

The Oregonian

New Portland task force wants to drop bike theft 50% in 5 years

*By Carli Brosseau
March 31, 2015*

Portland's new bike theft task force has an ambitious goal: cutting bike theft in half over the next five years.

About 2,700 bicycles worth \$2 million were reported to police as stolen in 2014, Chief Larry O'Dea said at a news conference Tuesday.

"The level of frustration that surrounds this issue is really at an all time high," O'Dea said. "We're hearing from our community and we're hearing from our officers that the thieves are becoming more and more brazen every day."

The Oregonian/OregonLive found in an analysis last month that it's not easy to catch a bike thief in Portland.

The task force was initially announced a month ago, but it was canceled at the last minute to work out "logistical issues," a spokesman said.

Experts agree that a huge share of bike thefts go unreported. Sometimes that's because theft victims don't expect police to investigate; other times it's because they don't intend to file an insurance claim or they are embarrassed they didn't lock up their bike better.

Officials didn't say Tuesday whether the baseline for the goal of decreasing theft 50 percent was the number of thefts reported to police or the number of bikes actually believed stolen.

Jonathan Maus, a member of the new task force who writes frequently about bike theft on his blog, BikePortland.org, put the share of unreported thefts at 50 percent.

In broad terms, the task force hopes to boost the number of bikes registered, the number that are locked up properly and the number that are reported stolen to police through increased coordination between police, transportation officials and local bike security startups.

Multnomah County prosecutors, park rangers, Portland State University officials and others are included, though they are not part of the core group, officials said.

One of the task force's undisputed points of emphasis is how to lock a bike correctly.

A recent survey by J Allard, CEO of Project 529, found that about 85 percent of Portland cyclists lock their bike with a U-lock, the gold standard, but only about one-third of those cyclists used the lock properly, looping both the frame and the front wheel to the rack.

A new city website, endbikettheft.org, includes clear directions on how to register and properly lock a bike.

Police will also receive expanded training on how to spot and question suspected bike thieves, officials said.

The task force will announce its specific goals on its new website by the end of May.

Dan Saltzman: King of His Bureaus (Letters to the Editor)

*By Ronald W. Atwood
April 01, 2015*

Saltzman: King of His Bureau: Regarding "Dan Saltzman, King of Gone," (March 30): I find The Oregonian/OregonLive editorial on Dan Saltzman's absences to be overblown and verging on the petty. The primary job of a city commissioner is to manage an assigned bureau. I did not see any evidence that Saltzman's bureaus are not run well. Thus, he is fulfilling his primary task.

Also, I assume Saltzman has a cellphone and a computer with him when he is gone so he can keep in contact with his managers. Am I wrong? Has a missed meeting delayed an important decision?

Finally, I think the editorial board missed the important story: Too many people do not take their vacation time. At what cost? We work too hard and do not take enough time off. Perhaps The Oregonian should look at each commissioner's bureaus to see if attending council meetings makes them run better. Brainstorming really occurs outside of council meetings. Let's focus on results.

Portland Mayor Charlie Hales and Indiana's Religious Freedom Restoration Act: Letters to the Editor

*By Glenn Carson
April 1, 2015*

Indiana and Charlie Hales: Regarding "Fallout from Indiana law," (March 31): Portland Mayor Charlie Hales says he will ban city-funded travel to Indiana in opposition to that state's Religious Freedom Restoration Act which is designed to allow legal recourse (not discrimination) for those who believe legislation may oppose their religious beliefs. Hales apparently believes it is fine to impose his morals on others but does not want others (in Indiana!) to defend their moral objections to legislation through the legal process.

By Merle Gorman

Indiana and Charlie Hales: Prior to the passage of Indiana's Religious Freedom Restoration Act, 19 states passed such laws while 11 more interpreted that their state constitutions already provided such protections. Will Mayor Charlie Hales restrict travel by Portland city employees to these 30 states as well, or does he consider that by capitalizing on the current furor over Indiana's law he has gained sufficient publicity to reconfirm his liberal bona fides?

Another way to ask the same question: Why hasn't he already restricted travel to these 30 other states?

