

### Google Fiber: 9 things to expect if it comes to Portland

By Mike Rogoway  
December 08, 2014

Kansas City has had Google Fiber for more than two years. Its experience gives Portland some clues on what to expect should Google bring the hyperfast Internet service here. A decision could come any day.

Some things to anticipate:

1. **Delays.** Google Fiber has said it could make a decision on serving Portland by the end of this year and that parts of the area could have service in 2015. But the company's operation in Kansas City has been plagued by delays from the start. Google extended the deadline for selecting Kansas City as its first market, then delayed the start of service, and has repeatedly extended signup deadlines in neighborhoods around the city. Officials in Kansas City say delays are to be expected given the scale of the buildout (Google has run at least 7,000 miles of fiber there) and issues securing rights of way and utility pole access for its network.
2. **Rabbits.** Most people associate Google with the colorful logo on its home page, but in Kansas City, Google's "fiber rabbit" is everywhere. Adorned in Google's rainbow color scheme, fiber rabbits pop up in front yards where the company is contemplating service, on the service trucks that seem ubiquitous zooming around town, and in a big, colorful rabbit statue at the front door of Google's Kansas City "fiber space."
3. **Fiber rallies:** Google says it will pick neighborhoods to serve based on the number of homes in a given area that sign up for service within a given period of time. In Kansas City, it's held ice cream socials and handed out cardboard fiber rabbits for people to place in their yards to encourage neighbors to sign up.
4. **Apartment issues:** Even if Google Fiber comes to your neighborhood, if you rent an apartment service availability will depend on whether your landlord signs up. Many buildings already have exclusive arrangements with existing Internet service providers; in Kansas City, buildings in poorer parts of town are much less likely to have service.
5. **Transparent pricing:** Google Fiber isn't cheap – in Kansas City it's \$70 for gigabit broadband service, or \$120 for a combination of TV and Internet. The cable TV/Internet bundle is \$10 more in Austin. (Google offers a free, 5 megabit per second downloads to customers who pay a \$300, one-time "construction" fee.) So Google's standard pricing is higher than many rival services, but Google's speeds are faster, its cable TV comes in high-def with a built-in DVR, and Google doesn't hide its prices behind temporary, introductory rates.
6. **Installation:** Google Fiber uses existing coaxial cable inside homes wired for cable TV. It installs Ethernet wiring in homes that do not. The company says installation is typically complete within a day.
7. **Disruption:** Verizon generated scores of complaints when it dug up yards around Washington County several years ago to bury fiber-optic cables for its FiOS TV and Internet service. Frontier now owns that conduit and says it won't open it to Google, so if Google Fiber comes to Washington County expect yards to be dug up again. Kansas City residents have frequently complained of torn-up lawns and flowerbeds, and Google has set up a hotline to help resolve issues with its contractors there. Disruptions may be less severe in Portland and other communities with existing utility poles, but Google may still need to trim trees to reach the poles and will have to bring in utility trucks to string the fiber overhead.
8. **No zombies** (And maybe no Blazers): Google Fiber's TV service in Kansas City includes most popular cable networks and has options for premium channels and sports tiers, including the Pac-12 network (along with regional conference networks from other parts of the country). But it doesn't include AMC, which televises the hugely popular "Walking Dead." And Google would have to work out a contract with Comcast SportsNet to carry the Portland Trail Blazers. Some subscription TV services, including Frontier, have reached deals for Portland's NBA franchise but others – notably DirecTV and DISH – have not.

9. **Speed:** Google Fiber delivers the speeds it promises. Apps are snappier, downloads are quicker and streaming video is sharper – you'll be able to watch select YouTube videos in the new, ultra-HD "4K" standard (provided you have a TV or monitor that can display it). Even so, gigabit service is overkill for almost everyone...for now. Internet evangelists say fiber is future-proofing homes in Kansas City, ensuring they'll be ready 5 or 10 years from now when new online services place greater demands on home networks.

## Uber vs. Portland: City reportedly tickets several rideshare drivers for running illegal taxis

By Joseph Rose  
December 08, 2014

9:37 a.m. update: Portland Bureau of Transportation spokesman Dylan Rivera just sent this two sentence statement to The Oregonian: "Over the weekend, we documented a number of Uber drivers operating in Portland. Later today, we hope to share the results of the targeted enforcement activity from the weekend." Stay tuned.

Blindsided by Uber's decision to launch its app-based ride-sharing service in Portland on Friday night, City Hall has promised to aggressively ticket the company and drivers for operating unpermitted taxis.

But it's hard to know just how far the city's code enforcement officers got with that plan over the weekend.

We know that the first sting, just minutes after Uber's invasion of stumptown, was an unmitigated flop. But a report from the Geekwire blog says the city managed to catch up with several drivers and issue "hefty fines."

The story quotes Bryan Hockaday, a policy advisor to Commissioner Steve Novick:

*Hockaday said that city officials hailed rides from Uber drivers and then issued "several" penalties once entering the vehicle.*

*"The very fact that an Uber driver was soliciting a ride and expected it was enough to impose a penalty," he said.*

But on Sunday night, Novick told The Oregonian that he didn't know if the city had cited any Uber drivers, who are not allowed to pick up passengers under the city's current taxi regulations.

Portland Bureau of Transportation spokesman Dylan Rivera had not returned phone calls and text messages on Monday morning.

Meanwhile, an Uber spokeswoman said she was unaware of any successful enforcement action against Uber drivers in Portland over the weekend.

Uber's drivers face fines starting at \$2,250 for each offense, while the San Francisco-based startup faces a \$1,500 fine each time a driver is caught picking up a fare.

The company is rolling out UberX — a service that allows passengers to use an app to get a ride from drivers who use their own cars as low-cost de facto taxis. Uber cars usually arrive in less than 10 minutes and offer fares that are 35 percent lower than those of traditional taxis.

Arguing that the city's taxi regulations are antiquated, Uber has told its drivers to keep rolling, even if they are fined by the police. "Uber will pay the fines and any impoundment costs" that its drivers rack up while picking up customers, said Eva Behrend, an Uber spokeswoman.

Hockaday told Geekwire that a full report about weekend enforcement would be released Monday.

Here's a look at how Uber's launch was covered by other news outlets:

- Novick wasn't pulling any punches in his interview with Willamette Week. He was quoted saying, "I guess this kind of behavior is to be expected from a company that plans to spend a million dollars investigating journalists' private lives. And that keeps track of the sex lives of its own riders." Context.
- Apparently, The New York Times knows something we don't, reporting: "Uber's arrival in Portland has been something of an inevitability. The service has been available in more than a dozen

cities surrounding the greater Portland area for months, and the company has been in talks with Portland." Actually, Uber has been available in only Vancouver for months. Gresham, Tigard, Hillsboro and Beaverton welcomed the company a few weeks ago. Maybe the Times was including Salem, 40 minutes down Interstate 5. But that adds up to only six "surrounding" cities.

- KATU attempted to answer the question, "Uber or taxis? Which has the best rates in Portland?" The station based its conclusions on a 2.7-mile ride. Of course, conducting a test using a sample of rides with varying distances and times would have been more revealing. So take it for what it's worth.

## **Defiant Uber rideshare launches in Portland, with City Hall promising to 'throw the book' at company**

*By Joseph Rose  
December 05, 2014*

Uber says it is no longer willing to wait for the city of Portland to revamp its strict taxi regulations to allow residents to hail and pay for rides with the push of a smartphone button.

As of 5 p.m. Friday, Portlanders will be able to use the cutting-edge-yet-controversial rideshare service in what has been the largest West Coast city without Uber, the company told The Oregonian.

The company is rolling out UberX — a service that allows passengers to use an app to get a ride from drivers who use their own cars as low-cost de facto taxis. Uber cars usually arrive in less than 10 minutes and offer fares that are 35 percent lower than those of traditional taxis.

The clandestine move — city code prohibits unpermitted ride-sharing — was met with a threat of immediate retaliation from Portland Commissioner Steve Novick.

If Uber drivers are going to start operating without the city's approval, "then we will try to catch them and seek penalty," said Novick, who oversees the Portland Bureau of Transportation.

