

## **The Oregonian**

### **City takes step toward new rules for home demolition notices, waiting periods**

*By Mike Francis  
February 12, 2015*

Portland city commissioners approved a building code amendment that would refine the way the city deals with home demolitions.

The commissioners took the action after more than 3-1/2 hours of testimony Thursday from people who said they opposed the amendment, embraced the amendment, or regarded the amendment as a barely acceptable compromise.

The amendment extends an initial 35-day delay to add 60 more days for residents seeking an alternative to a planned demolition. That represents a reduction from an earlier proposal to impose up to a 120-day waiting period before demolition.

The amendments, drawn up following discussions with stakeholders over the last two months, also clarify other points of the code, such as requirements to notify neighbors when a homeowner applies to tear down a house.

The city has seen a wave of such home demolitions, generated by developers and homeowners capitalizing on the rising values of their properties. The demolitions triggered "a cry for help" from concerned neighbors, as a member of the grassroots group United Neighborhoods for Reform called it Thursday. Last year the city had applications for 312 home demolitions, up from 281 in 2013.

Tension between developers, homeowners and neighbors was on full display in the City Council chambers Thursday. Developers objected to the amended plan, saying it would promote "frivolous appeals" by people trying to stall demolition. Neighbors and activists said the proposed rules don't go far enough to preserve vintage houses and the fabric of neighborhoods. "The most affordable home is the one already built," said one.

The proposed rules don't address the way houses are demolished. Many residents told the City Council Thursday they want the city to promote "deconstruction," a labor-intensive process intended to salvage reusable materials and reduce the volume of building debris that ends up in landfills. Without such rules, they said, developers may choose cheaper, faster methods, such as a one-day demolition with a backhoe.

## **The Portland Tribune**

### **City board OKs 242 new taxi permits**

*By Pamplin Media Group  
February 12, 2015*

Portland's city taxi regulation board has approved 242 new permits for cabs.

On Thursday, Feb. 12, the city's Private for Hire Transportation Board of Review approved the new permits and recommended that Ecocab be allowed to enter the Portland market. The permits must be approved by the City Council.

The board approved permits that were requested by six of the seven taxi companies that do business in Portland. The board also recommended City Council approval of 51 permits for Ecocab, which plans to offer service with a fleet comprised of all-electric vehicles.

"We hear from the public that they want taxis to be more accessible, and we hope these new permits will make it easier for everyone to be able to take a cab when they want one," said Leah Treat, Portland Bureau of Transportation director.

If the City Council approves Ecocab's 51 permits it will bring to 753 the number of taxi permits issued by the city, up from 460 permits.

The change was part of a review of the city's regulations for taxis, limos, town cars and other services, which are regulated by the Private for Hire Transportation Division.

New dispatch software has identified times during which there is a significant shortage of taxi vehicles available to serve the public during periods of peak demand. Even though there are a lot of taxis available during weekdays, a review in 2014 found that there are fewer available during early morning hours on weekends.

## **The Portland Mercury**

### **We've Got New Cabs Coming! Don't Plan Your Weekend Around It.**

*By Dirk VanderHart  
February 12, 2015*

Portland, you've got hundreds of cabs coming to you! But you're still going to have a loooooong while to wait if you're calling at 2 am this weekend.

As we reported yesterday, the city's taxi board just authorized a whopping 242 new cab permits for existing cab companies. If Portland City Council says okay, another 51 permits could be issued to a brand new company, EcoCab.

It's an unprecedented move for a typically cautious Private For-Hire Transportation Board of Review, but it's also probably necessary. There are unquestionable cab shortages during peak times, and taxi companies want to be able to compete when services like Uber re-enter the market in April, as planned. A day after the vote, though, it looks like there may be just one more cab in circulation this weekend.

"Both Green and Broadway (Cab) have said they want to bring new vehicles in," says Frank Dufay, the city's private for-hire transportation manager. "Broadway has said they want to bring a new vehicle in tomorrow."

The introduction of hundreds of new taxis was always bound to take a while, of course. But all these newly freed permits may take an especially long time to amount to actual results for YOU—the drunk, tired, tear-stained potential customer—because of conditions the city's set.

Before Portland's existing cab companies (well, the six that had new permit applications) can add any new cars to their fleet, they first need to get up to code as far as the wheelchair-accessible vehicles they offer. That's not cheap. We're talking vans with ramps that can cost double the price of new sedans.

And it's not like the cab companies are just a little behind the code-mandated 20 percent of their fleets that need to be accessible. Broadway needs 20 new vans to get legit, once its 30 new permits are factored in. Radio Cab needs 16. Green Cab, which was granted a dramatic 82 new permits yesterday—139 percent of its current fleet—will need 18. Every company in operation needs to add vehicles to meet the law.

Green and Broadway cab are in the best positions to do that immediately, because they provide subsidized rides to Oregon Health Plan patients using fleets of wheelchair-ready vans. That caused grumbling from Radio Cab officials, who say the companies have an unfair advantage in rolling out new vehicles, but it's going to mean fairly quick results for Broadway.

"We have one [going for inspection] tomorrow, and I think we're going to have six go in Monday," says Raye Miles, Broadway's president. Miles says her company could be up to compliance with city code tomorrow, if necessary. It has roughly 70 wheelchair-accessible vans that take OHP patients around, and could move some over to regular taxi service. But since Broadway has a number of new vans already coming in, she says those will get permits first.

Miles expects Broadway might start purchasing new cars (Priuses) next weekend.