Mayor Charlie Hales is the latest to join boycott-Indiana movement, calls law 'blatant discrimination'

*By Andrew Theen
March 30, 2015*

Portland Mayor Charlie Hales said Monday that he would ban city-funded travel to Indiana after Gov. Mike Pence signed a controversial "religious freedom" bill into law last week.

Hales' statement follows similar declarations from the mayors of San Francisco and Seattle. Connecticut Gov. Dan Malloy said he would also outlaw publicly funded travel to Indiana.

Pence signed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act into law in Indiana, sparking criticism from the LGBT community and allies around the country.

The law, Pence said, is intended to protect religious Indianans from government intrusion. Opponents argue that the law opens the door for businesses in Indiana to discriminate against gays and lesbians on religious grounds.

In a statement Monday, Hales called Pence and the Indiana Legislature's actions "blatant discrimination."

"Gov. Mike Pence and the Indiana Legislature have to understand that such blatant discrimination against their own citizens cannot stand," Hales said, adding that the U.S. has moved beyond "those shameful practices of the past."

"It is regrettable that the great city of Indianapolis, led by its very effective mayor, Greg Ballard, is being dragged down by the reactionary efforts of the State Legislature and the governor," Hales said.

Hales plans to introduce a formal resolution Wednesday for the City Council to consider. The resolution also calls on "civic and business leaders" to follow suit.

Dana Haynes, Hales' spokesman, said the mayor is "a big fan of Indianapolis" and Ballard, whom Haynes described as "a very progressive Republican mayor." Haynes said Ballard and Hales are friends, and the Indianapolis leader and his wife were in Portland in August and spent time with Hales.

Haynes said Hales is confident Indiana will recognize "its folly" and react to the growing controversy. The temporary travel ban would be reversed if Indiana lawmakers repealed the law or ensured protection for all residents, regardless of sexual orientation.

"Indiana isn't the first state to adopt this backward, discriminatory policy, but most states have sexual-orientation language in their civil rights statutes to protect LGBT residents," Hales said. "Indiana doesn't offer these same protections."

Hales presided over the nuptials of Richard Glenn and Bert Boehm last May after a federal judge in Oregon struck down the state's gay-marriage ban.

Last year, Portland Development Commission Executive Director Patrick Quinton traveled to Indianapolis for an Urban Land Institute conference. Portland and Indianapolis participated in a year-long urban fellowship program, with leaders and business representatives from each city taking turns visiting the other.

Quinton's \$1,530 trip didn't include \$175 for tickets to the Indiana Pacers home game against the Los Angeles Lakers. PDC Spokesman Shawn Uhlman said Quinton doesn't have any additional plans to return to Indianapolis.

It's unclear whether Portland leaders had trips planned for city-related business in Indiana. Haynes said the city is still trying to account for travel that could be jeopardized.

Nick Fish pushes affordable-housing commitment as OHSU deal questioned: Portland City Hall Roundup

*By Brad Schmidt
March 30, 2015*

Portland Commissioner Nick Fish wants the city to secure one more acre for affordable housing somewhere in the neighborhoods south of downtown, although even with the acquisition, officials won't come close to meeting long-standing goals for the area.

Fish has asked the City Council to buy into his proposal as part of a package of urban renewal amendments slated for approval Wednesday.

Fish hasn't identified the parcel or pledged when construction would begin - just that the city needs to secure development rights sometime in the next eight years, before June 30, 2023.

The proposal is the city's latest effort to inch toward affordable-housing goals for the North Macadam urban renewal district, where only 209 rent-restricted units have been built amid high-end condos overlooking the Willamette River. City leaders originally promised a mixed-income community, but results have been paltry.

The Portland Housing Bureau last year recommended walking away from goals set in 2003, but in recent months Fish - who oversaw the Housing Bureau from 2009 through early 2013 - has been pushing for progress. He's emerged as the swing vote for Mayor Charlie Hales' effort to revamp several urban renewal districts.

Portland officials are now prepared to subsidize development of at least 200 affordable units on city-owned property in RiverPlace, known as Parcel 3, which would take the total number of rent-restricted units up to 409.

