6/10/20

Dear Mayor Wheeler, Commissioners Fritz, Hardesty and Eudaly

The King Neighborhood Association affirms our allegiance and support of our black neighbors and all who are fighting for the elimination of systemic oppression and institutional racism. We grieve with those who have suffered from policies based on white supremacy and ask that Portland leaders seize this opportunity to enact meaningful change.

We support efforts to change the way police engage in our communities and shift the focus back to community policing instead of aggressive, and often deadly, enforcement. Most important is the need to change the culture of the PPB - especially through the training of new officers - to ensure that our police officers are dedicated to a community-police partnership that relies on building relationships instead of war-like tactics.

Specifically, we support proposals by Commissioner Hardesty to eliminate three programs that have a disproportionately negative impact on communities of color - the Gun Violence Reduction Team (GVRT), the School Resource Officer (SRO) program, and PPB’s contract with TriMet to serve as transit police officers.

We also call for

* A truly independent police accountability board with subpoena authority that includes community representatives with voting privileges.
* A review process for fatal police shootings and deaths in police custody by a special prosecutor or the Oregon Attorney General’s office.
* A disciplinary process that cannot be easily overturned by a state arbitrator.
* The end of qualified immunity for officers.
* The creation of a national police misconduct database.

It is time Portland leaders acknowledge the impact so many decades of unjust and oppressive policies have had on our communities. We need to demonstrate our commitment to implement meaningful change by taking tangible steps to address these wrongs now.

Sincerely,

Amy Wilson, Chair

King Neighborhood Association