

The Oregonian

With narrow vote, Uber and Lyft secure their place in Portland

By Elliot Njus

December 2, 2015

The Portland City Council on Wednesday approved a new set of rules governing Uber, Lyft and taxis, giving the ride-hailing apps more permanent footing.

But even though Uber and Lyft have been operating in Portland since April under a pilot program, the final rules didn't pass without controversy.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz in particular castigated her colleagues who voted in favor of the rules, saying they were letting Uber and Lyft off the hook when it came to insurance coverage.

Fritz, who said she became familiar with the workings of commercial auto insurance when her husband was killed in a traffic collision a year ago, wanted the city to require Uber and Lyft to provide more coverage to drivers whenever they're on duty.

The new city rules will allow ride-hailing firms to provide two tiers of insurance — a lesser amount of coverage when a driver is signed into the app with additional coverage kicking in as soon as the driver has been connected with a passenger. Taxis generally carry commercial insurance policies that have the same level of coverage at all times.

"I am baffled as to why any of you would consider your life or that of the person you love most in the world to be worth less than \$50,000," she said, referring to the per-person coverage required for death and injury during the first period.

She also said the rules would put at a disadvantage locally-owned taxi companies and their drivers.

Mayor Charlie Hales, Commissioner Steve Novick — who oversees the city's transportation bureau, which drafted the rules — and Commissioner Dan Saltzman voted for the rules. Commissioner Nick Fish joined Fritz in voting against the rules.

"I think there's been an effort to level the playing field as much as possible between (ride-hailing companies) and taxi companies, and I think that's a good direction to go in," Saltzman said. "I look at this as a new reality."

The city's proposed rules have come under additional scrutiny because of ties between an Uber lobbyist and the politicians who have pushed the new rules and voted for approval on Wednesday.

Novick and Hales were dinged by city Auditor Mary Hull Caballero for failing to disclose a meeting with Uber employees at the home of Mark Wiener, a prominent Portland political consultant. Wiener has also advised Novick, Hales and Saltzman in their campaigns.

During their time in Portland, Uber and Lyft have proven immensely popular, according to data collected by the city. The companies together account for six in 10 for-hire rides in the city. The number of rides has grown overall, suggesting the ride-hailing apps are creating their own clientele that previously weren't using taxis.

In separate statements, the companies welcomed Wednesday's decision and said they look forward to continuing to operate in Portland.

Portland approves 6 weeks of paid parental leave for city employees

*By Andrew Theen
December 2, 2015*

Starting in January, Portland city employees will be eligible for six weeks of paid time off after the birth of a child, an adoption or welcoming a foster child.

The new rules apply to both genders and could affect hundreds of city employees who otherwise would have to use unpaid, sick or vacation time.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz, who championed the city's paid sick leave ordinance in 2013, introduced the plan. "Sometimes employers do the right thing just because it's the right thing," she said.

The City Council approved paid parental leave Wednesday nearly two months after Multnomah County passed a similar policy.

With nearly 6,000 employees, the city is one of the largest employers in the metro area. Fritz said she hopes the new policy helps Portland become "an employer of choice," leading to a more diverse and younger workforce.

The policy could cost from \$413,000 to \$512,000 to implement, as some offices will need to pay other employees to work overtime or cover for colleagues on leave.

Despite the new policy, Portland still lags far behind European nations, Fritz said, where paid paternal leave is common.

Commissioner Steve Novick said he was extremely grateful Fritz brought the plan forward. "Parental leave isn't just nice to have," he said, "it's a necessity in a civilized society."

But Novick cautioned that his Bureau of Emergency Communications already struggles to cover for employees who take time off, leading to more overtime costs. He said he can't both implement the new policy and comply with Mayor Charlie Hales' direction to cut 5 percent from bureau budgets.

Portland leaders celebrated the policy as a key first step in joining a growing national movement.

"The research is very clear that parental leave has a positive impact," said Anna Kanwit, Human Resources Bureau director.