"They think they can just come in here and flagrantly violate the law?" he asked rhetorically. "This is really amazing. Apparently, they believe they're gods."

Under a city code prohibiting unlicensed taxis, Uber drivers could face arrest and jail time.

However, Frank Dufay, the city's private-for-hire-transportation manager, said it's more likely that rideshare drivers caught illegally picking up passengers will face stiff fines.

For the first offense, the city could levy a \$1,500 penalty against Uber and hit the driver with up to \$2,250 in fines. "It's not cheap," Dufay said.

Dufay said he would meet with Novick on Friday afternoon to discuss strategy for the city's code enforcement officers. "We can get out there and see if we can get an Uber ride," he said.

Novick learned of Uber's plans from The Oregonian.

Within minutes, Mayor Charlie Hales had David Plouffe, one of President Barack Obama's most high-profile campaign operatives and now an Uber vice president in charge of strategy, on a speaker phone, Novick said. "I told him that if they're just going to come in and flagrantly violate the law, we'll throw the book at them."

Brooke Steger, Uber Northwest general manager, said the city's threats shouldn't dissuade its hundreds of local drivers from trying to make a living. "We are 100 percent behind the drivers and we support them every step of the way," Steger said. "We hope the city doesn't take that kind of action."

Uber reiterated that the company isn't a traditional taxi company and shouldn't be subjected to what it considers "antiquated regulations" that stifle competition and innovation.

Uber's ask-for-forgiveness-not-permission approach shouldn't come as a surprise to City Hall. In fact, it has become standard operating procedure for the San Francisco-based startup, which is sitting on a \$1.5-billion mountain of cash and operating in more than 100 cities around the globe.

The company has started operating in many U.S. cities without first getting regulatory approval — or even warning transportation officials that they're about to start picking up riders.

The tactic worked in Seattle, where the wild popularity of rideshare services such as Uber and Lyft prompted the city to adopt new regulations to allow the businesses. However, the strategy backfired in Nevada, where a judge kicked the company out of the state – at least for now.

Portland's taxi regulations are among the nation's most restrictive, say Uber and rideshare competitors such as Lyft. Among other things, city code requires a 60-minute advance reservation for non-taxi ride services and sets a strict quota on how many taxi licenses can be handed out during any given year.

Portland vs. Uber: City code officers try to ticket drivers Minutes after Uber rideshare launched in Portland without the city's permission, code enforcement officers logged onto the app in an attempt to catch drivers violating taxi regulations. One problem: Demand for the service was so high that they couldn't book a ride.

So far, the heavily influential Private-for-Hire Transportation Board of Review, which includes representatives from the Portland's taxi and town-car companies, have been dead set against relinquishing any of the city's 460 taxi permits to Uber drivers.

A recent Portland Bureau of Transportation report showed the city is greatly underserved by taxis when they're needed most, Uber officials said it's getting harder for the city to defend strict ordinances designed to protect the taxi industry from competition.

Although Novick supports a comprehensive review of the city's taxi codes, He says the new ride-sharing upstarts have an unfair advantage over the city's regulated taxi industry.

"The taxicab industry is a regulated industry," Novick said. "The existing companies are expected to abide by the regulations -- regulations governing safety, accessibility, insurance."

Uber, meanwhile, wants to compete with them while ignoring the rules they have to follow, he said. "We told them we were interested in their ideas about how to change the rules," Novick said. "Instead of taking us up on that, they are electing to break the rules."

Steger said the company still wants to work with the city to upgrade its regulations to allow rideshare companies.

At the same time, she said the current situation, with Uber operating in Gresham, Hillsboro, Beaverton, Vancouver and Tigard but not in Portland, is farcical.

Uber drivers can pick up passengers outside of Portland and drop them off in the city limits — they just can't pick them up in Portland.

"There's a definite need," Steger said. "Thousands of people have been taking Uber into Portland from the suburbs. It's frustrating when they're unable to get a ride back. It's actually a risk to public safety during the holiday and DUI season."

## **Body cameras for police: Portland on cusp of outfitting 600 officers, other metro departments not far behind**

*By Everton Bailey Jr.  
December 05, 2014*

Cops around the Portland metro area are in various stages of embracing body cameras as a way to protect themselves and provide more public accountability.

But they're also asking questions about how to handle privacy issues as well as how to store all the footage that the cameras produce.

The technology is getting a high-profile push from President Obama with his announcement this week to devote \$75 million to outfit police agencies nationwide with the cameras.

In New York City, where a grand jury decided not to charge a white police officer in the chokehold death of a black man, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced that officers would kick off a police body camera pilot program this week.

Here's a look at what's in play locally:

## IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY

**PORTLAND:** Portland police want to outfit officers with body cameras in the next fiscal year. The City Council already has approved about \$800,000 for more in-car video cameras, but police plan to use that money instead to supply body cameras to about 600 uniformed officers – including patrol, school police, gang enforcement and traffic officers.

But first, police say, they need state lawmakers to adopt an amendment to Oregon's eavesdropping law.

The law requires anyone who audio-records a conversation to tell all parties that the conversation is being recorded. An exception was approved for law enforcement when using dash cameras, providing the officer is in uniform and displaying a badge, unless a reasonable opportunity exists to tell people they're being recorded.

Portland police will push lawmakers to extend the exemption to body cameras, according to the city's legislative agenda.

The city also wants the Legislature to curb the public release of body camera recordings and footage. City officials said they're concerned about footage taken inside private homes or that involves "traumatic and sensitive interactions with citizens."

"The ability for recorded data to be obtained by news media and aired publicly could violate the privacy of citizens, jeopardize sensitive police investigations and legal proceedings and place an unsustainable burden on law enforcement administrators," the city's agenda says. "The city of Portland will advocate for a narrowly tailored public records exemption for on-body camera footage that balances transparency and privacy interests."

Portland police began testing the body cameras more than a year ago. Traffic officers and Central Precinct bike officers have used several different ones made by WatchGuard Video, Viewu and most recently, Taser. Early reviews were that officers liked them and their presence tended to calm people down who were agitated and approached by police, Sgt. Pete Simpson said.

On Wednesday, the City Council will be asked to give the city the go-ahead to seek competitive bids for the body cameras.

**GRESHAM:** Police Lt. Claudio Grandjean is leading an eight-person committee that includes officers and sergeants to explore using body cameras. The group met for the first time last week and plans to make a recommendation to the police chief sometime next year, he said.

He's encouraged, he said, by studies that show civilians as well as officers tend to be more civil to each another when they know they are being recorded.

"This is the way the industry is moving," Grandjean said. "In a few years, if your department doesn't have cameras, people are going to be asking: 'Why don't you?'"

**SHERIFF'S OFFICE:** It's been looking into using body cameras since August and plans to continue researching the logistics, said Lt. Steve Alexander.

It would cost an estimated \$100,000 for a digital evidence storage system and 25 to 30 cameras, he said. Those cameras would first go to the patrol unit.

## IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

**BEAVERTON:** Four traffic officers use body cameras, said police spokesman Officer Mike Rowe, and the police department is considering a five-year, \$100,000 contract to outfit patrol officers with body cameras.

**FOREST GROVE:** The police department plans to start a pilot program with two body cameras for police officers in January or February, Capt. Mike Herb said. The cameras are expected to cost \$400 to \$600 each.

The department has been considering using body cameras for patrol officers since spring, Herb said.

Among issues still to be sorted out, he said: How to handle public records requests for footage, how to fund annual costs for storing footage, determining how long to store footage and how to handle sensitive material captured by the cameras.

"Body cameras are a good concept," Herb said. "I believe they will show that police officers the majority of the time are doing their jobs correctly. It will also keep police officers accountable and it will also keep members of the public accountable as well."

**HILLSBORO:** The police department aims to develop a policy on body camera use and sort out issues about footage storage and costs before equipping officers, said spokesman Lt. Mike Rouches.

**SHERWOOD:** The police department hopes to have all officers equipped with body cameras within the next 12 months, said Capt. Ty Hanlon, an agency spokesman. The department already has three officers who use body cameras that they bought themselves, he said.

The footage is stored within the department's own evidence system, but the department probably would have to add more storage to accommodate the additional cameras, Hanlon said.

