all.

We will be a city where all women – including women of color who make less than their white peers – make the same amount as men who do the same work.

We will be a community for people of all ages. Age-friendly cities recognize we must strive to engage people of all ages socially, civically and economically. I believe

that age-friendly cities will be more desirable, successful, and economically viable than those that are not.

Our skyline will be redefined. The Broadway Corridor and the Post Office site in Northwest, Zidell to the South, OMSI and the Rose Quarter in the Central Eastside, and Gateway in the East.

These developments are exciting and will catalyze housing, jobs, greenspaces, urban habitat, river access, active transportation, and many other exciting opportunities.

I am optimistic about our future, I am optimistic about our people, and I know that together we will succeed. Together, working in partnership, Portland won't just be a city that works, but a city that works for everyone.

Thank you!