

## Mayor Ted Wheeler, Remarks When Voting for Resolution 37373

My reading of the resolution is that *it does not come at the expense of others*; it to me, is a more expansive vision of civic participation, inclusion, and democracy in our city. It is not inconsequential that I think that also improves accountability of city government. To the degree that people don't feel engaged or that they feel that decisions are being made without them and that they are not included, people start checking out.

And as you look at democracy generally in America and even here in Oregon, what you see is even when it comes time to cast a vote, for ballot measures or for individuals running for office, increasingly people say, "Why bother?" We cannot have that happen at the community level. We cannot have that happen at the neighborhood level. This is collectively all of our community, and as somebody said earlier today, "We need to open as many doors as we possibly can." And as I said earlier during the testimony, there is no way I can read this resolution as being anything other than a both/and solution as opposed to an either/or solution.

And last but not least, Portland is – and I've said this, and sometimes people think I'm just being Pollyanna-ish, but I'm not – Portland is actually looked to as an amazing city, and the facts all bear that out. When you look at the economy, when you look at the companies that are moving here, when you look at the people who are moving here – young and old – and they're moving here for economic opportunity and they're moving here for lifestyle, and we are growing, and we are diversifying, and yet, our neighborhoods are experiencing a lot of the growing pains.

For those of us who have been in Portland our whole lives, the city has changed, it's changed dramatically. And some of those changes are really good, and really positive; on the other hand, some of those changes are really jarring. We see increased poverty; increased housing inaffordability; increased homelessness; we see strains on our infrastructure, and strains on our civic infrastructure as well.

Cities that will be successful are those cities that can navigate this change, from being a smaller city to being a much larger, global, more complex city with all of the opportunities – and believe me Portland is *bristling* with opportunities – but also with some of the boils that come along with that growth.

I think, as Commissioner Saltzman said, that it is time that we look at this structure that was originally created in 1974, take a fresh look at it, and ask ourselves: How can we keep the things about this structure that we really like, and that we appreciate, and for me at the top of that list is engaging citizens in a *meaningful* way, to bring their collective strengths, time, talent, energy, and passion to the table, *and* expand the circle of people who want to meaningfully participate in our city. In other words, it's about leverage. It's about leveraging the opportunity that exists by increasing the number and kinds of people who participate in helping our community to be successful.