The department is leaning toward getting Taser Axon cameras, he said, which cost about \$700 each.

**TIGARD:** Three motorcycle officers in the police department's traffic unit wear cameras, spokesman Jim Wolf said.

The footage is mostly used as evidence for traffic court, Wolf said. The cameras "put everyone in check," he said.

The department is considering getting cameras for patrol officers, he said.

"The determining factor comes down to economics," Wolf said. The department also has cameras in its police cars, he said, so it needs to weigh the benefits of adding body cameras into the mix, he said.

**TUALATIN:** The police department is still in the research phase, but hopes to begin testing body cameras next year, said Lt. Greg Pickering.

The agency is looking to follow the lead of others in Washington County before starting its own program, he said. "We think it's important that we all are following the same sheet of music," he said.

Tualatin police began looking into body cameras in 2009, Pickering said, but didn't think the technology was adequate.

Cost estimates, he said, run \$10,000 to \$30,000 to outfit patrol, traffic and school resource officers -- a total of 30 officers -- plus \$10,000 to \$50,000 a year to store the data, he said.

**SHERIFF'S OFFICE:** It hopes to begin testing body cameras starting with two to five deputies early next year, said Sgt. Bob Ray.

The agency is still assessing whether the cameras are a "viable option," Ray said, and hasn't calculated costs involved.

## **IN CLACKAMAS COUNTY**

**SHERIFF'S OFFICE:** Sheriff Craig Roberts and the county's police chiefs have launched a study group to tackle body cameras. The chiefs generally are open-minded to the idea, but won't commit until some potential stumbling blocks are addressed.

**MILWAUKIE:** Police Chief Steve Bartol, who is heading the study group, said the law enforcement agencies are most concerned about: Costs for the cameras and training; costs for servers or other storage devices for the videos shot by the cameras; policies for using the cameras and policies for answering public records requests for body-camera videos.

"Do you turn on the camera in a private residence? Do you turn it on when you are talking to a victim of a crime? And when do you turn it off?" Bartol said.

"We need to set some guidelines to help officers make good decisions," he said.

**GLADSTONE and CANBY:** Chiefs Jim Pryde of Gladstone and Bret Smith of Canby said they've heard horror stories that some private citizens in Washington have requested so many body camera videos that the police departments have been crippled by the costs.

Both said some policies must be established for ensuring public access and transparency while providing some realistic limitations on costs and associated staffing.

**LAKE OSWEGO:** Lake Oswego Police Chief Don Johnson said the City Council plans to hold a study session early next year to examine the issues.

**MOLALLA:** Chief Rod Lucich said some officers "may bristle at first" at the idea of recording practically everything they do on the job. "But they're also tired of people saying something happened -- when it didn't," Lucich said.

**SANDY:** Police Chief Kim Yamashita said her officers already are "beta-testing" some different brands of cameras to determine what would work best for the department.

"I welcome the cameras because everything we do is already videotaped by members of the public," Yamashita said. "But then, they are the ones who edit it and decide what they release to the media. With our own cameras, there may be another version of what happened."

**WEST LINN:** Police Chief Terry Timeus agreed, saying police in Salt Lake City and Fresno, Calif., have seen complaints against police plummet since adopting body cameras. Both officers and private citizens, he said, seem to have elevated their behavior when they realized they were being videotaped.

## **Portland police move to seek competitive bids to equip officers with body cameras**

*By Maxine Bernstein  
December 05, 2014*

Portland police want to outfit its officers with body cameras in the next fiscal year, and will ask for City Council approval next week to seek competitive bids for the equipment.

The Police Bureau plans to use \$834,619 that the council already approved for more in-car video cameras to equip 600 uniformed officers with body cameras instead. That will include patrol officers, school police, gang enforcement and traffic officers.

Police estimate the cost of equipping the officers with the body cameras at between \$500,000 to \$1 million, and will use the \$834,619 to help cover the expense.

Annual operating and maintenance costs for the body cameras are estimated to reach between \$400,000 and \$750,000. The city would need to set aside the money in the bureau's budget for next fiscal year.

The Police Bureau also anticipates it will need three more full-time employees to support the body camera program.

The bureau's actions come amid a national effort to equip more officers with the body-worn cameras in the wake of a grand jury ruling that did not indict Ferguson Officer Darren Wilson in his fatal shooting of 18-year-old Michael Brown, who was unarmed. President Obama earlier this week pledged to ask Congress to provide \$75 million to buy 50,000 new body cameras for law enforcement agencies across the country.

According to Portland's city ordinance, the body cameras would be used to "improve evidence collection, strengthen officer performance and accountability, to enhance agency transparency, to document encounters between police and the public, and to investigate and resolve complaints and officer-involved incidents."

Police say they'll also push for state lawmakers to adopt an amendment to Oregon's eavesdropping law and public records exemptions for the camera footage before officers are equipped with them.

The state eavesdropping law requires anyone who audio records a conversation to inform all parties that the conversation is being recorded. An amendment was approved for law enforcement when using dash cameras, providing the officer is in uniform and displaying a badge, unless a reasonable opportunity exists to inform people they're being recorded.

Portland police will ask lawmakers next session to extend that statutory exemption for body cameras, according to the city's legislative agenda.

The city also wants the state legislature to curb the public release of police body camera recordings and footage. City officials said they're concerned about footage taken inside private homes or others that involve "traumatic and sensitive interactions with citizens" that are requested to be released and made public.

"The ability for recorded data to be obtained by news media and aired publicly could violate the privacy of citizens, jeopardize sensitive police investigations and legal proceedings and place an unsustainable burden on law enforcement administrators," the city's agenda says. "The city of Portland will advocate for a narrowly-tailored public records exemption for on-body camera footage that balances transparency and privacy interests."

The ACLU of Oregon will lend its support to the cameras as long as there are strict guidelines about their use and video and audio retention, its executive director Dave Fidanque has said. The policies must protect people's privacy rights, particularly when police are in a home and on private property, he said.

In September, Mayor Charlie Hales said he supported U.S. District Court Judge Michael H. Simon's push to have Portland police wearing the small cameras. Portland police began testing the body cameras more than a year ago.

Traffic officers and Central Precinct bike officers have used several different ones made by WatchGuard Video, Viewu and most recently, Taser. Early reviews were that officers liked them, and their presence tended to calm down people who were agitated and approached by police, Sgt. Pete Simpson said.

The City Council meets at 9:30 a.m. Wednesday in City Hall.

## **Mount Tabor reservoirs: Amanda Fritz says delays put plans 'all on hold'**

*By Andrew Theen  
December 05, 2014*

Portlanders eager to know the fate of Mount Tabor's open-air reservoirs will have to wait a while, maybe months, for an answer.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz on Friday acknowledged that the Parks Bureau's abrupt cancellation Thursday of a Dec. 10 meeting, where she was supposed to announce her recommendations, put the brakes on the entire process.

"It's just all on hold," she said.

Portland is disconnecting the three reservoirs, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, from the city's drinking water supply. Water from the Bull Run watershed is already being stored at covered reservoirs at Powell Butte in east Portland, and will bypass Tabor starting in 2016. Water Bureau officials say the city is following federal rules to address the risk of a cryptosporidium outbreak.

It's not a popular decision with many longtime neighbors and reservoir supporters who think the city should have fought harder to evade the federal rules. A group of opponents has attended public meetings to protest.

The Water Bureau planned to have the reservoirs out of service by the end of 2015, but the Historic Landmarks Commission hasn't given the city the go-ahead. The volunteer commission must approve a land-use application that calls for removing a dozen trees and installing 48-inch pipes to redirect water away from the reservoirs.

The commission held a hearing this week and scheduled a second one for Jan. 12 because of questions raised by opponents.

Fritz expects any Landmarks Commission decision to be appealed to the City Council, so she said it only made sense to delay any announcement on preferred options by her and Commissioner Nick Fish.

"Nick and I need to be able to be not biased when we consider whether that land-use decision should be approved or not," Fritz said.

It could be months before an appeal reaches the council.

