

'I Love This City'

continued ▲ from front

One way to increase equity within Portland would be to increase job opportunities and technical training for youth, he said. "We need skilled workers."

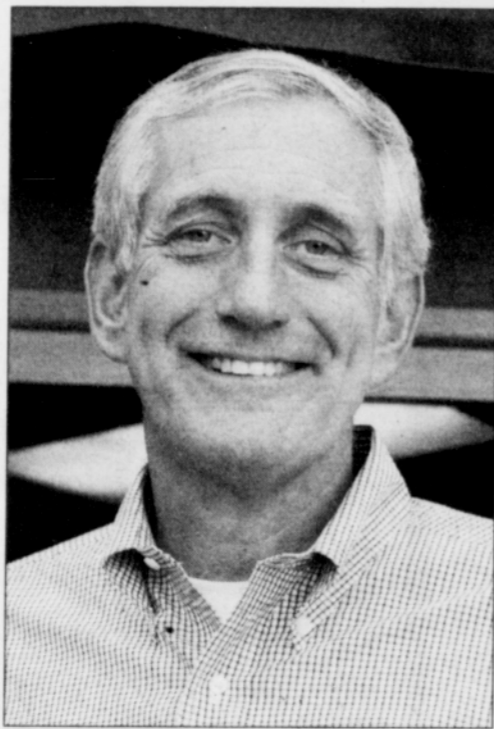
The equity agenda also needs to go all the way to the top, said Hales. "But if the equity agenda is going to have real clout, it needs to be right at the mayor's side."

Hales also emphasized his goal to catalyze more diversity amongst city leaders. While at City Hall, he sees himself as a mentor to develop new leaders of color for positions in the city, he said. "We can do that deliberately."

This includes more people of color within the Police Bureau. He said police recruitment is falling short on looking for local hires.

Although some officers truly believe in community policing, Hales said there are not enough of them, which consequently divides the house. "But if we set expectations, we will be a community agency," he said.

One goal would be to change how the bureau deals and partners with the community, by increasing the number of officers who live within



Charlie Hales

their working neighborhoods.

He added, while he respects the work of Chief of Police Mike Reese, he said officers within Portland need a mayor and command structure they respect, and a police bureau that will connect with the community.

When addressing the current fiscal state of the city, he said Portland's city budget is wounded, but not in a dire condition. He said, however, there is too much funding in overhead and administration, and the current city council, he believes,

has run up too much debt.

"This will be a challenge," he said. "We have two blinking yellow lights. There is too much overhead and too much debt."

He also said he is opposed to coal going through north and northeast Portland neighborhoods, and he plans to put pressure wherever it's needed, even though he realizes the fight might not be an easy one.

But Hales said he is optimistic positive changes can and will be made if he is elected mayor. "I wouldn't want the job if I thought I would be presiding over the decline of Portland," he said.

Although he is proud of the work he did as a commissioner of the city, this time around, he said there will be many differences in how he connects to the local community. "I'm going to have the discipline of getting out of the building and talking to people and not just rely on staff," he said. "Count on me to be accessible."

Hales also would like to have city council meetings at night and out in the various communities occasionally, perhaps monthly, in an effort to increase the voices within Portland neighborhoods. "We have got to have leadership," he said.

Police Use Excessive Force

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attle officials recently reached a deal with the DOJ, agreeing to court oversight and independent monitoring of the city's police department.

Portland police have been criticized for years over how they deal with mentally ill suspects.

The DOJ announced its Portland investigation in the aftermath of the death of Aaron Campbell, an unarmed black man who was fatally shot by officers who responded to a call that he was threatening suicide.

His death was not the only recent high-profile case, a public outcry followed the 2006 death of James Chasse Jr., a mentally ill man who died after he was chased and tackled by officers after he was said to have urinated in public.

Five years before that, the police shooting of Jose Mejia Poot at a psychiatric hospital drew calls for change in the way police handle the mentally ill.

The federal investigation said Thursday that most police uses of force were constitutional, but that officers sometimes use too much, including situations involving minor offenses.

"Fundamentally, we have to treat people in mental health crisis with compassion and empathy," Reese

said. "We can't treat them the same way we do somebody that's committed a bank robber."

The investigation singled out stun gun use, saying officers frequently discharged them without justification or used them too many times on a given suspect.

In July 2011, for example, officers responded to the home of a mentally ill man who had allegedly assaulted his mother and had a sword. Though the man's hands were visible and he had no weapon, one officer shocked him with a stun gun and another shot with a beanbag round.

Federal officials also said Oregon's statewide mental health system has "gaps in services" that often make the police the first responders when people are in a mental health crisis. In this, Oregon is not alone, Perez said.

"In communities across this country, the largest mental health facility is the jail," he said. "That's wrong, and we need to change that."

The report noted that Oregon has one of the highest rates of homelessness in the U.S., and many people in that population have serious mental illness.

"Given our anemic community-based mental health system," said Mayor Sam Adams, "I appreciate that the findings note that the already tough job of being a Portland

police officer has gotten even tougher."

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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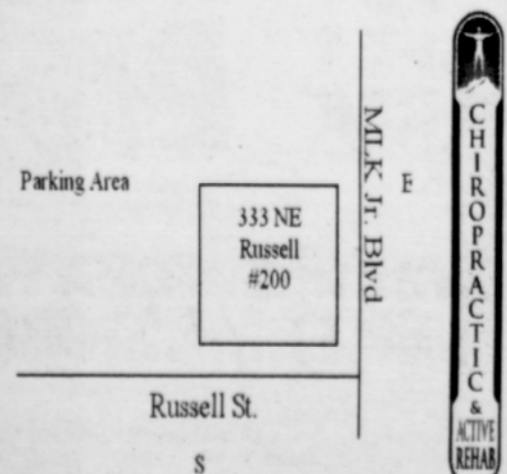
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