Fish's proposal also would call on the city to eventually hit a target from 2003: 479 units for individuals or families earning up to 60 percent of the region's median income.

In some ways, Fish's plan is reaffirming what the Housing Bureau has already said it can achieve. Officials in December said they should have enough urban renewal money for about 300 more affordable units.

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The resolution Fish is presenting to the City Council states that officials plan to "fully achieve" goals set in 2003. But that's not accurate.

The 2003 housing strategy called for 788 affordable units out of the first 3,000 built, with affordable units open to people earning up to 120 percent of the region's median. Fish's plan will focus only on people earning up to 60 percent of the median, an aide said.

Separately, the 2003 benchmarks were far below overarching city goals at that time, representing a compromise because of high development costs. After the first 3,000 units were built, Portland was supposed to increase affordable-housing goals for the area -- although it was never clear how that would happen.

"Once it becomes clear that the total build-out of housing units will exceed the 3,000 unit target, then the affordable unit goals will need to be increased," the 2003 plan reads. "Increasing the targets would help to assure the livability of the district through providing housing that is attractive and affordable to a broad range of households and incomes."

Already about 3,000 units have been built.

Fish's resolution doesn't address the 2003 pledge to increase goals after the first 3,000 units are built.

"Unfortunately we weren't able to make it happen this go around," said Liam Frost, a policy aide for Fish, noting that officials will be able to monitor spending and progress with reports required every two years.

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City officials have at least two options to secure land: a development agreement being negotiated with the Zidell family, which owns about 30 acres, and Oregon Health & Science University.

Zidell negotiations have stalled because of affordable housing, although there's reportedly been progress.

As for OHSU, Portland at one point spent \$6 million to obtain affordable-housing development rights on what's known as Block 33 (3516 S.W. Macadam Ave.), where affordable housing was to be built above a hospital parking garage.

But amid the recession, Portland revised the deal.

Part of the reason Portland wanted out: so they could build a different affordable housing project, Gray's Landing, which opened in 2012 as the only rent-restricted complex in the district.

City officials gave up their development rights with OHSU and recouped \$3 million cash and \$1 million in development credits. The deal also allowed Portland to get more money if OHSU sells the property within seven years - 25 percent of the sale price, up to \$2 million.

The deadline? May 28, 2017. And if OHSU doesn't sell before then, Portland gets nothing.

Although the terms of the deal were better than what was originally proposed in 2009, officials today are recasting it as problematic.

"It wasn't the idea to create a narrow window for us to get our money back," Patrick Quinton, executive director of the Portland Development Commission, told the City Council last week. "At the time, it seemed like the right window."

Portland and OHSU officials said they are in the process of negotiating an extension. Some affordable housing advocates say Portland should use the opportunity to ensure rent-restricted units are part of the deal.

Portland's 'Ban the Box' proposal should help ex-offenders, not punish businesses: Editorial Agenda 2015

*By The Oregonian Editorial Board
March 30, 2015*

Mayor Charlie Hales' effort to "ban the box" could have been an easy win. Labor, business groups and civic leaders all offered their support for the idea that employers should not reflexively disqualify ex-convicts as job candidates.

But Hales wanted to go further than just removing the criminal-history question from applications forms. He supported a proposal, backed by the AFL-CIO and the Urban League of Portland, that would prohibit

employers from checking an applicant's criminal background until after making a conditional job offer. Initially, the proposal would have granted the candidate a right to sue if the business withdrew the offer for a reason that the applicant felt was irrelevant. Public safety and other sensitive positions were not included in the criminal-background restriction.

Not surprisingly, employers objected to the scope of Hales' proposal, which would hamper their ability to fully vet applicants and raise the specter of litigation. Despite dumping the right-to-sue provision, Hales' proposal still faced stiff opposition from business groups who otherwise lauded his ambitions.

Fortunately, good sense seems to have prevailed. Hales tabled the issue last week and will convene a work group - including employers -- that will look at ironing out revisions, as The Oregonian/OregonLive's Andrew Theen reported.