Larry Wallack, a Portland State University professor, said six weeks is a good start but that Portland is "still far behind what we should be striving for."

Companies such as Netflix offer up to one year of paid parental leave. King County, Washington, provides 12 weeks.

Portland employees will have to take the leave continuously and only once in a calendar year aside from exceptions approved by human resources officials. They may take the leave anytime within one year of a child's arrival.

In the last fiscal year, 185 city employees took parental leave, according to city documents.

5 takeaways from Portland's plan for next 20 years of growth

By Andrew Theen

December 2, 2015

Portland leaders are fond of saying great places don't happen by accident, and for more than a year, city planners have been hard at work on the city's blueprint for the next 20 years.

The projections include 260,000 new residents and 142,000 new jobs.

Where will all the growth happen?

"Places that are sort of popular now are only going to get more popular," Susan Anderson, the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability director, said Wednesday.

Just tuning in?

The City Council held five work sessions in the past few months drilling down on the state-mandated comprehensive plan.

Here are five takeaways from the plan:

Apartments galore

There's no avoiding it: Portland will have tens of thousands of new apartment complexes. Eighty percent of the projected 110,000 housing units will be apartments, with an estimated 10,000 city-funded affordable units. Single-family neighborhoods will largely be spared from upheaval, Anderson said. But Portland has a lot of capacity on streets that are already zoned for growth, meaning popular neighborhoods with urban centers such as St. Johns, Sellwood and up-and-coming Lents will see more construction cranes.

Where is the next Williams or Division Street?

The radical transformation along North Williams Avenue and Southeast Division Street during the past 10 years will probably spread elsewhere. Anderson said while she can't predict exactly where the next hot neighborhoods will be, there are some easy guesses. "Sandy in particular over the next 20 years will grow in popularity," Anderson said of the diagonal street. Some of that growth is already happening, but she expects development to continue from the Hollywood District to Cully and beyond.

What about east Portland?

Much of Portland's job and housing growth will occur east of downtown. Anderson said the city will focus more attention on redeveloping streets such as 82nd and 122nd Avenues. She said 82nd and Powell Boulevard could be a hip intersection – with mixed-use buildings lining the intersection, bus rapid transit running down Powell, and trendy restaurants and businesses. The city plans to pair that growth with bringing much-needed services to east Portland. Plans call for investing heavily in sidewalks, safer crossings and bike infrastructure along Powell, 122nd and elsewhere.

Where will the next streetcar line go?

The next public transit project could be a streetcar line down Macadam Avenue/Oregon 43 to the Johns Landing neighborhood in Southwest Portland. The \$80 million project is the only streetcar expansion in the 20-year framework, and Anderson said that's because of the "market readiness of the area." Planners also think there's enough neighborhood demand to support a streetcar line. The Johns Landing it's a sure thing, but planners included it in lieu of expansions north on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and a Sandy Boulevard proposal because the Johns Landing proposal because it was more feasible.

More jobs – on campus and on dirty lots

Where will all these new Portlanders work? Just like the housing stock, Portland's job footprint will become denser – with taller buildings downtown, in the Lloyd District and elsewhere.

Anderson said the close-in Central Eastside Industrial District could be one hub 21st century industries. A growing biotechnology sector in the South Waterfront could expand across the Willamette River to the Central Eastside, where technology jobs are already clustering. She said the city also hopes some 600 acres of contaminated brownfield sites could be cleaned up and redeveloped during the next 20 years. Portland also expects and wants more job growth on college and university campuses and at hospitals.

Lacking votes, Charlie Hales delays Portland demolition tax again

*By Brad Schmidt
December 2, 2015*

Portland Mayor Charlie Hales' planned demolition tax has been shot down again – this time by the City Council.

Commissioners Nick Fish, Amanda Fritz and Steve Novick each said Wednesday they would not support Hales' proposed \$25,000 tax on home demolitions. Lacking political support, Hales called off a planned vote and said he'd bring back a revised plan Jan. 13.

Hales first offered the tax in September in what appeared to be a political win-win.

