



Office of Mayor Ted Wheeler
City of Portland

DATE: January 12, 2021
TO: Carmen Rubio, Commissioner
FROM: Ted Wheeler, Mayor
RE: Bureau and Liaison Assignments

As I look ahead to 2021, I am very excited to welcome you to the Council, and excited to work with you on behalf of our community.

Portlanders expect and deserve for their City leaders to develop and advance a shared agenda that is reflective of their values. Our unique form of government presents an opportunity to leverage our collective authority, platform, and leadership to make real progress, quickly, on shared goals. As we have discussed, I look forward to working with you and our colleagues to take advantage of this opportunity.

I have shared that livability, homelessness, and safety are top priorities for me. Thank you for sharing your feedback, and for talking with me about your interests and priorities. I am grateful for your partnership in this important work, and for your leadership with the following bureaus and liaison responsibilities:

- Portland Parks & Recreation (PPR)
- Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS)
- Office for Community Technology (OCT)
- Open and Accountable Elections Program (per City Code)
- Regional Arts and Culture Council (RACC)
- Portland's 5 Centers for the Arts
- League of Oregon Cities
- Mt. Hood Cable Regulatory Commission
- Metro Policy Advisory Committee

As Commissioner-in-Charge of these bureaus, and liaison to these key pieces of work, I ask that you include the following on your lists of priorities, and partner with me on items, noted below, that will require our collective attention and leadership to be successful:

- O'Bryant Square re-opening: O'Bryant Square is fenced off and inaccessible to immediate neighbors and visitors to downtown. PPR, Bureau of Transportation, the Portland Parks Foundation, and community stakeholders have been loosely coordinated in the work to stabilize the block, bring the fence down, reopen the space, and move toward a long-term vision. There are a number of complexities which have slowed the work: restrictions associated with the property, the multi-bureau coordination required to advance the capital work, scarcity of resources. I ask that you partner with Commissioner Hardesty to ensure that PPR and PBOT work closely together to advance the project and move quickly toward an interim solution to bring the fence down.
- PPR/Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) partnership: PPR and BES have overlapping missions, values, and programs. Commissioner Nick Fish worked during his years as Commissioner in charge of these bureaus to develop and advance a shared agenda, particularly around natural area management and the bureaus' separate but related tree programming. I ask that you partner with Commissioner Mapps to ensure this coordination continues to mature.
- RACC native art plan: The land within our official city limits has been home to indigenous populations for thousands of years. This history is not acknowledged and celebrated in the way it should be. I ask that you work with RACC leadership to develop a plan which highlights the history of indigenous cultures in our region. I ask that you coordinate with Tribal Relations Director Laura John, and that this work be done in partnership with PPR so their shared community spaces can be a platform for information, art, and events.
- Community art: I believe community artists and art can help be a tool for community-building, and a tool to prevent and disrupt graffiti and vandalism. I ask that you work with RACC and community partners to explore and pursue strategies to increase street art, with a particular focus on areas that are frequently vandalized.
- Community Safety Transition Director: I strongly support this position and the work to transition our public safety system into a community safety system tailored to our community's needs. I expect that all of Council will continue to prioritize this work, and that we will collectively support the successful candidate as they lead us through the complexities of this change management effort.
- Sustainable and equitable RACC funding: The City's longstanding and significant investment in RACC is not matched by our regional partners, calling into question whether RACC is truly able to develop and support a coordinated regional approach to arts and culture. Additionally, RACC does not enjoy the strong base of philanthropic support that many of its peer organizations rely on. I ask that you work with Executive Director Madison Cario and RACC's Board to increase regional and philanthropic investments in the organization so that the Portland metro region is home to a diverse, well-supported, sustainable arts and culture economy and community of art and artists.

- Public space management: Shared community spaces should be safe, welcoming, and accessible to all. This includes rights of way as well as parks and other public spaces. I will continue to work with Commissioner Ryan, the Office of Management and Finance, and the Joint Office of Homeless Services to ensure that camp management prioritizes outreach and public health. I ask that PPR continue to partner in this approach.
- Climate action: BPS Director Andrea Durbin has been asked to develop and implement robust, sustainably-funded climate and air quality programming in her bureau. I support this work and ask that you continue to move toward implementation. I ask also that you work with Director Durbin to follow up on the Climate Emergency Declaration, including with energy efficiency and retrofit work in the built environment, both internal to the City and in the community. Lastly, I ask that you partner with me in this work, as I will continue to participate in national and international climate conversations.
- Shelter to Housing Continuum: In 2019 Council directed BPS to amend City Code to better respond to our homelessness crisis. A multi-bureau workgroup including representation from several Council offices has developed and proposed draft language to the Planning and Sustainability Commission. I ask that you continue to support BPS in advancing this proposal to City Council for consideration adoption before the declared Housing State of Emergency expires this spring.
- Small bureau alignment and efficiency: Chief Administrative Officer Tom Rinehart has worked with me on a review of many of the City's small bureaus and has identified options to save money and streamline our operations through restructuring and in some cases consolidation. I ask that you meet with CAO Rinehart for a briefing on this work as it relates to OCT, and that you partner with him and with Commissioner Hardesty and me to implement the consensus proposal he has developed. I am happy to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about this approach before it is implemented.
- Permitting: During the COVID-caused recession, as we hope to provide creative, nimble permitting services to ensure that we move into recovery quickly and sustainably – and are able to protect and preserve the small and local businesses that make Portland special – I have asked Bureau of Development Services Commissioner Ryan to work with Director Esau, other permitting bureaus, and me to develop and propose emergency steps to speed up permit approval across all categories. My goal is that as we build back Portland's economy, we support its unique aspects (for example, food carts) and the entrepreneurs who are its heart and soul. I ask you to ensure that PPR leadership participates fully and constructively in this conversation.

Again, I am deeply grateful for your service on the Council, and look forward to being your partner through the next four years of critical work.