Portland is considering four options for the reservoirs:

- Leave water in the reservoirs and periodically clean them at a cost of \$90,000 a year.
- Drain them.
- Go forward with a \$40 million-plus, decade-old plan that includes converting two reservoirs into reflecting ponds and one into a wetland, with designs for terraced hillsides and gardens.
- Or something else.

Parks officials received more than 900 public comments on the options, with most choosing to keep water in the reservoirs.

# What readers have to say about smoking ban in public parks: Portland City Hall Roundup

By Andrew Theen  
December 08, 2014

Last week, the volunteer Portland Parks Board said the city should ban all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, in the city's public parks.

The board's recommendation came after months of meetings. Commissioner Amanda Fritz, who oversees the Parks Bureau, asked the volunteer board to study the issue. She'll probably implement the policy early next year.

Cities large and small have enacted similar bans, but the recommendation wasn't met with universal praise by readers of The Oregonian/OregonLive.

According to an OregonLive.com poll, 48 percent of respondents disagree with the proposal to ban smoking and tobacco products in public parks. Nearly 40 percent of the 530 respondents agreed with the parks board's recommendation.

The story drew 1,200 Facebook likes and more than 120 comments. Here's a sampling:

*YoGlo: Smokers have long viewed the world as their ashtray, and other people's space as theirs to pollute. It's way past time to put a stop to their rampant, disgusting narcissism. Put the ban in place, now. Like so many other cities have already done.*

*ctwheby: I can understand that cigarette smoke is annoying, and can be dangerous, to others, but what's up with banning chewing tobacco? No smoke, no butts, newer forms require no spitting. How is this harmful to others? Even if one spits, how many dogs have peed and pooped in the park recently? I used to smoke, and cigarette smoke smells awful to me now. I don't think smokers are aware of how seriously nasty they smell; I wasn't when I smoked. I would rather not be around it, but giving cops another reason to hassle folks is worse to me, though.*

*bloggod: second hand cigarette smoke is hazardous and noxious....the public deserves to use our public spaces without being forced to endure the smog of nicotine addicts.*

*blazer prophet: I don't smoke, chew or vape... but I am against this. To be it's just further erosion of our personal "liberties" and intrusion by government into our personal lives. I mean, I get it that people don't like it when they have staked out an area at a park on a crowded day and a group sits right next to them and starts smoking. It's annoying. But what about when people blare songs like "rape your sister until she enjoys it" and other such hits and you have young kids there? So we now ban all music? And what about annoying cell phones? Yes, we will need to ban those as well. And showerless homeless people? Yeah, they're out as well. Where does this end?*

*ThomasAnderson: Smoking in parks should be banned because people with lung issues should not have to avoid smokers to enjoy their trip to the park. I have a child with lung disease and it is very frustrating when certain parts of a public park are not accessible due to people smoking cigarettes.*

Fritz is expected to bring the proposal to the City Council in January.

## The Portland Tribune

### Uber drives into Portland; city warns of big fines

By Jim Redden  
December 5, 2014

San Francisco's Uber drove into Portland Friday evening, even as city officials warned that ride-sharing drivers could face fines if they pick someone up inside the city.

Uber's Brooke Steger wrote in a blog announced that the company decided to move into Portland after being welcomed into the suburbs, with Uber drivers in Beaverton, Gresham, Hillsboro and Tigard.

"Now, it's time to have it all: your Uber is arriving now," Steger wrote. "We're honored to be a part of a city that continues to push the envelope when it comes to technology, culture and innovation."

Uber is the ride-sharing company that uses a smartphone app to call for private cars in 254 cities around the world. The company said it covers about 64 percent of the U.S. population. Uber started in Vancouver, Wash., early this year. It also began offering rides in the suburbs, but has been stymied by Portland taxi-licensing rules, which limit the number of taxis and town cars operating.

Uber claims its rides are about 30 percent cheaper than Portland taxis. It also requires drivers to go through background checks and have clean driving records. The company also has insurance on drivers, who also carry their own insurance, according to Uber.

After Uber announced its intentions, Mayor Charlie Hales responded with his own warning, posting on his Facebook page that "Uber's action is illegal."

"The city will enforce existing regulations," Hales wrote. "That could include fines for the company, as well as fines for drivers."

Uber spokeswoman Eva Behrend said Friday evening that the company launched in Portland because "Rose City residents were tired of waiting while the rest of the world passed Portland by."

"Now it's time to try and bring Uber everywhere, even the cities where we know it's going to be a tough challenge, but where residents have made their voices loud and clear: they want job generation, they want choice, they want competition," Behrend said. "This weekend we're launching Uber in Portland where more than 27,000 residents have indicated they're looking for a safe, reliable and hassle-free ride, and where nearly 500 drivers are waiting to start earning income."

"Every day Uber riders from neighboring cities are being dropped off in Portland and we have been working with the mayor's office for over a year to get them a ride back."

The company wants to work with state and local leaders "to bring the impact of the Uber platform to Portland," Behrend said.

Uber posted a video on its website showing the first Portland Uber rider, Brian Kidd, who is known for riding a unicycle while playing flaming bagpipes.

### **Operating illegally**

City Commissioner Steve Novick, who oversees Portland's Bureau of Transportation, said Friday evening in a statement the city was prepared to issue civil and criminal penalties against Uber and its drivers for operating without required permits and inspections.

"There's nothing sharing about this so-called 'sharing economy' company: They want to profit in Portland without playing by the same rules as existing cab companies," Novick said. "People who pick up passengers for Uber in Portland should know that they are operating illegally and could be subject to penalties. Public safety, fairness among competitors and customer service are our top priorities. Unlike permitted drivers, Uber drivers do not carry commercial insurance, putting Portland customers at great risk."

Fines for the most common violations range from \$1,000 to \$5,000.

Portland has encouraged city residents to use the smartphone app Curb to call taxis from Broadway and Radio Cab, two of the largest permitted taxi companies in the city.

In his Facebook post, Hales wrote that the city "embraces the technology of the sharing economy. The city will continue to work with transportation-network companies like Lyft to embrace that economy. To the degree that Uber wants to be part of that process: fine."

*Reporter Kevin L. Harden contributed to this story.*

## **Metro accepts controversial urban growth report**

*By Jim Redden  
December 4, 2014*

The Metro Council unanimously accepted a controversial report Thursday intended to guide its scheduled decision whether to expand the Portland area's urban growth boundary next year.

The 2014 Urban Growth Report says the boundary does not need to be expanded if enough cities implement their existing plans to increase density. Metro administers the urban growth boundary which determines where development can occur.

Metro President Tom Hughes said acceptance of the report is just the beginning of a year-long process that will include additional research on the issues raised by those who questioned it. Among other things, Hughes said the council will study whether Portland can actually increase density as much as it says and the potential impact on housing affordability.

Witnesses who testified before the vote split on whether increasing density will maintain livability or hurt the economy. Mary Kyle McCurdy, policy director and staff attorney for 1000 Friends of Oregon, said the report was a well researched foundation for next year's decision. But Wilsonville Mayor Tim Knapp said it could slow his city's historic growth.

The council also discussed letters it had received questioning whether the density increase was possible, how much it might increase housing costs, and whether local governments can afford the required subsidizes.

The letters included one from an ad-hoc group representing every mayor in the region except Portland Mayor Charlie Hales. Portland is working to update the state-required comprehensive land-use plan that governs growth to encourage higher density.

Other letters challenging the report were submitted by Washington County Chair Andy Dyuck, Happy Valley Mayor Lori DeRemer, and the Coalition for a Prosperous Region, which includes the Clackamas County Business Alliance, the Columbia Corridor Association, the Commercial Association of Brokers, the NAIOP Oregon Chapter, the Home Builders Association of Metropolitan Portland, the Portland Metropolitan Association of Realtors, the Portland Business Alliance and the Westside Economic Alliance.

No letters in support of the report were distributed at the hearing.

## **City may crack down on Airbnb laggards who aren't getting permits**

*By Steve Law  
December 4, 2014*

Portlanders opening up their dwellings for short-term rentals would need to get city permits or be barred from listing their properties with Airbnb and other companies, under a proposal headed for the Portland City Council next Thursday, Dec. 11.

City Commissioner Nick Fish, who proposed the idea, said Thursday he expects it will win council approval.