Hales thought the tax would discourage demolitions of old houses in single-family neighborhoods, frequently a sore point for nearby homeowners. Money from the tax would be dedicated to help increase the city's stock of affordable rental units, the city's most pressing political challenge.

But the proposal ran headlong into opposition during a public hearing in October, prompting Hales to delay his plan and promise revisions. The tax returned last week with only one major change: eliminating a rebate for demolitions that add density.

On Wednesday, a majority of the City Council said they couldn't support the proposal.

"I'm certainly willing to take more time on the old 'measure twice, cut once' proposition," Hales said.

Fish told Hales he wanted more time to explore the "delicate balancing act" of setting exemptions based on the sales price of a new home.

Novick said he wanted to offer rebates for demolitions that help meet city density goals, or reduce the tax depending on the price of a new home, or both.

Fritz said she might not support any proposal, despite the appeal of a new source or revenue to pay for affordable housing. But she said it didn't seem reasonable to pay for affordable apartments "by making single-family housing even more unaffordable."

Hales said his office will explore revisions and other options during the next month. But he urged the City Council to do something to curb demolitions -- his top priority -- and also generate money for affordable housing.

"This is the first actual new revenue for affordable housing that we've come up with so far," he said. "I'm not wedded to this as a solution. I am wedded to finding one, and this one appears useful."

Willamette Week

Amanda Fritz Lambastes Portland City Council for Giving Uber and Lyft the Green Light

The harsh words comes as the city council votes 3-2 to permanently allow Uber and Lyft.

*By Beth Slovic
December 2, 2015*

Portland City Council voted 3-2 Wednesday morning to allow Uber and Lyft to operate permanently in Portland.

Mayor Charlie Hales joined City Commissioners Dan Saltzman and Steve Novick in approving the new rules. Commissioner Amanda Fritz and Nick Fish voted no.

Fritz, whose husband died in a car crash last year, offered a lengthy explanation for her no vote, taking aim at the ride-sharing companies and her colleagues' "capitulation" to powerful, out-of-state corporations.

"This ordinance denotes caving in to multinational corporations, at the expense of Portland businesses and the safety of our community," she said before voting no.

Here's Fritz's entire speech:

I never thought I would see the day that Portland City Council would operate like the Republican-dominated Congress in Washington, D.C. Congress is known for allowing industry to write its own regulations, rather than legislators acting on behalf of their constituents in the public interest. Sadly, that day has arrived here in Portland today, with these regulations being adopted on behalf of the Transportation Network Companies or TNCs, principally Uber and Lyft. I am greatly troubled by the fact that common-sense regulations were not accepted by the Council majority, simply because Uber and Lyft wouldn't approve.

This has been a long public process. It has not been a good public process. None of the workers most affected by this ordinance had a seat at the table of the community Task Force. TNC lobbyists had multiple private meetings with the primary council members supporting this ordinance. Taxi representatives did not. As a consequence of the process, the final ordinance does not represent a balanced approach. And as a result of that lack of balance, it does not act on behalf of the long term public good of Portlanders.

A December 8, 2014 article in The Oregonian reported that Commissioner [Steve] Novick stated:

"If Uber thinks there should be no maximum price on what they charge Portlanders, they should make their case to the Portland City Council, because everyone agrees: good regulations make for a safer community."

Good regulations do make for a safer community. But this ordinance doesn't follow through on the laudable initial commitment to good regulations.

Commissioner Novick just reiterated his desire that both Uber drivers and taxi drivers should be treated as employees. This outcome is not met in the rules to be adopted by the City Council today, even after the state Bureau of Labor and Industries has ruled Uber drivers are employees. This ordinance ignores that ruling.

In meetings inside City Hall, Commissioner Novick pledged to me that the new system would be as safe for an aging woman like me as the current taxi system. That is not the outcome with the policy before us. Background checks will no longer be overseen by public servants working for the people of Portland inside city government. They will be contracted out to private third parties, with only spot checks to confirm accountability. There is no requirement for drivers to take a defensive driving course, thus missing a huge opportunity to close the driver-error gap as we implement Vision Zero. Taxi drivers are having to work longer hours to eke out a living. All of these factors make me feel less safe as a lifelong taxi cab user, as a result of this ordinance.