Supporters, who are backing a similar proposal in the Legislature, should use the delay to refocus their energy on the goal they articulated in the first place - helping ex-convicts get a fair shake from employers. That should mean getting businesses to consider an applicant's skills, qualifications and whether a criminal conviction in the past is truly relevant to a job. It should not mean using the law to impose information blackouts and the threat of legal action on employers as a way to box them in.

It has already been done elsewhere. Several cities have adopted ban-the-box type laws that open doors for ex-convicts while not hamstringing businesses. In Seattle, for example, employers review criminal background after they conduct their initial screening that weeds out applicants who lack the qualifications for a job. After that, businesses can consider a candidate's criminal background along with many other factors before making a job offer. Seattle councilmembers also directed complaints to the city's Office for Civil Rights - not to the county courthouse.

Despite arguing that employers should conduct background checks only after a job offer has been made, Portland advocates provided compelling evidence that employers can be trusted to consider that information long before that stage.

In a recent meeting with the editorial board, Jim Houser, co-owner of Hawthorne Auto Clinic, offered his personal experience in hiring, pointing to one longtime employee, who is an ex-convict.

But in that case, the applicant volunteered his criminal background with Houser during his interview. Houser had the time and freedom to consider whether it mattered - and ultimately decided it did not. Other employers deserve the same courtesy and leeway to make that determination before reaching the stage of settling on a final candidate.

Just as the city is hitting pause on the process, so state legislators should table HB 3025, which similarly dictates that a candidate's background cannot be checked until after a conditional job offer. It also creates the private right of action that Hales dumped. With those punitive sideboards, the bill, introduced by the House Committee on Business and Labor, should not advance.

No one is disputing that an ex-offender deserves consideration by employers as an individual for his or her skills and qualifications. But supporters need to remember that the goal is to foster honest conversation and evaluation. Those conversations don't happen under the threat of a lawsuit.

The Portland Tribune

Hales bans city-paid travel to Indiana to protest new law

*By Jim Redden
March 30, 2015*

Mayor Charlie Hales announced Monday that he is banning the use of city funds to pay for travel to Indiana to protest passage of a state law there being denounced as allowing discrimination against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered individuals.

Hales will ask the City Council on Wednesday to adopt a resolution supporting the ban — and he is asking civic and business leaders in town to not travel to Indiana, either.

The law, which is intended to guarantee religious freedom, was recently passed by the Indiana Legislature and signed into law by Indiana Gov. Mike Pence. It is being denounced as discriminatory by GLBT activists and some elected, civic and business leaders.

“Gov. Mike Pence and the Indiana Legislature have to understand that such blatant discrimination against their own citizens cannot stand. We, as a country, have moved so far from those shameful practices of the past,” Hales said in a Monday afternoon statement.

According to the statement, as the commissioner in charge of the Office of Management and Finance, Hales has the authority to temporarily alter the rules on city-funded travel.

Although the federal government and 30 other states have passed similar laws, many of them also have laws prohibiting discrimination against LGBT individuals, Hales said.

“Indiana isn’t the first state to adopt this backward, discriminatory policy, but most states have sexual-orientation language in their civil rights statutes to protect LGBT residents,”

Hales said. “Indiana doesn’t offer these same protections. All states have to realize that government-sponsored discrimination against LGBT residents in the United States of America has to stop.”

More affordable housing on City Council agenda

*By Jim Redden
March 29, 2015*

More affordable housing will be built in the city-subsidized neighborhood known as North Macadam if the City Council approves an ordinance it is scheduled to consider Wednesday.

The ordinance, introduced by Commissioner Nick Fish, will commit the city to buying an additional one-acre parcel in the area for affordable housing no later than the 2022-2023 fiscal year. It is apparently part of deal worked out between Fish and Mayor Charlie Hales to reconfigure several of the city’s urban renewal areas.

The ordinance can be read [here](#).

Hales wants to place some of the property in the URAs on the property tax rolls earlier than scheduled. Fish wants the council to recommit to an affordable housing goal in the North Macadam URA that has not been met and appears to be slipping away.

The ordinance submitted by Fish is apparently key to Hales winning council approval for the URA changes he has been pursuing. They will also be considered by the council Wednesday. Hales also supports recommitting to the affordable housing goal.

