

April 2024

PLEDGE OF SUPPORT PORTLAND STREET RESPONSE



As a candidate committed to the well-being and safety of our community, I stand unequivocally in support of the Portland Street Response (PSR). Our city has been at the forefront of innovative public safety measures, and PSR embodies our collective commitment to compassion, efficiency, and the judicious use of our tax dollars. PSR is not just a program; it is a testament to our community's values, providing unparalleled support to those in need. However, it is time we build on its success and take bold steps to enhance its reach and effectiveness.

Firstly, the necessity to transition PSR into a 24/7, 365-day service cannot be overstated. Emergencies and crises do not adhere to a schedule of 8:00 AM to 10:00 PM; our response to these issues shouldn't either. By ensuring PSR operates around the clock, we can offer immediate assistance whenever and wherever it's needed, reinforcing our safety net for all residents.

Moreover, it is imperative we harness every available resource to support this critical program. Significant federal health funding remains untapped, a reservoir of support we must actively pursue. By fostering strong partnerships with our allies in the federal government, we can secure these funds, thereby enhancing PSR's capacity to serve our community without additional burden on our local taxpayers.

Expanding PSR's operational scope is another crucial step. Currently, PSR's mandate limits its responders to public spaces, yet crises do not recognize these boundaries. By granting PSR the legal authority to respond to calls within private premises, such as shelters, sobering centers, and other sanctioned homeless camps, can ensure more comprehensive care and support, truly meeting our residents where they are, in their moments of greatest need.

Incorporating PSR as a primary responder within our emergency call system is crucial. Doing so would not only enhance efficiency during crisis situations but also ensure that calls are answered with the most fitting resources, leading to more effective use of time and resources. It is imperative that we safeguard the autonomy and integration of PSR within our city's infrastructure to avoid any dilution of its capabilities. The proposed shift of PSR to a county operation poses risks that could impede our oversight and seamless coordination with our existing emergency services. Rather than transitioning PSR to the county level, it would be more beneficial for PSR to be established as an independent division within Portland Fire and Safety. This would affirm its essential role in our city's emergency response system and address the ongoing City/County collaboration issues that have been hindering renewal efforts, which I am committed to resolving. Maintaining PSR as an integral component within our city's framework ensures direct oversight and fosters a cohesive emergency management system.