There are other factors in these rules, dismantling the reliable taxi service Portlanders have depended on for decades:

People choosing to use taxis will no longer be certain of the fare before we hail or book a cab. Customers will need to ask every driver in a taxi waiting zone for their fare, in order to get the best price.

New taxi companies will no longer be scrutinized by the grueling public vetting and approval by City Council in an open public hearing. I feel so sad for my friends in Union Cab, supported by the Communication Workers of America Local 7901. You worked so hard to win approval. You offer dozens of immigrant families not only a chance at the American Dream, but an opportunity to belong to an American union, part of the united American Federation of Labor movement. You achieved the dream, in winning approval of your franchise. And now the majority of Council is telling you you're an expendable casualty in the free market – the free market that is grinding the working class and the middle class into the servants of the billionaire corporations.

The majority of Council is showing the same disregard for the values and service of Radio Cab, predominantly owned and operated by veterans. The same for Green Cab, and EcoCab. Which values and principles does this ordinance purport to serve? The almighty free market is a poor substitute for local businesses, local values, local loyalty.

More problems with this ordinance:

Only taxis will be required to use in-vehicle cameras. This puts both passengers and drivers at risk. This is another inequity created between taxis and TNCs. Why not require that TNCs have the cameras turned on during the ride, on those wonderful smartphones? Answer: because Uber and Lyft say no.

The City will lose revenue with the adoption of this ordinance. Many TNC drivers won't meet the threshold annual income level of \$50,000 to be liable for our Business Income Tax. Yet the rides they provide would otherwise have been taxable income to full-time cab drivers. Expanding the driver pool dilutes the tax base.

The fees charged for TNC company permits are woefully inadequate to cover the cost of enforcement, meaning fees paid by taxi companies will disproportionately pay for PBOT staff time attempting to hold TNCs accountable. This will mean fewer spot checks of taxis, by the thinning of the soup.

I don't understand why people driving for profit are somehow exempt from precautions on using cell phones while driving. Commissioner Saltzman has previously been so vigilant on distracted driving. Studies show that hands-free operation is just as distracting as hand-held phone use. We heard testimony that the sound has to be kept on, to alert the driver of a ride opportunity. Does that mean the sound is on for taking a phone call, too? Have three of you forgotten so fast, that Public Service Announcement we viewed from AT&T just a few months ago, urging us to put our cell phones in the glove compartment while driving?

But with all those flaws, this ordinance is most egregious regarding the disparate requirements for insurance between taxis and TNCs. Taxis will continue to be required to carry half a million dollars in liability insurance at all times. Uber and Lyft drivers will be

covered by a paltry \$50,000 when accidents happen while drivers are waiting to pick up fares, or are on their way home. And they'll get nothing, if a crash occurs with a distracted driver tapping their phone to accept a ride, then crashing into a tree or another car. There is no required collision coverage in that scenario.

Worst of all is the appalling disregard in this ordinance for pedestrians, cyclists, and other motorists injured by TNC drivers during Period 1, when the driver is cruising waiting for a ride, or after a passenger has been dropped off. Mayor [Charlie] Hales asked for data on accident incidences. The data gathered laboriously by taxi companies proved most crashes happen when drivers are waiting for rides or on their way home after a fare. Yet no changes were made to the insurance coverage required in this ordinance, in response to that data.

As you are all aware, my husband was killed in a traffic crash last year. Through this excruciating life event, I've learned a lot about insurance coverage requirements in this state. The crash in which my husband was killed was probably initiated by the reckless driving of a commercial tanker truck as it was being driven home after dropping off its cargo. This ordinance sets the value of a person's life taken by a commercial driver returning from a paid fare, at \$50,000 maximum. Less, perhaps, given the pitiful level of coverage the Council is setting of \$100,000 per incident.