This will be a “game changer” in enforcing the city’s new short-term rental ordinance, Fish said.

In July, the City Council passed an ordinance legalizing short-term rentals of less than 30 days in single-family homes. Hosts who rent out rooms in their homes for short-term stays must get a city permit, starting Aug. 30. However, only a small percentage of hosts have bothered to get the permit, which costs about \$180 and requires a cursory safety inspection of their dwellings.

The Bureau of Development Services is responsible for enforcing the ordinance, but it only steps in when someone files a complaint about an operation. Usually those come one at a time, when a neighbor objects to something going on down the block.

Thomas Lannom, Revenue Bureau director, told the City Council recently he wants to be more “proactive” about enforcing the city’s new ordinance, because the city is losing out on lodging tax revenues from short-term renters. Right now, Airbnb is collecting lodging taxes from its local hosts, but won’t divulge their names or addresses to the city.

Lannom pledged to bring a proposal to the council giving the city new tools to collect the tax, and identify the local hosts for Airbnb and other companies that market short-term rentals.

At a recent City Council work session, Fish asked Airbnb’s David Owen if the company could require hosts to post their permit number before getting ads on the Internet-based system, but Owen was noncommittal.

Under the proposal coming to the City Council, that may become mandatory for Airbnb, Craigslist and others that promote short-term rentals.

“That makes enforcement very easy,” Fish says. “This changes everything.”

The City Council also is expected on Thursday to legalize short-term rentals in apartments and condos, if certain conditions are met.

## **Mayor's plan to redo urban renewal districts gains support from citizen committee**

*By Steve Law  
December 4, 2014*

Mayor Charlie Hales' proposal to shuffle and shrink Portland's urban renewal districts emerged largely unscathed after being vetted by a citizens advisory group, and now heads to the Planning and Sustainability Commission and Portland Development Commission board.

The Urban Renewal Area Amendment Advisory Committee recommended one small change to Hales' plans: shifting a key block in Old Town/Chinatown into the River District Urban Renewal Area. Known as Block 33, the block bounded by Northwest Couch and Davis and Fourth and Fifth avenues is a surface parking lot controlled by developer David Gold. That once was eyed for an Uwajimaya grocery store, and many believe it's a lynchpin to further development of Old Town/Chinatown — a key Hales goal.

Block 33 already lies within the city's Downtown Waterfront Urban Renewal Area, but that district lacks the funds available in the flush River District, which includes the booming Pearl District and much of Old Town/Chinatown.

After a City Council presentation Wednesday evening on the advisory committee's recommendations, Hales said those will fulfill his plan to “right size” the city's urban renewal districts, which have bulged close to the maximum allowed by state law.

“We're putting a billion dollars — with a b — back on the tax rolls,” Hales said.

When he knocked on doors running for mayor, Hales said he heard lots of criticisms about the city's ever-expanding use of urban renewal, which keeps a large chunk of property value off the tax rolls, including much of the bustling Pearl District.

Urban renewal “is not an ATM,” Hales said. “It's not a permanent condition. It's a strategy for change.”

In all, Hales proposes changes to six urban renewal areas:

- Shrinking the River District to put 30 percent of its property value back on the tax rolls. That will boost annual property taxes for the city, Multnomah County and public schools.
- Shrink the Airport Way district by putting 60 percent of its property value back on the tax rolls.
- Ending the fledgling Education Urban Renewal Area which includes 109 acres in and around Portland State University. That was a pet project of former Mayor Sam Adams, and Hales wasn't keen on it.
- Ending the Willamette Industrial Urban Renewal Area, which never lived up to its promise and has been largely inactive.
- Adding 45 acres into the North Macadam Urban Renewal Area, including 35 acres that were in the Education district near PSU. Hales hopes to devote more money into private developments near the university instead of campus buildings, which could be problematic for urban renewal spending because of state property tax limitations.
- Extending the end date of the North Macadam district by five years, until 2024-25. That gives the Portland Development Commission more time to support projects around PSU, as well as the Zidell barge plant and Knight Cancer Research Center, both on the downtown waterfront.
- Add 16 acres near the new Clinton Street MAX stop into the Central Eastside Urban Renewal Area, to take advantage of new development opportunities there.

- Extend the life of the Central Eastside district by five years, enabling it to tap an additional \$21 million in bond financing.

The main critic of Hales' urban renewal area shuffle is the League of Women Voters of Portland.

Debbie Aiona, the league's action chair who served on the advisory committee, said the mayor should have put even more property back on the tax rolls. The mayor's plan will deliver \$5.4 million more property taxes to local governments in 2015-16, Aiona said. She's like that number to be larger, which would require more shrinkage of urban renewal area boundaries.

Multnomah County and the league both opposed adding Block 33 into the River District, but their representatives on the advisory committee were outvoted.

The mayor's urban renewal plan is slated to return to the City Council for vote on amendments on Dec. 17.

## **Willamette Week**

### **10 Things You Need to Know About Uber in Portland**

*By Aaron Mesh  
December 7, 2014*

Portland is now an Uber town—whether city officials like it or not.

The San Francisco-based ride-sharing company launched a surprise invasion of Portland on Friday, bringing its service to the only city on the West Coast where it wasn't operating. City officials like Commissioner Steve Novick, who had so far barred Uber's cars, vow to retaliate with stings and fines. Uber says it will fight the city's crackdown in court.

What does Uber's controversial debut mean for your transportation options? And what happens next? WW has the answers.

#### **How do I hail an Uber car?**

Download the app to your smartphone, enter your credit card information, then tap a button to summon the nearest driver. When your ride ends, your card is charged for the fare.

#### **How fancy will my ride be?**

Don't expect one of the sleek, black, Uber-owned town cars seen in New York City and San Francisco. Portland's getting the discount-store version of Uber, called UberX, which enlists drivers to take their own cars and turn them into DIY taxis. (Our reporters have been picked up by a Ford Five Hundred SEL and a Toyota Camry. The company won't allow cars built before 2005.) That's one of the advantages of Uber: It increases the transportation options in Portland without increasing the number of cars on the road.

#### **What if I don't have a smartphone?**

No Uber for you. That's one of the criticisms levied against Uber: that it only serves the tech-savvy and financially secure. "The only people they target are people with a smartphone and a credit card," Steve Entler, general manager of Radio Cab, told WW in July. "Who's taking care of your mother?"

#### **Does Uber work better than calling Radio Cab?**

We had a chance to test that question after Uber launched in Vancouver, Wash. this summer. When WW comparison-shopped the two services by riding to Vancouver and back in August, Uber was marginally faster and cheaper—by less than \$5 and five minutes. That may no longer be the case this

weekend, however, as the company appears overburdened by demand during its Portland debut. An attempt to use the Uber app on Saturday evening resulted in a wait of over an hour—at which point we cancelled the reservation.

### **Do Uber drivers like their jobs?**

The more than 30 drivers our staff has interviewed—mostly in other cities—say they love the flexibility of being able to decide when and where they want to work. Many use Uber as a second job. Uber drivers have their paychecks go straight into their bank accounts every week. They report making \$10 to \$20 an hour.

### **So what's the down side?**

The drawback for drivers and customers is the same: risk. Uber treats its drivers as contractors, not employees. The company has claimed it's not liable when things go wrong—like the most notorious case, when a driver waiting for a fare hit and killed a six-year-old girl in San Francisco last New Year's Eve. Oregon state officials have warned that commercial insurance may not apply to passengers. Uber also doesn't have a great track record of making sure its cars can accommodate disabled passengers. And it's upending the established taxi industry, meaning that local cab drivers are seeing the value and security of their jobs plummet.

### **What protections does Uber provide customers?**

"Uber carries a combined single-limit insurance policy of \$1 million to cover the rider and driver," says general manager Brooke Steger. The company conducts background checks on drivers. Its phone app requires all riders to rate their drivers on a scale of 1 to 5 stars at the end of a ride—and drivers rank their riders the same way. Most Uber drivers won't pick up a passenger whose rating is lower than 4 stars, and the company won't let drivers keep contracting if they dip below a certain rating.