Although the numbers have changes over the years, the council had most recently committed to having 788 units of affordable housing built in the North Macadam URA that includes the growing South Waterfront area along the west bank of the Willamette River south of the Marquam Bridge. Only 209 units have been built so far, however.

The council has agreed to help finance at least 200 more units of affordable housing on a two-acre piece of property owned by the Portland Development Commission at 2095 S.W. River Parkway, across the street from the Marriott Residence Inn. Fish’s ordinance commits the council to buying one more acre in the North Macadam URA for the additional units needed to meet the city’s goal.

Changes sought by Hales in the North Macadam URA will help finance the purchase and construction. According to Fish’s ordinance, they will increase the URA by approximately 45 acres, which will generate an additional \$38 million in urban renewal funds for affordable housing.

The ordinance directs the PDC, which administers the city’s urban renewal areas, and the Portland Housing Bureau "to work collaboratively to identify and acquire the rights to develop affordable housing on a site of at least one acre in addition" to the Southwest River Parkway site. Work on that location is scheduled to begin in 2017.

South Water has been heavily targeted by the city for redevelopment. It is served by the Portland Streetcar and the Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail Line will run through it. Completed projects include several privately owned condominium towers, the Oregon Health & Sciences University Center for Health

& Healing, the Collaborative Life Sciences Building & Skourtes Tower being used by OHSU, Oregon State University and Portland State University, and a number of market rate apartment buildings.

It will eventually include OHSU's Schnitzer Campus and Commons.

The only affordable housing project completed to date is the Gray's Landing, located on the corner of Sothwest Lowell and Bond in South Waterfront.

The other ordinances relating to the URAs can be found at www.portlandonline.com/auditor/?c=26997.

The Portland Mercury

Checking in On Charlie Hales' Campaign Cash: More Money From Development Types

*By Dirk VanderHart
April 1, 2015*

Mayor Charlie Hales, the lone announced candidate for his seat in next year's primary race, continues to haul in campaign donations in his off hours—and report them well before campaign finance deadlines, in case would-be rivals are curious.

In the last three weeks, Hales reports fielding nearly \$5,500, much of it from well-known development players in this city. Here are the highlights.

- \$2,000 from Ann Edlen, a former marketing executive and wife of Gerding Edlen Development Company CEO Mark Edlen. Gerding Edlen has built and managed some of the city's most posh and prominent buildings, including a huge stake in the development of the South Waterfront.
- \$1,000 from CH2M Hill, the engineering consulting firm that's at the top of every water activist's "enemies" list. The company's got a contract to build new below-ground reservoirs that will kick into service once Portland disconnects its beloved above-ground tanks.
- \$500 each from, Timbers owner Merritt Paulson; Singer Dazzle Building LLC, partly owned by Nob Hill overlord Richard Singer; Phillip Beyl, an architect with local powerhouse GBD Architects; and Stanley Penkin, a local developer and arts booster.

The Mercury first reported in February Hales had kicked his campaign finance machine into gear, noting an enormous donation from light rail builder Stacy and Whitbeck. That firm stands to win big from a vote city council will take later this morning on tweaks to Portland's "urban renewal areas."

Hales has raised a bunch of other cash, too.

Mayor Charlie Hales Forbids City-Funded Travel to Indiana

*By Dirk VanderHart
March 30, 2015*

Just when there's finally a reason to visit Indiana (more on that in a second), Mayor Charlie Hales is telling city employees they mayn't visit the Hoosier State on the public dime.

Hales announced today he's using his perch atop the city's Office of Management and Finance to temporarily forbid city-funded travel there. It's a reaction to Indiana's recently passed "religious freedom restoration act"—signed into law in a political climate, and with worrying provisions, that have led many people to surmise it would allow businesses to refuse to serve gay customers. Indiana Gov. Mike Pence obstinately denies this (sprinkling those denials with falsehoods), but legislators are hustling to clarify the law just the same.

"Gov. Mike Pence and the Indiana Legislature have to understand that such blatant discrimination against their own citizens cannot stand," Hales said in a statement. "We, as a country, have moved so far from those shameful practices of the past."