Four innocent people were harmed in the crash that killed my husband. Under this ordinance, another grieving spouse like me in a crash with four injuries would receive only \$25,000 in compensation for a death caused by a TNC driver – even if the insurance company paid out without the fees of 35% or more deducted if the estate has to engage a lawyer to collect on damages. I am baffled as to why any of you would consider your own life, or that of the person you love most in the entire world, to max out in value at \$50k, less than half of one year of our salaries. I don't understand why you asked for the data on crash incidences before and after picking up a ride, then ignored it.

The Council is opening the city to liability, in knowing of a problem and refusing to address it, the same way ODOT failed to install median crash barriers until we passed the Fritz-Fairchild Act. Whose will be the names on the ordinance amending this Code, after someone's family member is killed by a TNC driver in Period 1?

Again, I quote Commissioner Novick early in this process:

"If Uber thinks taxis should not have to have proper insurance in case of a crash, they should tell us why we should allow that."

That has not happened. There is no public purpose in allowing TNCs to have inadequate insurance in case of a crash.

Again, I quote Mayor Hales, "Our main concern is public health and safety, because the state invested in the cities the responsibility to do that..." "Beyond that, though, is the issue of fairness. Taxi cab companies follow rules on public health and safety."

The rules adopted by the majority of council today do not follow the same rules for public health and safety for TNCs as for the taxi cab companies.

There are multiple other problems with the done deal being adopted.

- Lack of protection for TNC drivers assaulted by passengers, compared with taxis.*
- Setting the insurance company rules to favor Uber's insurer, which is not admitted in the state of Oregon and will not provide protection if the James River Corporation fails, while making local taxi companies buy insurance from big national companies rather than reliable Oregon firms.*
- Taxing all rides the same to pay for accessible rides, without requiring TNCs to share the load in providing accessible vehicles, places an unfair burden on taxi companies who recently invested in accessible vehicles to meet the City's fleet requirement.*
- One and done safe driver checks, rather than periodic re-testing.*

I could go on and on. I am beyond disappointed in these regulations, which ought to be so simple, fair, and safety-oriented.

Aside from the here-and-now impacts on drivers, passengers and bystanders injured by TNC operations, I am very concerned about the negative climate impacts of putting thousands of TNC vehicles on Portland streets. Before the pilot project, there were a mere 750 permits allotted to taxis. Now, we are told there are about 5,000 new commercial drivers on Portland's streets, adding to congestion and making it easier for passengers to choose low-occupancy cars over transit. The mayor is heading to Paris to boast about Portland's commitment to reducing vehicle emissions and other crucial mechanisms to combat climate disruption. How does this ordinance help in that regard?

I am very grateful to the taxi drivers and other citizens who participated in this process, however flawed the process has been, as if their participation might make a difference. I was hopeful that my input might make a difference, too. I see no evidence that has been true.

I thank Director Leah Treat and the Portland Bureau of Transportation staff. I recognize that you have carried out the direction of your commissioner in charge and mayor. I expect and receive the same from the bureau directors assigned to my portfolio.

Thank you to my colleague [Commissioner] Nick Fish, who has stood side by side with me in trying to protect the interests of our constituents, rather than ceding to the demands of two powerful out-of-state corporations. Like the many Portlanders who have provided support and encouragement to me over the past 62 weeks — Commissioner Fish, your efforts have been hugely appreciated, even though we can't change the outcome.

Thank you to Claire Adamsick, Tim Crail and Tom Bizeau on my staff, and Judith Mowry and Dante James in the Office of Equity and Human Rights, who tried hard to get taxi drivers' voices heard.

I recognize there are many Portlanders supplementing their income, or driving for Uber or Lyft as their primary income. I appreciate their participation in the process, too. I worry about the TNC drivers putting their families at risk from driving without proper insurance, surveillance or support from their TNC employer. When \$50,000 insurance proves too little in Period 1, the injured party can and will sue you personally to recover damages. I believe we could have set up a system that safeguards both drivers and riders in the new paradigm, and those in the taxi industry continuing to provide service to women like me who do not feel safe getting into an unmarked car with no camera running. This ordinance does not do that.