### **What are local cab companies doing to compete?**

Radio Cab and Broadway Cab have invested in a phone app of their own, called Curb. It roughly approximates the Uber service—click a button, get a cab. But the companies are also depending on the Portland Private For-Hire Board of Transportation, which sets the rules for taxis, limos and town cars, and has so far barred Uber. As of this weekend, however, Uber has decided to defy those rules.

### **Why is Steve Novick fighting Uber so fiercely?**

You mean telling The New York Times that "Uber seems like a bunch of thugs"? The city commissioner is certainly outraged that the company abandoned rule negotiations and decided to stage what's essentially a hostile takeover of the cab market. But Novick also may be playing operatic notes to impress organized labor, including Oregon AFL-CIO, which opposes Uber as a threat to unionized drivers. Unions are Novick's political base, and a much-needed ally in the ongoing war over his proposed \$46 million Portland street fee.

### **How could Portland City Hall stop Uber?**

The city has sent out undercover enforcement officers to try to order Uber cabs and issue \$2,750 fines to drivers—but that's a lot of overtime hours for a small deterrent. Portland's transportation officials can also start impounding the cars of Uber's drivers. But the most meaningful next step is that Uber and the city could go to court. Novick told Oregon Public Broadcasting on Saturday that he's considering filing a court injunction to keep Uber from operating in Portland. That's the tactic Las Vegas officials took when Uber came to town—and it's worked, forcing Uber out of Nevada for now. So order your Uber car while you can. Most likely, your latest transportation option is headed for a judge.

## Uber Pledges to Support Drivers, Fight City Fines In Court

*By Aaron Mesh  
December 6, 2014*

The City of Portland wants to fight Uber? Uber says bring it on.

A spokeswoman for Uber, the ride-sharing company that last night defied City Hall by launching its car service in Portland, says it will back its drivers by waging a legal fight against city fines.

"Uber stands by every driver partner," says Uber spokeswoman Eva Behrend, "and will fight unjust citations moving forward."

Portland began trying to crack down on Uber drivers soon after the service launched at 5 pm Friday. (Uber orchestrated a simultaneous news release to its plans at 4:30 pm to WW and The Oregonian,) KATU and The O reported that undercover enforcement officers tried—and failed—to purchase rides using the company's cell phone app.

City Commissioner Steve Novick, who oversees transportation, has warned that Uber drivers face fines starting at \$2,750 for a first offense. The risk for drivers is big—because they are driving their own vehicles as de facto taxis, and are contractors with Uber, not employees.

"People who pick up passengers for Uber in Portland should know that they are operating illegally and could be subject to penalties," Novick said Friday in a statement.

To see how Uber could fight back, look to Las Vegas.

That's where Uber, a San Francisco-based startup valued at \$40 billion, is battling in court with the Nevada Transportation Authority and the Nevada Taxicab Authority, who have been hailing Uber cabs, fining the drivers and impounding their cars.

Uber has responded by paying the costs of the drivers' fines, funding their court costs and legal bills, and renting them new cars to drive while their vehicles are impounded.

The company has also waged a court battle to block a preliminary injunction by the Nevada Transportation Authority to keep its service out of Las Vegas. That battle has moved up to the Nevada Supreme Court—but Uber has shut down its Las Vegas service.

In Portland, Behrend says the company will continue discussing rule changes with City Hall, even though officials have now decried them as scofflaws and bullies.

"We have been speaking with the city for well over a year and remain committed to continuing the discussion," Behrend says.

## Uber, Defying City Hall, Launches Its Service in Portland Today City officials, "completely, utterly blindsided" by San Francisco startup, pledge crackdown.

*By Aaron Mesh  
December 5, 2014*

The ride-sharing service Uber will begin running cars today in Portland, defying Portland City Hall's rules barring the company from operating within city limits.

"We are launching today," says Uber general manager Brooke Steger. "The city still has not written us into regulations. It's our duty to listen to the residents of Portland."

It's a brash and provocative move by the San Francisco-based startup, valued this week at \$40 billion. Uber enlists drivers to turn their own cars into de facto taxis, with customers summoning rides with the tap of a phone app.

City Commissioner Steve Novick says Uber's drivers will face fines starting at \$2,250 for a first offense—and the company faces a \$1,500 fine for every driver the city catches.

"There's nothing sharing about this so-called 'sharing economy' company: They want to profit in Portland without playing by the same rules as existing cab companies," Novick says in a statement. "We have told Uber and [its competitor] Lyft that they are welcome to offer ideas for regulatory changes. Uber has chosen instead to break the law."

As WW reported in July, Uber has tried to break into the Portland market for nearly two years, but has been barred by the city's Private For-Hire Transportation Board of Review, which regulates taxis, limos and town cars.

Uber is launching anyway, even though some city officials had said they want to seek a compromise. Established taxi companies, including Radio Cab and Broadway Cab, have opposed the service. So have labor unions, including the powerful Oregon AFL-CIO. Portland city officials, including Mayor Charlie Hales and Novick, have been wary of changing the rules—though Novick has said he's willing to consider eventual rule changes.

Steger says Uber is unwilling to wait.

"There is so much outcry for us to operate," Steger says. "We're also seeing hundreds of drivers who are already dropping off in Portland, and are not able to turn around and pick someone up. We look forward to the city writing transportation network companies into their regulatory code."

Uber launched its service Nov. 12 in Gresham, Hillsboro, Beaverton and Tigard, picking up fares in those suburban cities and putting more pressure on Portland to approve the company.

The company's decision to launch today follows a Dec. 3 letter to the City Council, signed by more than 40 hotel and restaurant owners and real-estate developers, asking for Uber to be legalized. (Among the signatories: Travel Portland, the city's tourism board.)

"It's difficult to understand why Portland is now the largest city in the country where ride sharing companies are not able to operate," the letter says. "It is inconsistent with the kind of City Commission we know you are and inconsistent with who we are as a city."

Novick released a statement 12 minutes after Uber announced the start of its service. He warned that drivers will face fines, and said passengers face the danger of drivers not having commercial insurance.

UPDATE, 5:15 pm: Reached via text by WW, Novick added another shot.

"I guess this kind of behavior is to be expected from a company that plans to spend a million dollars investigating journalists' private lives," Novick says. "And that keeps track of the sex lives of its own riders."

He's referring to comments made by Uber executive Emil Michael last month about investigating unfriendly reporters, and to the company's blog post analyzing the "rides of glory" made after one-night stands.

Josh Alpert, a top aide to Mayor Charlie Hales, tells WW that Uber "completely, utterly blindsided" city officials, who had been preparing revisions to the city's taxi policy. No one in City Hall knew Uber was defying city rules until this afternoon.

David Plouffe, one of Uber's top executives, called Portland City Hall on Thursday—and when Hales and Novick learned today what he was calling about, they called him back with a firm message.

"We're going to enforce the law," Alpert says. "We've been planning for this, with the hope this wouldn't be something we'd have to do. We're not used in Portland to having companies trying to manhandle their way in without regard for customer safety or other companies. But we're prepared."

UPDATE, 9:57 pm: Uber spokeswoman Eva Behrend says the company will continue discussing rule changes with City Hall, even though officials have described them as scofflaws. But she adds that the company will support its drivers by waging a legal fight against city fines.

"We have been speaking with the city for well over a year and remain committed to continuing the discussion," Behrend says. "Uber stands by every driver partner and will fight unjust citations moving forward."

## **Portland Bureaucrat Dean Marriott Challenges Whether City Commissioner Nick Fish Can Place Him on Paid Leave**

Marriott has given notice he plans to sue Fish and the city auditor

*By Aaron Mesh  
December 4, 2014*

Longtime Portland bureaucrat Dean Marriott, placed on paid administrative leave after a city audit showed the costs of a sewer office building went out of control, is appealing to a labor board to overturn City Commissioner Nick Fish's decision to send him home.

Marriott will receive a Jan. 8 hearing with Portland's civil service board, which reviews the suspensions and demotions of city employees. The hearing will decide whether Marriott's paid leave counts as a suspension he can appeal to the board.

Marriott, the director of the Bureau of Environmental Services, has filed a notice that he intends to sue Fish and City Auditor LaVonne Griffin-Valade. The Nov. 19 tort claim, first reported Wednesday by The Oregonian, charges Fish and Griffin-Valade with conspiring on a politically motivated attempt to end his career.