"It's all happening so fast," she says. "It was done in such a 'kaboom' sort of fashion. We haven't had new permits since the '70s."

One caveat to all this: If any taxi company takes issue with yesterday's vote, it has 10 business days to file an appeal. Dufay says he doesn't expect that to happen, and so will hand out permits before that window closes.

If an appeal did come, though, it might be from Radio Cab General Manager Steve Entler, who brought up the appeals process at yesterday's meeting. (He told the Mercury afterward that he probably wouldn't file one.)

Entler, along with Radio Cab employee Darin Campbell, were the only two people to vote against the new permits at yesterday's meeting. They argued it was too many cabs to add to the streets. We reported that, with other news organizations reporting our reporting, and that's inspired two lengthy news releases today clarifying Entler's reasons for the vote. Both statements were sent by a spokesperson for the newly formed Transportation Fairness Alliance, a coalition of Portland taxi companies who are demanding Uber and its ilk abide by the same laws cabs do. Here's the gist:

*Entler fully supports the approval of all 242 new permits granted to Portland's current taxi companies, and was the first to vote in favor of the 51 permits for pending market entrant Eco-Cab.*

*When the motion was made in yesterday's meeting to approve all of the taxi company's outstanding permit applications, Entler voted in opposition, expressing concern that the process for approval did not accurately assess the ability of each cab company to immediately activate the new permits due to the associated costs. He had hoped for further discussion in the meeting to consider alternatives to releasing the volume of permits requested, with the end goal of immediately serving the demand of Portland passengers.*

## **The Portland Business Journal**

### **Portland investment activists plan to hit City Hall**

*By Andy Giegerich  
February 13, 2015*

Activists from the group 350PDX plan to ask Portland Mayor Charlie Hales for a little love at lunchtime today.

The group, which prods officials to divest holdings of companies that don't practice sustainably, wants Hales to follow through on promises to remove coal, oil and gas companies from the city's investments.

Hales had pledged to remove such holdings in June 2013.

"He promised us he'd bring a resolution to City Council," said 350PDX divestment coordinator, Sandy Polishuk, in a release. "But it's been over a year and nothing has happened. Instead the city of Portland has since invested another \$20 million in ExxonMobil. Charlie stood us up."

The group will lobby on the steps of City Hall at noon on Friday. It will bring "valentines" for Hales urging him to follow through on the pledge.

"Eugene, Ashland, Seattle, San Francisco, Providence, the list goes on and on of cities that have divested." said Dr. Adriana Voss-Andreae, 350PDX's chair. "It's high time for our mayor and our city to break up with fossil fuels; only fossil fools try to cheat on mother nature. We need to choose the livable and regenerative path for our city, for our children."

### **How the cab companies feel about Portland's pending taxi infusion**

*By Andy Giegerich  
February 13, 2015*

Wednesday's vote by the Private For-Hire Transportation Board to approve a proposed addition of 292 cabs to Portland's streets could rock riders' worlds.

The cab companies themselves are, for the most part, happy to provide the cabs. Broadway Cab's fleet will increase by 30 cars while Green Transportation will add 82. New Rose City Cab will add 30 cars, New Rose City Cab will add 30 and Portland Taxi will add 24.

Radio Cab's fleet will increase by 26 taxis while Union Cab will add 50 cars. The new EcoCab company will provide an extra 50 cabs to the city's streets.

"This is a very positive step in the right direction, and we applaud the Private For-Hire Transportation Board of Review for responding to customer demand for greater access to the safe, reliable and proven transportation service that taxis provide," said Noah Ernst, spokesperson for the Transportation Fairness Alliance and Radio Cab superintendent, in a statement. "This is evidence that the existing regulatory

process can effectively accommodate expansion in service capacity while maintaining a legal and level playing field for all participants."

Previously, Portland's cab companies had been limited to 460 permits. The Portland City Council must approve the proposal.

Radio Cab General Manager Steve Entler, who represents taxi companies on the 14-member Board of Review, voted against the proposal.

While Entler, according to a release from the Transportation Fairness Alliance, backs the notion, he's concerned that the approval process "did not accurately assess the ability of each cab company to immediately activate the new permits due to the associated costs."

Ernst added that it'll be difficult for all taxi companies to "expeditiously...meet the mandated requirement that 20 percent of all taxi company fleets be wheelchair accessible."

## **GoLocalPDX**

### **NEW: City Approves 242 New Taxi Permits**

*By Joanna Evoniuk  
February 13, 2015*

The City's Private for Hire Transportation Board of Review approved 242 new taxi permits on Thursday, in response to public interest for more taxi service in the city, according to the Portland Bureau of Transportation.

Dispatch software in taxis has revealed a shortage of available vehicles when they are demanded most, according to Dylan Rivera, spokes person for PDOT.

"We hear from the public that they want taxis to be more accessible, and we hope these new permits will make it easier for everyone to be able to take a cab when they want one," said Leah Treat, Director of the Portland Bureau of Transportation, in a media statement.

The Board awarded the new permits for six of the seven taxi companies operating in Portland.

The board also recommended City Council approved 51 permits for Ecocab, a new taxi company which plans to offer a fleet of all-electric vehicles. If they do, the total number of permitted taxis in Portland would rise from 460 to 753, according to Rivera.

The City Council required that each taxi company guarantee 20 percent of its fleet be accessible for people with disabilities.

PBOT is currently conducting a review of the City's regulations taxis, limos, town cars and other services regulated by the Private for Hire Transportation (PFHT) Division.