This ordinance denotes caving in to multinational corporations, at the expense of Portland businesses and the safety of our community. There is limited public purpose in the regulations being adopted today. This ordinance represents capitulation to the lowest common denominator, in the worst way. I am very disappointed that Portland isn't stepping up to set the national standard for a sharing economy with adequate safeguards for both workers and customers.

This is one of the saddest votes I have cast in almost seven years in office. Portlanders will lose their family-wage jobs, fare-paying passengers will not be as safe when hiring rides in Portland, and victims will receive grossly inadequate compensation when tragedies occur, as a result of this action.

This ordinance does not act on behalf of the long term public good of Portlanders. In casting my vote, I would like to add an emphatic swear word. But in the interest of decorum, I vote simply in the name of all traffic crash victims. No.

The Portland Mercury

Portland's Not Getting A Demolition Tax—This Year

*By Dirk VanderHart
December 2, 2015*

Mayor Charlie Hales' proposed demolition tax [pdf] appears to have blown up.

Hales, who had to duck out of this morning's Portland City Council meeting early, did something sort of extraordinary in a council where votes are often tabulated ahead of time: He whooshed his proposal for a \$25,000 tax on home demolitions to the top of the agenda, then asked his colleagues what they thought.

"It's really at the point now where I need some guidance from council," said Hales, who has sold the tax as way to both prevent loss of "neighborhood character" and raise millions for affordable housing. "We've heard from a lot of people on this issue."

Hales quickly had his answer.

Commissioner Nick Fish spoke up first, saying he couldn't stand by the tax as written. "I'm not sure it's fully baked," he said. "I will reluctantly vote no."

Commissioner Steve Novick came next, joining Fish in expressing concerns the tax is regressive (it would slap on the \$25,000 whether the development that sprang up in the place of a demolition was worth 300,000 or \$3 million). He also wanted an exemption for demolitions that would help increase density on a piece of property, which Hales included in the proposal at one time, then stripped out. "I can't support anything that doesn't have either," Novick said.

Once Amanda Fritz voiced her stance—"It doesn't make sense to pay for affordable multifamily housing by making single family housing less affordable"—the matter was done.

The mayor can't have been surprised—there was clearly a reason he'd asked, after all. Since he unveiled the tax idea months ago, he ran into angry bands of developers, and homeowners concerned they'd be stopped from building their "dream" homes. But the policy also could have

been a sizable booster shot for a city hurting for dedicated affordable housing cash. City revenue staff estimated it could have raised between \$1.25 million and \$3.75 million a year that could be spent.

Instead, it's back to the drawing board. Hales didn't scrap his proposal completely, but said he'd bring it back in new form in mid-January. One idea he floated: A city-enforced moratorium on home demolitions, while city leaders figured out what to do.

"There are other options I think the council can consider in addition to or instead of a tax," he said.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz Tears Into Her Colleagues (Again) As New Uber Regulations Pass

*By Dirk VanderHart
December 2, 2015*

In seven years on Portland City Council—but maybe especially recently—Commissioner Amanda Fritz has made a habit of loosing blistering condemnations when it's clear a majority of her colleagues disagree on an issue she cares about.

Fans of the Fritz catalogue will remember such hits as March 5 of this year, when Fritz, unable to convince council to pare down height limits for buildings near the river, said she was "absolutely disgusted with this entire hearing." Or the time a month earlier when she excoriated her colleagues for the decision to re-partner with the federal Joint Terrorism Task Force.

Now we've got a new joint!

With the writing on the wall that city council would pass new regulations on companies like Uber and Lyft today—and therefore make the controversial services' entry into Portland official—Fritz went off with a lengthy prepared speech. (See below: It starts at 36:36.)