This travel ban isn't a Hales original. Seattle Mayor Ed Murray has enacted the same policy. So has Connecticut Gov. Dan Malloy.

It's also unclear whether the ban will have any tangible effect. The mayor's office is trying to find out whether there are any outstanding trips to Indiana that will have to be scuttled. Hales' spokesman, Dana Haynes, says the mayor would refuse to attend the 2016 United States Conference of Mayors annual shindig, slated to take place in Indianapolis, if the law is still in effect. "But the conference would likely move anyway," Haynes notes.

Hales plans to put a resolution before City Council on Wednesday enshrining the city's disapproval of the Indiana law.

"The sunset is the repeal of Indiana's policy, or implementation of specific wording to protect all residents from discrimination," Haynes says.

As to that one reason to travel to Indiana? The heroic and scrappy Michigan State University Men's Basketball Team is in the Final Four, and it's the best thing that's ever happened. But it's in Indianapolis.

Daily Journal of Commerce

Hales: No city travel to Indiana until 'discriminatory' law is reversed

*By Andy Giegerich
March 30, 2015*

Portland Mayor Charlie Hales has joined leaders in two other major West Coast cities in calling for Indiana to reverse new policies that, many say, allow businesses to discriminate against homosexuals.

Hales plans to issue an order Monday to "temporarily suspend any further city-funded travel to Indiana, in light of that state's passage of a new law that discriminates against lesbian, bisexual, gay and transgender residents."

Portland's City Council will consider a resolution on Wednesday to support Hales' call. The mayor's office encourage civic and business leaders to join the city in banning Indiana travel.

Hales oversees Portland's Office of Management and Finance and can temporarily change city-funded travel rules.

"Gov. Mike Pence and the Indiana Legislature have to understand that such blatant discrimination against their own citizens cannot stand. We, as a country, have moved so far from those shameful practices of the past," Hales said in a release.

"It is regrettable that the great city of Indianapolis, led by its very effective mayor, Greg Ballard, is being dragged down by the reactionary efforts of the State Legislature and the governor."

The mayors of San Francisco and Seattle made similar calls on Sunday. Apple CEO Tim Cook also blasted the laws, as has Salesforce.com's Marc Benioff.

Indiana Gov. Mike Pence signed the bill last week.

GoLocalPDX

Mayor Hales Bans City-Funded Travel to Indiana in Light of New LGBT Law

*By GoLocalPDX News Team
March 30, 2015*

Portland Mayor Charlie Hales will issue an order today to temporarily suspend any further city-funded travel to Indiana, in light of the passage of a new Indiana law that discriminates against LGBT residents.

The Indiana Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) was signed into law by Governor Mike Pence last week.

"Gov. Mike Pence and the Indiana Legislature have to understand that such blatant discrimination against their own citizens cannot stand. We, as a country, have moved so far from those shameful practices of the past," Hales said. "It is regrettable that the great city of Indianapolis, led by its very effective mayor, Greg Ballard, is being dragged down by the reactionary efforts of the State Legislature and the governor."

On Wednesday, Portland City Council will consider a resolution that supports Hales's decision. The resolution also asks civic and business leaders throughout Portland to halt any travel to Indiana as well.

The city of Indiana already protects the rights of its LGBT residents, according to the mayor's office.

"Indiana isn't the first state to adopt this backward, discriminatory policy, but most states have sexual-orientation language in their civil rights statutes to protect LGBT residents," Hales said. "Indiana doesn't offer these same protections. All states have to realize that government-sponsored discrimination against LGBT residents in the United States of America has to stop."

Portland Taxi Drivers Upset With Uber Task Force's Transparency and Process

*By Joanna Evoniuk
March 30, 2015*

Portland taxi drivers say the task force in charge of changing regulations that would allow ride-share companies like Uber to operate in Portland has not been transparent or fairly included the taxi industry.

The lack of openness is frustrating drivers, who like Portland cabbie Jeanette Thibert, say the impact of the task force will be felt throughout the city.