Fish placed Marriott on paid administrative leave because of the \$11.5 million services building that opened this spring at the Columbia Boulevard Wastewater Treatment Plant.

In April, WW obtained documents showing how the city turned what was supposed to be a utilitarian office building, originally estimated at \$3.2 million, into a "poster-child facility" for wastewater engineers in North Portland.

Fish responded to reports by WW and KOIN-TV by asking for a city audit. He sent Marriott home Oct. 22 after the audit said BES managers approved a design so ornate and inadequate that it required 85 change orders during construction, mostly to fix design problems like the ecoroof covered in wetland grasses.

Fish has asked the Barran Liebman law firm to investigate the project.

Marriott's civil-service protection is at the center of his tort claim. In it, his attorney says Fish and Griffin-Valade trumped up the sewer building's cost overruns to create a cause for the last city bureau director who can't be fired at the discretion of elected officials.

"Since 2000, when the city voted to remove civil servant status for bureau directors, all directors who retained their civil service protections have been replaced by 'at-will' employees," the tort claim says. "Both [Griffin-Valade] and Commissioner Fish have demonstrated clear animus toward Mr. Marriott's legal protections and shown a clear intention to remove him from his position and replace him with someone who can be fired at Commissioner Fish's discretion for any reason."

The civil-service protection has extended Marriott's 20-year career before.

In 2005, then-Mayor Tom Potter asked Marriott to resign, while forcing out three other bureau chiefs. Marriott refused to resign, and Potter couldn't make him leave because he had civil-service protection that meant he could be fired only for cause.

## **Portland City Hall Preparing to Compel Airbnb Safety Inspections**

*By Aaron Mesh  
December 3, 2014*

Portland city officials say they will finally crack down on Airbnb hosts who don't get safety inspections.

WW reported last month that only 4 percent of Airbnb hosts in Portland had bothered to seek a city permit to operate. Getting a permit requires paying a \$180 fee, agreeing to operate under new city rules and passing a safety inspection.

Portland Revenue Bureau director Thomas Lannom has drafted an ordinance that would penalize Airbnb and other online rental marketplaces \$500 each time they don't display a host's city permit number on their website.

Mayor Charlie Hales said last month he was content to let Airbnb hosts seek permits at their own pace. Since WW's story, however, Hales asked for the enforcement ordinance.

The City Council will consider it Dec. 18.

With the new rule, says City Commissioner Nick Fish, who pushed for the change, "We're insisting that the booking agents not advertise rogue hosts."

## The Mercury

### Uber Brings Ride-Sharing to Portland Without Permission; Novick Threatens Hefty Fines

By Denis C. Theriault  
December 5, 2014

Uber's hardly been quiet about its lust for Portland—ardor that was reciprocated this week when several business leaders sent a letter to city council demanding a refreshing of the city's taxi rules so the ride-sharing business could swoop in without risking fines and punishment.

The city's transportation bureau, meanwhile, hasn't been so hot to trot. Same for the city's transportation commissioner Steve Novick.

Reports are coming in, citing Uber officials, that the company is forcing the issue—launching its service in Portland over the objections of city officials. In a statement issued a few minutes ago, the Portland Bureau of Transportation reacted to those reports, by accusing Uber of preparing to "start offering taxi service in Portland illegally on Friday night." And Novick, in that statement, has promised to level "civil and criminal penalties against Uber and its drivers for operating without required permits and inspections." (The Oregonian's Joseph Rose has taken credit for breaking the news about Uber's insurgency to city hall.)

He also cast some aspersions at Uber's business model, which it's already taken to the city's suburbs in a bid to make its arrival here seem inevitable. Uber, based in San Francisco, offers an app that allows people looking for rides to connect with private drivers looking to provide rides.

It promises efficiency—and it's become a popular part of the growing (and wealthy-favoring) "sharing economy," alongside outfits like Airbnb. But it's also intensely controversial.

Uber's prices "surge" during peak hours, which can sometimes surprise riders (like a woman who paid almost \$400 for a ride on Halloween). Their drivers also are largely unregulated, at least compared to taxis and licensed town-car operators. The company's also battling labor and PR issues.

*"There's nothing sharing about this so-called 'sharing economy' company: They want to profit in Portland without playing by the same rules as existing cab companies," Novick said. "People who pick up passengers for Uber in Portland should know that they are operating illegally and could be subject to penalties. Public safety, fairness among competitors and customer service are our top priorities. Unlike permitted drivers, Uber drivers do not carry commercial insurance, putting Portland customers at great risk."*

PBOT's statement goes on to highlight the fines any Uber drivers operating illegally in Portland might face.

Code Section	Requirement	1st Offense	2nd Offense	Subsequent Offenses
16.40.090 A.	LPT and Taxi Driver Permit	\$1,000	\$2,500	\$5,000
16.40.150 A.	Taxi Company Permit	\$1,500	\$2,500	\$5,000
16.40.190 B.	Taxiplate	\$1,250	\$2,500	\$5,000

Full City Code Citation: [http://www.portlandonline.com/auditor/?c=28593#cid\\_408153](http://www.portlandonline.com/auditor/?c=28593#cid_408153)

The bureau's in the midst of studying the city's taxi regulations, in part because of the clamor for services like Uber. A recent study detailed by the Oregonian showed Portland's demand for taxis spiking on weekends and going unfulfilled. The city's typically been reticent to flood the market with permits. It took a battle and a lengthy study, back in 2012, for newcomer cab outfit Union Cab to win permission to operate in Portland.

*Commissioner Novick is convening a task force to reexamine existing taxi regulations and see if those regulations should be restructured while protecting consumers and drivers.*

*"We have told Uber and Lyft that they are welcome to offer ideas for regulatory changes," Novick said. "Uber has chosen instead to break the law."*

KGW is reporting that the app went live at 5 pm, citing regional manager Brooke Steger.

*Uber's regional manager Brooke Steger said the app began working at 5 p.m. and drivers were able to immediately begin offering rides.*

*The City of Portland, which previously said it wouldn't change its regulations to allow Uber to operate like cabs, has not yet altered the rules. Uber launched anyhow.*

*"I don't think we're going against the city's wishes," Steger said. "We hope the city embraces this and listens to their constituents, the people of Portland and drivers partnering with us."*

The O's report says Mayor Charlie Hales almost immediately called Uber after Rose called for comment the ride-sharing company's plans.

*Within minutes, Mayor Charlie Hales had David Plouffe, one of President Barack Obama's most high-profile campaign operatives and now an Uber vice president in charge of strategy, on a speaker phone, Novick said. "I told him that if they're just going to come in and flagrantly violate the law, we'll throw the book at them."*

*Brooke Steger, Uber Northwest general manager, said the city's threats shouldn't dissuade its hundreds of local drivers from trying to make a living. "We are 100 percent behind the drivers and we support them every step of the way," Steger said. "We hope the city doesn't take that kind of action."*

Read PBOT's full statement after the jump.

*The Portland Bureau of Transportation has learned that transportation company Uber has said it will start offering taxi service in Portland illegally on Friday night.*

*City Commissioner Steve Novick, who oversees PBOT, said the City is prepared to issue civil and criminal penalties against Uber and its drivers for operating without required permits and inspections. The City of Portland requires permits for drivers and companies that offer taxi or executive sedan service within the city limits.*

*"There's nothing sharing about this so-called 'sharing economy' company: They want to profit in Portland without playing by the same rules as existing cab companies," Novick said. "People who pick up passengers for Uber in Portland should know that they are operating illegally and could be subject to penalties. Public safety, fairness among competitors and customer service are our top priorities. Unlike permitted drivers, Uber drivers do not carry commercial insurance, putting Portland customers at great risk."*

*Portland and Vancouver, Wash. are the only cities in the metropolitan area that regulate taxi companies. Uber recently started operating in Vancouver without permits and in other area cities that do not regulate taxis.*

*Since the City Council moved taxi regulation from the Revenue Bureau to PBOT, effective July 1, Commissioner Novick and transportation officials started a top-to-bottom review intended to update the City's taxi and executive sedan regulations.*

*Commissioner Novick is convening a task force to reexamine existing taxi regulations and see if those regulations should be restructured while protecting consumers and drivers.*

*"We have told Uber and Lyft that they are welcome to offer ideas for regulatory changes," Novick said. "Uber has chosen instead to break the law."*

*It is illegal for motorists to pick up passengers for a fee in the Portland city limits without proper permits. Taxis that pick up passengers outside of Portland may drop off those passengers in Portland without a permit.*

Anyone in Portland can use the smartphone app Curb to call taxis from Broadway and Radio Cab, which are two of the largest permitted taxi companies in the city. The three most common violations of City Code that city enforcement officers find, and which Uber and its drivers may be in violation of, are:

The Limited Passenger Transportation and Taxi Driver Permit requirements ensure the public that drivers have passed annual City-required annual background checks.

