

Candidate Name: Bob Weinstein
Campaign Contact: Bob Weinstein
Phone #: 907-617-4979
Email: bobalaska@gmail.com

Do you want United for Portland's endorsement and support?

Yes. I would be honored to have United for Portland's endorsement and support.

What's your approach to ending unsheltered homelessness in Portland?

As a new Portland City Council member, my approach to address homelessness and housing affordability would be:

1. Ensure that this issue is one of the top priorities for the new Mayor and Council to address, and that we are brought up to speed on the current status as quickly as possible. To that end, I would suggest that between the election and January 1 there be a review of the current status, and recent history, of the need for housing and shelter, if City/County/Metro programs have been successful in reducing the gap between housing/shelter needs and people in need, and other related issues. This would include a review of current needs for permanent supportive housing, as well as regional success in moving people into housing.

I would make sure that this review involved community partners, developers, and fellow council members. Importantly, we need to learn what has been working and what has not been working, and support the former while adjusting the latter.

2. Assure that there is clear leadership and accountability to streamline decision-making and resource deployment.
3. Developing a coordinated entry system for all services to reduce duplication and ensure individuals receive appropriate care. A coordinated access system like Houston's streamlines the process for accessing housing and support services. Research has shown that coordinated access systems help communities make it easier for people experiencing homelessness to get help.
4. Implementation of a Built for Zero approach, where the goal is to drive the number of people experiencing long-term, chronic homelessness down to functional zero. This uses quality, real-time data to identify and house those with the greatest needs.
5. Streamline permitting for affordable housing projects: I support streamlining the approval process for developments that include a significant percentage of affordable units. By reducing bureaucratic hurdles and expediting approvals for affordable housing projects, we can significantly cut down on soft costs and time-related expenses.

<https://www.sandiego.gov/insidesd/san-diego-improves-permitting-times-residential-and-commercial-projects>

San Diego recently reduced permitting time for certain residential and commercial construction projects, including affordable housing, from 12 months to 30 days. Why can't we do that in Portland?

6. Expand shelter capacity and services: I'll push for increased coordination with Multnomah County to expand our emergency shelter system, with some focus on shelters with integrated support services. This will provide immediate relief for those experiencing homelessness while we work on long-term solutions.

In sum, we need a multi-pronged approach addressing both immediate needs and long-term affordability.

**How do we create housing sufficient to meet future needs, not just current needs?
What mix of housing does that look like to you?**

As a candidate for Portland City Council, I think we need to listen more to builders and developers about the barriers they have to building more affordable and market rate housing. Zoning and development policies are crucial levers for addressing our city's affordable housing needs, now and in the future. Here are some key ideas I propose:

1. Review middle housing options: I support a review of efforts to relax zoning restrictions to allow more duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes in single-family neighborhoods in order to increase housing supply without dramatically altering neighborhood character. It is my understanding that this did not result in nearly as many projects as advocates predicted. If so, why?
2. Transit-oriented development: We should incentivize higher-density, mixed-use development near major transit corridors. This can create more housing while reducing car dependency.
3. Streamline permitting: Our current permitting process is often slow and cumbersome. I propose creating a fast-track approval process for projects that include a significant percentage of affordable units. As I pointed out above, San Diego appears to have done this. If San Diego can, why not Portland?

The mix of housing would be the full range of housing types, from multi-family to single family, and from affordable, subsidized housing to market rate housing.

When you think of public safety, what does that mean to you? What will you do to ensure public safety for all Portlanders as a member of the city council?

My vision for public safety is rooted in a comprehensive, evidence-based approach that addresses law enforcement needs and the root causes that can lead to crime and disorder.

I agree with this quote from Vice President Kamala Harris: *“Still driving me is the notion that safety is a fundamental civil right. I believe that people have a right to feel safe on the streets and in their homes.”*

I am deeply committed to ensuring all of our neighborhoods are safe places to live, work, and raise families. This means funding and supporting the Portland Police Bureau to ensure we have sufficient staffing levels, training, and resources to allow officers to do their jobs effectively. My goal is to strengthen the relationship between the police force and the community, promoting transparency, accountability, and mutual respect.