She compared City Council to a "Republican-dominated Congress in Washington, DC," saying it was allowing industry have outsize influence rather than acting in the public good. She said public safety would suffer as "transportation network companies" (TNCs) like Uber and Lyft ran rampant, insinuated the city's carbon-curbing goals could be hampered and transit use hurt, and accused colleagues—commissioners Steve Novick and Dan Saltzman teamed up with Mayor Charlie Hales to pass the rules—of taking meetings with Uber lobbyists while taxi interests were left out in the cold. (Expect critics to point out that Hales, Saltzman, and Novick have all been aided in political campaigns by consultant Mark Wiener—who's lobbied for Uber)

"This is one of the saddest votes I have cast in almost seven years in office," Fritz said toward the end of her 13-minute, five-page remarks [pdf]. "In casting my vote I would like to add an emphatic swear word." She didn't.

None of this is much of a surprise, of course. Since Uber barged into town without permission around this time last year, a robust and acidic debate has sprung up. Fritz and Commissioner Nick Fish have raised questions about TNCs throughout that process, and were already

bested in a vote when council made a decision to let the companies operate under provisional rules in April.

Proponents have argued TNCs are convenient—offering quicker service in a city where cabs used to be hard to come by (they were heavily regulated until earlier this year)—and a useful source of supplemental income in a city struggling with rent increases and displacement. The public seems to agree: In the months since Uber and Lyft have begun operating legally in Portland, they've snatched up most of the market share.

Opponents say TNCs are inherently unsafe. They make compelling arguments about unfair insurance coverage the companies are required to carry—it's separated into three "periods" with \$50,000-per-person coverage when drivers are waiting to accept a fare, and more robust coverage when they're on their way to a pick-up, or driving someone around. (Cabs carry \$1 million in coverage at all times.) And they say Uber and Lyft have inadequate and self-serving background check procedures that can allow dangerous people into the system.

Fritz agrees with all of these criticisms, ("Commissioner Novick pledged to me that the system would be as safe for an aging woman like me as the existing taxi system. That is not the outcome."), but saved her weightiest comments for the insurance question, which she said was the "most egregious" part of the new rules.

It's probably not a coincidence Fritz was wearing a zebra-print sweater vest today (more tasteful than it sounds). Her husband, Dr. Steven Fritz, was a big fan of the pattern. He died in a tragic car wreck on Interstate 5 last year.

"As you are all aware, my husband was killed in a traffic crash last year," Fritz said. "Through this excruciating life event, I learned a lot about insurance requirements in this state. This ordinance sets the value on a person's life.. at \$50,000 max."

She was referencing the "phase one" coverage limit, for when a driver is waiting to accept a fare request. Concerns over insurance have been raised repeatedly by cabbies this year, and give even supporters of the new regulations pause.

Commissioner Steve Novick, responsible for shepherding the rules through to council, announced this morning that he doesn't think the phase one coverage the city's mandating is adequate. Then he said there's not much we can do about it right now, since it's become something of a national standard.

"Uber and Lyft have made it clear that if any jurisdiction tried to depart from this agreement, they intend to declare war," Novick said. "If you're going to pick a fight with a \$50 billion company, you're probably smart to look around for some allies. So I'm going to do that."

Novick says he'll be happy to testify before the legislature to get the state to enact tougher requirements. And he asked Uber foes to keep a weather eye out for big cities (300,000 residents or more) around the country that favor enacting tougher insurance rules, invoking "strength in numbers."

Until that happens, Novick said he'll turn his attentions back to the other great and thorny issue that's plagued him during his time in office: finding more money for city roads. He's expected to introduce a new 10-cent gas tax proposal in coming months.

"This is a no-win issue," Novick said. "I'd be very happy if I never heard the words Uber and Lyft."

The rest of the votes went down as expected. Fish voiced his long-held concerns about Uber as a trustworthy partner, voting no (his remarks [pdf]). Saltzman said services like Uber and Lyft represent a "generational shift"—Saltzman only uses cabs, he says, but his 20-year-old daughter swears by Uber. And Hales repeated a statement he's made often: That Portland has tougher regulations than the vast majority of cities where TNCs have cropped up.

Now, it seems, they're here to stay.