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What's on your list today?™

Support for Housing, Police Mayor sets priorities with new budget

Mayor Ted Wheeler announced his proposed general fund budget of \$553 million Monday, which included increased monies for homeless services, affordable housing, police officers, and new small business support.

With the backing of Portland Business Alliance, Wheeler has proposed an increase in the city's Business License Tax rate from 2.2 percent to 2.6 percent, which would add an estimated \$15.3 million to the annual budget. Also proposed was an expanded tax exemption for small business owners to lighten their tax obligation.

The proposed budget includes \$31.2 million to the Joint Office Homelessness services, a record breaking amount and 10 percent increase from last year, as well as funding for current and future affordable housing units being constructed.

"We understand that together we can do more to help people experiencing homelessness fund the shelter and services they need to get off the street, and that the ultimate goal is to move people out of shelters and into housing," Wheeler said in a press release Monday.

The proposed budget would authorize the Portland Police Bureau to hire 52 additional officers and enhance the Behavioral Health Unit of the bureau, among other measures.

Wheeler cited a need for public safety officers to shorten response times for 911 calls, decrease an over reliance on police overtime, police officer fatigue, and a need to pivot to a more community-centered policing model.

Adding more revenue to the police budget was praised Monday by Portland Police Association



Mayor Ted Wheeler

President Daryl Turner, who called it a "move in the right direction." But the activist group Critical Resistance rejected the plan, saying it would be better to "divert funding away from policing and into community resources," like mental health and housing.

In a statement released Tuesday, Critical Resistance said it will convene with other advocacy groups, like Care Not Cops and Don't Shoot Portland Saturday at Hughes Memorial United Methodist Church in northeast Portland to discuss community safety needs.

The proposed city budget will be decided later this spring after a public comment period and consideration and approval by the entire city council.

Hip Hop Day Founder Dies

Idris 'Starchile' O'Ferrall was visionary rapper

Beloved hip-hop performer, promoter, and one of the founding planners of Portland's Hip-Hop Day, Idris O'Ferrall, who went by the stage name "Starchile," died Thursday at the age of 42 from complications of central nervous system lymphoma, a cancer that was diagnosed last month, O'Ferrall's father said on a Facebook post.

Born and raised in Portland, O'Ferrall began rapping in the 90s as a Wilson High School student and went on to run his record label, host TV and radio shows, and then became a concert promoter and emcee.

Hel teamed up with the Trail Blazers' DJ O.G. One to organize Portland's first Hip Hop day at City Hall in 2015 to build bridges between musicians, fans, and community leaders in a city that has faced criticism for excessive police presence at hip-hop concerts in years past, according to an independent police review from 2014.

In the past two years, O'Farrell was also known to help keep the culture of hip-hop alive by hosting a long-running showcase of talented local performers in the genre, Mic Check at White Eagle Saloon in north Portland, an area hit especially hard by gen-



Idris "Starchile" O'Ferrall

trification.

The Twitter account @MicCheck_PDX found many members of the hip-hop community mourning O'Farrell's passing.

"Today we mourn the loss of our friend @StarChile The visionary mind behind Mic Check. We are so grateful for the time we've had together & look forward to celebrating your life and legacy. Rest In Peace."

A Go Fund Me crowdfunding campaign, "Medical Support For Starchile" was started to help his family deal with the high medical costs his illness has accrued.