My focus is on making Portland a safe, livable city by taking a balanced, common-sense approach that respects the rule of law and the men and women tasked with upholding it. We need to hire more police officers. Second, we need to improve trust between police and people in the neighborhoods they serve. This is important because the first won't work without the second.

We need to emphasize dealing with repeat offenders. I hope the new DA will address that and other issues that have made law enforcement even harder.

We must invest in upstream preventative measures like youth programs, job training, addiction treatment, affordable housing, and mental health support. Too often, we ask our police to be the catch-all response for all public safety problems.

Since a significant part of improving public safety is moving homeless people off the streets into shelters and enforcing the upcoming ban on open use of hard drugs, we need to make sure that mental health and drug addiction treatment services are present to meet the needs.

What do you see as Portland's economic engine, and what do you believe it should be for the future?

Portland's economic engine has traditionally been diverse, built on industries like manufacturing, technology, healthcare, and professional services, as well as a strong downtown core. However, our city's greatest strength lies in its innovative spirit and commitment to sustainability.

For the future, I believe Portland's economic engine should focus on:

1. Clean technology and renewable energy: Leveraging our existing expertise in sustainability to become a hub for green innovation.
2. Advanced manufacturing: Embracing Industry 4.0 technologies to revitalize and modernize our manufacturing sector. An example is the recent decision by Daimler to select Portland as the location for their engineering facility for electric trucks.

3. Creative and digital industries: Nurturing our thriving arts scene and tech startup ecosystem to drive cultural and technological innovation.
4. Healthcare and life sciences: Expanding our world-class research institutions and biotech companies to improve health outcomes and create high-paying jobs.
5. Sustainable tourism: Promoting our natural beauty, culinary scene, and unique culture to attract visitors while maintaining our commitment to environmental stewardship.
6. Small business growth: Supporting local entrepreneurs and fostering a diverse, resilient small business community. Historically a high percentage of new jobs come from startups and small business growth.
7. Revitalizing downtown by reimagining what the downtown of the future should look like. This could include incentivizing office-to-residential conversions where feasible as well as replacing aging office buildings with new residential construction.

To achieve this vision, we must invest in education and workforce development, improve our infrastructure, streamline regulations for businesses, and cultivate public-private partnerships. By focusing on these areas, we can create a vibrant, inclusive economy that provides opportunities for all Portlanders while maintaining our city's unique character and values.

Tell us about your leadership style. How will you work with constituents and interest groups? How are you going to address the inevitable disagreements in a brand new council of 12?

- A. Leadership style: My leadership style derives from a unique blend of experience and skills that I believe will be valuable in serving our community effectively.
 1. Experienced Public Official: I have a proven track record as a public official, having served as mayor and city councilor in Alaska. During my 18 years in these roles, I gained insights into governance, community engagement, and decision-making processes. This experience has prepared me to navigate the complexities of local government and advocate for policies that benefit our residents. As I said above, I have experience with collective bargaining, including with public safety unions.
 2. Effective Communication and Collaboration: Throughout my career, I have consistently demonstrated my ability to communicate effectively with diverse groups, including community members, business leaders, and public officials. My experience as a superintendent and mayor required me to build strong, collaborative relationships and work toward consensus on complex issues. I understand the importance of listening to and integrating the perspectives of all stakeholders to achieve shared goals.
 3. Good listener and learner: As I have often been reminded since the beginning of my campaign, there are many issues on which I initially lack knowledge and information. When that occurs, my practice has been to reach out to those with expertise and information and learn as much as I can, whether it involves public safety staffing, affordable housing, the CEI Hub and Willamette River, or many other issues facing Portland.
 4. Responding to Constituents: In addition to the positions referenced above, I also worked as a state-based staffer for an Alaska U.S. Senator for six years. While part of my job

involved policy matters, much of it also involved responding to concerns that citizens had brought to the senator's attention, often requiring contact with officials at the relevant federal department.

On the council, I will support the development of a constituent management system- like the one I used as a U.S. Senate staffer- so Portlanders actually get a response from their elected officials. City Hall recently stated that city council members won't have a role in responding to concerns or problems with the city expressed by constituents, who will be directed to use 311.

