

## Kudos and expectations for the mayor's budget

Mayor Charlie Hales and the rest of City Council continue to send a message that housing matters. In his 2015-16 proposed budget, the mayor has allocated an additional \$5.9 million on housing. This comes out of a nearly \$50 million surplus the city has this year.

### EDITORIAL

It includes funding for year-round women's shelter, homeless veterans, home ownership and preventing displacement in North and Northeast Portland, public safety and rent assistance — including an effort to support some of the harder to reach people on the streets. Kudos.

Housing commissioner Dan Saltzman and advocates had hoped the mayor's budget would include a \$5 million investment in the Housing Investment Fund — a fund created to help to acquire land and build more affordable housing. The mayor's proposed investment is \$2.5 million.

The long and short of it is that the proposed budget is holding the line when it comes to investing in housing and homelessness. The city will rely on Multnomah County — which will release its budget in June — to make a hefty investment in housing to support the newly created Home For Everyone, a group working to tackle ending homelessness in the region.

The city is also investing heavily in supporting individuals and families experiencing poverty with programs for youth, street improvements in East Portland, domestic violence services, wage

increases for all city employees and continuing to invest in Hooper Detox.

Overall, this year's budget gets a passing grade when it comes to investing in people. Saying that, it's not nearly the investment needed to move the dial on the growing housing crisis in our community. We're being outpaced. In fact, without a more robust investment of long-term revenue for affordable housing the city will continue to lose ground.

It's unclear how the city plans to balance the housing crisis in our community with the needs they've laid out on transportation and emergency preparedness. It's time for the mayor and City Council to lead. Street Roots continues to believe it's a no-brainer — that nothing should come before prioritizing people when it comes to building more affordable housing units and tackling the housing affordability needs of Portlanders. Plain and simple, housing should move to the front of the line. Any additional money found in this year's budget should go to the Housing Investment Fund.

More so, City Council should find a way to begin to fund the Housing Investment Fund through specific policies where there's a nexus between housing and market profitability.

Not allocating tax dollars from short-term rental companies such as Airbnb toward housing was a missed opportunity this past year. Adding a demolition fee for developers that would go towards housing and creating a developer impact fee this coming year are two examples where the city can lead. We're waiting, anxiously.

## Everything we do is for the vendors. Join us!

Everything Street Roots does is with the idea of looking at the world through a lens of love. Regardless of where you come from, or where you're going — Street Roots strives to give people a sense of belonging.

The mission of Street Roots is to create income opportunities for people experiencing homelessness and poverty by producing a newspaper and other media that are catalysts for individual and social change.

Being a catalyst for individual and social change is at the heart of everything we do.

Street Roots is more than just a weekly publication. It's a force of good for social justice in our community. The newspaper is so much more than just an income. It's a way for people to be able to build genuine relationships in the community across class lines. It's a tool for building self-confidence and a tool for helping change the lives of not only the vendors selling the newspaper, but the thousands of readers that support Street Roots.

Back in January, when Street Roots launched a weekly publication, we had moved the price of the paper for vendors from 25 cents to 35 cents — something vendors had supported to help pay for the additional production costs of a weekly newspaper. The first couple of editions sold like hotcakes, but it was clear that additional increase of 10 cents was eating into the vendors' income.

Street Roots collectively made the decision to come back down to 25 cents. After all, why should vendors have to pay the price? Wasn't the entire idea of publishing weekly suppose to boost vendors' income? Exactly. It was the right thing to do.

At the end of the day, everything we do is with the goal of providing vendors with the necessary opportunities to improve their quality of life.

"Having a weekly publication has allowed me to make more money, but it's also allowed me to think about my future in different ways," says Earl Bennett, a Street Roots vendor. "It's allowing me to stand on my own two feet."

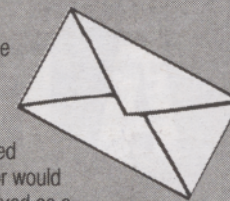
In this edition of the newspaper you'll find an envelope. You can help offset giving vendors a raise by supporting the larger organization by giving a one-time or recurring donation this month. In May, all recurring donations are being matched by a generous donor.

This is an incredible time at Street Roots. The dialogue happening in the pages of Street Roots and on street corners between vendors and readers is amazing. After all, selling the newspaper is more than just an income. It's about building self-confidence. It's about self-respect. It's about being a part of the larger community. It's about finding solutions in both individuals lives and the lives of the people we collectively serve.

We can't thank you enough for all of your support.

### Write in

If you would like to have something that you've written published in our pages, or would like to get involved as a member of our reporting staff, contact Managing Editor Joanne Zuhl at 503-228-5657, joanne@streetroots.org. We ask that all submissions include the author's name and contact information, if available.



### Street Roots

211 NW Davis St.  
Portland, OR 97209  
503-228-5657  
Fax: 503-227-3117  
www.streetroots.org  
www.news.streetroots.org  
Hours: 7:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Mon.-Fri., 7:30 a.m.-2 p.m., Sat. and 7:30-11 a.m. Sun.

### Advertising

Interested in advertising in Street Roots?  
Contact Israel Bayer at israel@streetroots.org

### Staff

**Executive Director** Israel Bayer  
israel@streetroots.org  
**Managing Editor** Joanne Zuhl  
joanne@streetroots.org  
**Vendor Coordinator** Cole Merkel  
cole@streetroots.org  
**Operations Director** Sarah Beecroft  
**Program Assistant** Grace Badik, Jesuit  
Volunteer, grace@streetroots.org  
**Development Director** Sarah Cloud  
**Development Assistant** Ann-Derrick  
Gaillot  
**Reporters** Emily Green, Sue Zalokar,  
Christen McCurdy, Sarah Hansell, Sam  
Bouman, Jacques Von Lunen, Jared Paben  
**Photographers** Diego Diaz, Joe Glode  
**Canvasser** Desmond Hardison

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If you are interested in volunteering with Street Roots, please submit a volunteer application at streetroots.org/volunteer. Or call Volunteer Coordinator Grace Badik for more information at 503-228-5657.



### DIRECTOR'S DESK

By Israel Bayer

Israel Bayer is the executive director of Street Roots. You can reach him at israel@streetroots.org or follow him on Twitter @israelbayer.