The Taxi Company Permit requirement ensures the public that licensed companies have appropriate commercial insurance that will cover passengers in the event of a crash, and that the companies' drivers have annual City-required background checks and inspected vehicles.

The Taxiplate display requirement calls for posting of a metal plate on the vehicle with an identification number. It helps customers and enforcement officers identify permitted operators.

## The Portland Business Journal

### The weekend in Uber: Rate comparisons, city bombast and more

By Andy Giegerich  
December 8, 2014

The Portland Bureau of Transportation has learned that transportation company Uber has said it will start offering taxi service in Portland illegally on Friday night.

The storm was ignited Friday when Uber began operating in Portland despite not having permission to do so. Portland requires drivers and companies that offer taxi and other transportation services to be permitted.

City Commissioner Steve Novick said Friday that Uber and its drivers would receive penalties — at the

Code Section	Requirement	1st Offense	2nd Offense	Subsequent Offenses
16.40.090 A.	LPT and Taxi Driver Permit	\$1,000	\$2,500	\$5,000
16.40.150 A.	Taxi Company Permit	\$1,500	\$2,500	\$5,000
16.40.190 B.	Taxiplate	\$1,250	\$2,500	\$5,000

Full City Code Citation: [http://www.portlandonline.com/auditor/?c=28593#cid\\_408153](http://www.portlandonline.com/auditor/?c=28593#cid_408153)

high end, \$5,000 for multiple violations — for operating illegally.

Uber uses an app through which users can enlist private town cars and individuals with their own cars to pick up those looking for a taxi. This weekend:

- Novick told Oregon Public Broadcasting he may go to court to stop Uber from operating in Portland. One concern that the city touted to media during the Uber weekend: that it doesn't comply with city rules that require 20 percent of transportation company fleets to be wheelchair-accessible.
- KATU, a news partner of the Portland Business Journal, did a cost-comparison between Uber and a taxi. The \$11.90 taxi ride cost \$9.57 when provided by an Uber driver.
- Willamette Week offered the best primer over the weekend on Uber and its Portland battles.

Among the paper's findings: Uber claims it covers both drivers and riders through a \$1 million single-limit insurance policy, that Uber drivers make between \$10 and \$20 an hour but are treated as contractors and that the reason Novick could be fighting the services so stridently is because unions, which include cab drivers, are a big part of his political base.

## **Portland to Uber drivers: You will be fined if you operate within city limits**

*By Suzanne Stevens  
December 5, 2014*

Uber said it would begin operating in Portland at 5 p.m. Friday evening, according to the Oregonian, defying a city ban on such ride-share services. The city wasted little time responding.

In an email sent to media at 4:45, the city warned that drivers may face penalties and fines for operating illegally in Portland.

Uber, through its app, enables private town cars and individuals with their own cars to pick up those looking for a taxi.

Commissioner Steve Novick, who oversees the Portland Bureau of Transportation, said in the statement that the city is prepared to issue civil and criminal penalties.

"There's nothing sharing about this so-called 'sharing economy' company: They want to profit in Portland without playing by the same rules as existing cab companies," Novick said. "People who pick up passengers for Uber in Portland should know that they are operating illegally and could be subject to penalties."

Penalties range from \$1,000 for a first offense to up to \$5,000 for multiple violations.

City rules prohibit the use of unlicensed taxis, which would include private cars used to provide rides. The city is reviewing the policy, a move that can't come fast enough for some of Portland's leading restaurant, hospitality, tourism and development executives.

Forty-plus business leaders sent a letter to city leaders on December 3 urging city officials to allow Uber to operate, noting the Portland is the largest West Coast city that doesn't allow ride-share services.

## **GoLocalPDX**

### **First Night in Portland: An Uber Cabbie Q&A**

*By Taya Alami  
December 6, 2014*

Uber began operating in Portland Friday evening, despite city threats that the company would face fines for doing so.

The company, that has disrupted the traditional taxi business model around the world, has been circling the Portland market all year long. Since January, Uber has been operating in five of Portland's suburbs and advertising for "Portland Drivers" on Craigslist. On Friday, the company decided to pull the trigger and started operating in the city even though it had not been approved for licenses.

GoLocalPDX asked Rachel Wills, an Uber driver, a few questions during a Dec. 5 ride through downtown Portland.

#### **Why are you an Uber driver?**

Because I love people. I love to drive around and I have a great economic vehicle that's just sitting in the driveway.

#### **How much have you made in tips tonight?**

No tips; at least not to my knowledge.

**Has anyone been rude to you?**

No, not at all. Everybody has been very pleasant and very happy to have us.

**How many fares have you had tonight?**

You're number seven. I started at 4 p.m. in the outlying areas and 5 o'clock in Portland.

**Do you think Uber has a right to operate in Portland?**

Absolutely; 100 percent. I think everybody deserves an option.

**Are you concerned about the city threatening to fine Uber for operating in Portland?**

Uber said they would cover the cost (of any fines); so no. And how would they know? Do they just pull everybody over randomly and ask them if they're driving for Uber?

**Do you do this full time?**

No. I own a cat grooming business. I do this two days a week - Mondays and Fridays.

**What's it been like to work for Uber?**

So far they've been very gracious, very informative. They have a lot of training and seminars in Portland.

**Do you have any security concerns working this job?**

Yes. Especially as a single woman. I actually went out and bought pepper spray and took self defense classes, just because. I'm not expecting problems, but I know if I pick people up late enough, they might be drunk and belligerent.

**Have you been trained by the company on how to handle a situation like that?**

Not by the company, no. But I should really bring that up with them, shouldn't I?

**Have you ever seen the movie Taxi Driver?**

Yes; years ago.

**Do you ever think about it now?**

The movie? Not really. I don't think being a taxi driver and a rideshare driver, don't really have any similarities, besides picking people up and dropping them off at a location. This is a more personal approach. This is more just one neighbor helping another neighbor out.

**And that's why this appeals to you?**

Yes. Absolutely.

## **City Threatens Uber with Fines if it Begins Operates in Portland Friday**

*December 5, 2014*

The City of Portland has warned “ride sharing” company Uber that if it begins operating illegally in Portland, starting Friday evening, the company will be fined from \$1,000 to \$5,000 per offense.

Uber, the controversial taxi company, will begin operating illegally in Portland starting Friday, Dec. 5, and the city has said it will start to fine drivers and the company, according to Dylan Rivera of the Portland Bureau of Transportation.

Portland Transportation Commissioner Steve Novick is prepared to issue civil and criminal penalties against Uber and its drivers if it moves forward with operations in the city without the proper permits and licensing, Rivera said.

“There’s nothing sharing about this so-called ‘sharing economy’ company: They want to profit in Portland without playing by the same rules as existing cab companies,” Novick said. “People who pick up passengers for Uber in Portland should know that they are operating illegally and could be subject to penalties. Public safety, fairness among competitors and customer service are our top priorities. Unlike permitted drivers, Uber drivers do not carry commercial insurance, putting Portland customers at great risk.”

The company, that has disrupted the traditional taxi business model around the world, has been circling the Portland market all year long. Since January, Uber has been operating in five of Portland’s suburbs and advertising for “Portland Drivers” on Craigslist.

Recently, several dozen companies called on city hall to allow Uber to operate in the city, which they said was the largest in the nation without a rideshare company.