"If this process really is about what's best for the citizens of Portland, and not about weeding out regulations that are inconvenient to a select group of corporations, the proposed regulations as they are being drafted now would look different and the process that created them would be different as well," Thibert said.

Drivers say Private For Hire Transportation Innovation Task Force has not been fully transparent, such as neglecting to make public notes from the sessions or publishing all communications. They also protest the task force acts on misinformation and has not given drivers equal opportunities to speak.

"It's a huge deal—there are a lot of people who have a lot to say and are very concerned about the future of the industry, and are not given a chance to speak," said Darin Campbell, who is the taxi driver representative on the Portland Private for Hire Transportation Board.

The Innovation Task Force

When Uber announced in December they would be halting operations in Portland until April, Mayor Charlie Hales announced the city would be reviewing its regulations for taxi and private for hire transportation.

The Private For Hire Transportation Innovation Task Force is formed of 13 community members to hear concerns and input from the industries and public, while crafting new regulations for taxis and ride-share companies. The recommendations will be presented to the Portland City Council, who will make the final decision.

With the task force in the final stages of deliberations, taxi drivers from around the city are unhappy with the process so far.

"There's a disconnection between the task force and members, and a lot is lost by the wayside," Campbell said.

In one example, task force members said they would publish any outside contact they received from parties with special interests. Although members announce at meetings received a letters from parties such as Uber, Campbell said those letters are never published for public viewing.

Bryan Hockaday is the policy advisor to Commissioner Steve Novick, in charge of transportation. He said the task force has a message of transparency since day one.

"All meetings are posted online, along with a schedule," Hockaday said. "We feel committed to full transparency and that it's very much a part of the public process."

Cab driver Wynde Dyer wrote a letter to the entire task force, as well as Commissioners Amanda Fritz, Dan Saltzman, and Nick Fish. She voiced concerns for the lack of transparency and inclusion for cabbies, as well as mentioning the task force had asked her to "lay off the pressure."

Dyer has been an active public presence at task force meetings, along with posting transcripts from the meetings and requesting communications between the task force members.

"I will back off the pressure when there is true transparency to this process, when the process becomes truly open to hearing diverse voices, and when the task force begins to consider citizens of Portland who do not have smart phones, credit cards, and perhaps do have wheelchairs or other mobility aids," Dyer wrote in her letter.

Hockaday said the City has received a public records request from Dyer, and will provide the information as soon as she pays the standard fee.

Process and Public Opinion

Besides a lack of transparency, taxi drivers are also concerned about fair representation for their industry.

"It's terrible—taxi drivers were given one opportunity in the form of a listening session," Campbell said. "We begged for a formal presentation just like Uber and the taxi companies got, but we got nothing."

Campbell said drivers are concerned the task force are being rushed into making decisions.

"There's nobody from any transportation industry making decisions in a short time period," Campbell said. "They aren't going to grasp any of the problems it will create."

Hockaday said the task force has received a great deal of input from the general public, and taxi drivers, which is appreciated. The task force hosted a drivers' forum in February, as well as a community one.

Portland cabbies say the task force has not always been given correct or in depth information when it comes to the taxi industry.

A press release from the Transportation Fairness Alliance pointed out a subcommittee of the task force had been misled as to the percentage of a taxi fleet that is required to be wheelchair accessible. There was also miscommunication as to fines for occupational insurance policies, according to Kelliann Amico with the TFA.

Final Recommendations

The task force will present their preliminary recommendations to the City Council on Thursday, April 9. Hockaday said the task force had made great progress during its months of work.

Uber, who paused their Portland operations to give the city a chance to rework its regulations, said they are pleased with the process so far.

"We are looking forward to the recommendations the Mayor's Task Force is crafting to ensure that ridesharing is part of Portland's transportation ecosystem in April," said Uber spokesperson Kate Downen in an email.

Campbell said he hopes the council will take time to consider the recommendations and avoid jumping to hasty conclusions. Thibert agreed, saying the decisions will greatly impact the riders as well as drivers.

"They are changing the rules, re-crafting our community, and it's critical for us and the community to have that information," said Thibert. "That's the point of the transparency."