I disagree. City councilors are elected to serve the people of Portland, and that includes being responsive to their needs and concerns. In my years of experience as an elected city official and staff for U.S. Senator Mark Begich, I learned that constituents have many important reasons to contact their elected officials. And that they expect a response from their elected representatives.

B. Addressing the inevitable disagreements in a brand new council of 12:

Disagreements are not only inevitable but can be valuable in fostering robust debate and better decision-making. My approach will be threefold:

1. Promote active listening and respect for diverse viewpoints.
2. Focus on data-driven, objective analysis of issues.
3. Seek common ground and work toward compromise when possible.

I believe that by maintaining professionalism, emphasizing our shared goals across all districts for Portland's betterment, and being willing to find collaborative solutions, we can navigate disagreements productively and serve our city effectively

What would you do to align Portland's taxing and spending with our city's needs and values?

On my homepage, I have an excerpt from a December 2023 Oregonian editorial: **"We need a financial reckoning. We need our local jurisdictions as well as the public to examine how we pay for public services, decide on priorities and strategize how to better meet obligations."**

Why?

As you know, we currently have several City/County/Metro taxes that have targeted uses. The Portland Clean Energy Fund is generating \$210 million per year, 7 times the revenue that was projected by its advocates.

Of similar concern to me is the massive surplus growing in the Preschool for All program. A few months ago, County Commission staff made a presentation to the County Commission showing that expenses would be exceeding expenditures in a couple years, so a .8 % increase in the

1.5% Preschool tax - a 53% increase- would be needed. Based upon my budget experience, I sent an email to the county asking if the data included fund balances, and if not, to provide me with the fund balances since the inception of the tax. It did not!

As of a few months ago, **the fund balance for the recently ended fiscal year was estimated to increase to \$409 million**, many times the current annual program needs. As the editorial noted, "Portland and Multnomah County are simultaneously raking in cash while they are scrambling for money to cover basic services."

Finally, over a month ago, I was the first city council candidate to oppose Initiative 17 (now Measure 118), which proposes a 3% gross revenue tax on businesses with \$25 million or more in annual revenue that will give an untargeted payment of \$750-\$1,600 to every Oregonian- including wealthy people who don't need it.

We will need new leadership in local government if we are going to make changes so that basic services that Portlanders support, like public safety and neighborhood livability -and fixing potholes- are funded adequately.

How do we get there? One suggestion is to implement a "Critical Needs First" budget policy, requiring 75% or more of discretionary general fund dollars to be allocated to public safety, homelessness and affordable housing solutions, neighborhood livability (including downtown revitalization) and essential infrastructure before considering other expenditures.

This policy directly addresses the priority of focusing spending on critical concerns by:

1. Ensuring the vast majority of funds go to top priorities
2. Creating a clear, measurable mandate for budget allocation
3. Forcing tough decisions on lower-priority spending

Is there an issue, topic, or policy we didn't ask about, but is very important to you? If so, feel free to ask and answer your own question(s).

Yes.

Should Multnomah County and the City of Portland better coordinate their resources to reduce homelessness and substance abuse, and meet mental health needs? How?

To effectively address homelessness, substance abuse, and mental health needs, Multnomah County and the City of Portland must significantly improve their coordination and resource allocation.

I think that the lack of an adequate governmental response has made the problem greater than it would have been if the city and county had had a better relationship. Better coordination of

financial resources deployment and services to homeless people could and should have occurred from the earliest days of local governments attempting to mitigate the issue.

The recent rollout of the deflection plan is a prime example of the county chair making unilateral decisions which ignore input from other county commissioners, professionals, and other local governments. Her response to a reporter's question at a recent press conference was stunning. Who is actually going to get successfully deflected into treatment with a vague, ineffective process?

To improve city-county coordination and cooperation, we must elect people for both County and City positions who are both willing to make tough decisions, who commit to working together to address these issues, and who will insist on accountability. That means me (of course!) and people like Vadim Mozyrsky for the County Commission.