

The Oregonian

Take it easy, Portland: You get to vote on a gas tax

*By Brad Schmidt
January 28, 2016*

You wanted a vote on street funding, Portland? Well, now you've got it.

Voters in May will be asked to approve a temporary gas tax — Oregon's most expensive, at a dime per gallon — to pay for safety improvements and paving projects to help patch up the city's rumbly roads.

The tax would raise an [estimated \\$64 million over four years](#), but its fate is far from certain.

Although the Portland City Council voted unanimously Wednesday to send the tax to the May 17 ballot, the petroleum industry vowed a strong opposition campaign. And city officials have already acknowledged a challenge, with early polling suggesting only tepid support from voters.

But the decision to move forward with a gas-tax vote marked the final twist in a two-year saga over how to help pay for street improvements, one that began with controversy in 2014 when Mayor Charlie Hales and Commissioner Steve Novick pushed for a new street fee without a public vote.

"Today, we've achieved something that some people probably thought couldn't happen," Commissioner Nick Fish said. "Which is: You've found a path forward."

Is approved, the gas tax would raise an estimated \$35.8 million for paving projects and \$28.2 million for safety projects, sidewalks and bike lanes. Tax collections would begin no earlier than September and would expire after four years, with a strong likelihood that the City Council would ask voters to renew or increase the tax.

The tax would apply to all gasoline and diesel sales, although commercial trucks that pay a separate weight tax would be exempt.

Officials promised to create a citizen oversight committee and pledged to spend 56 percent of revenues on street repairs and 44 percent on safety projects, no matter how much money they ultimately collect. They also released a list of potential paving projects, plus a specific list of safety efforts — which includes \$8 million for projects near schools, \$6.4 million for sidewalks on Southwest Capitol Highway and four east Portland routes, and \$2.8 million for bike projects in the central city.

A steady stream of advocates offered conditional support during a two-hour hearing Tuesday, with many emphasizing the need to make safety improvements in east Portland. A lobbyist for the Portland Business Alliance also endorsed the vote but called on the City Council to maintain existing funding for street repairs.

Even if approved, the new tax money would amount to a Band-Aid for Portland's crumbling roads. Following [decades of inattention by city leaders](#), more than half of city streets have

now deteriorated into poor or very poor condition. Officials say they'd need nearly [\\$1.2 billion over 10 years](#) to bring streets up to city benchmarks.

"We are here because we need to do something," Hales said. "It is our problem."

A gas tax emerged as a preferred option last fall after various City Hall plans fell apart, even though the tax requires a public vote. At the time, Novick released polling suggesting 55 percent of voters might support it. Now, he said, more recent polling suggests the number could be up to 63 percent.

"That means you have to run a real campaign," Novick told The Oregonian/OregonLive after the vote. "But it means you've certainly got a shot. So we're gonna have a good campaign and we'll see what happens."

But Paul Romain, a lobbyist for the Oregon Fuels Association, promised a fight. Romain said his group would first challenge the wording of the city's ballot measure in Multnomah County Circuit Court, then rally against it during the election season.

"There will be a very broad coalition opposing this at the ballot in May, I can guarantee you that," he warned.

Undeterred, members of the City Council savored the moment. As has become a custom since Novick joined the City Council in 2013, Portland officials evoked classic rock lyrics or songs as part of their vote.

Fish likened the decision, with all its twists and turns, to The Beatles' "The Long and Winding Road."

Novick offered lyrics from a recently departed musical icon, Glenn Frey of the Eagles, who co-wrote "Take it Easy."

"We may lose, we may win," he said, "but we will never be here again."

The Portland Tribune

Council sends gas tax measure to May ballot

*By Jim Redden
January 28, 2016*

After many months of disagreement over the best way to increase street maintenance and safety projects, the City Council unanimously voted to refer a temporary 10-cents-a-gallon gas tax to the May 17 Primary Election ballot on Wednesday.

Commissioner Steve Novick proposed the measure after it was recommended by the City Club of Portland following the collapse of council negotiations on a series of other funding measures collectively referred to as a street fee.

The proposed tax would last four years and raise an estimated \$64 million. It will be opposed by Oregon Fuels Association, which represents gas dealers.

Portland bike share: Will it reach the poor?

*By Jennifer Anderson
January 28, 2016*

When the city's Nike-sponsored bike share program launches this summer with 1,000 orange bicycles saturating Portland's central city core, who will ride them?

Residents and tourists alike, city leaders hope. But what sort of people?

Elsewhere around the country, bike share programs are attracting a disproportionate share of young, affluent white men. But Portland is trying to learn lessons from other cities to make sure the program here serves a broader sector of the population, including those most in need of a cheap form of transportation.

In 2010, there were just five bike-sharing programs in the United States. That's since grown to 57 cities, plus another 13, including Portland, in the planning stage.

The health, economic and environmental benefits of bike share programs have been a big public focus. But industry experts have also been talking about the equity of bike share programs, which is now coming into the spotlight with new, alarming data. It shows that most large-city programs are having the unintended consequence of skewing toward young, white, male users who are better educated and earn higher incomes.

Steve Hoyt-McBeth, Portland Bureau of Transportation's bike share project manager, says Portland is taking a proactive, innovative strategy to assure more equity when the program starts in mid-July.

“People have been working on equity for a long time but our results are still not very good right now,” Hoyt-McBeth says of the industry in general. “We’ve been working hard to solve this issue. There’s a lot of best practices, but still a lot of challenges we face.”

Portland’s bike share will use city resources for capital equipment and project management, but no city funds toward operation. That will be covered by sponsorships, member fees and any other funds.

Still, having an equitable bike share system is a top priority, Hoyt-McBeth says, for many reasons.

“It’s a public program,” Hoyt-McBeth says. “Portland is changing. If you’re going to have a successful transportation system, we need to make sure we’re serving the needs of all residents. If we’re just a niche transportation mode, we’re not going to be successful in the long run.”

The two major reasons for gaps along color lines, income and education levels have to do with access: both geography (placement of bike stations) and financial (affordability of the program).

Portland has a plan to address both challenges, along with another strategy for boosting equity: training and hiring a diverse bike share work force. Hoyt-McBeth isn’t aware of another bike share program that has a similar workforce equity plan, which was modeled after the city’s Clean Energy Works program.

Equity goals spelled out in contract

The two-page equity plan, called the “High Road Standards,” is embedded in the Bureau of Transportation’s 95-page bike share contract with the city’s operator, Motivate.

That contract calls for Motivate and the city to “develop a meaningful and effective approach for insuring that the economic benefits derived from the project are shared by a broad cross-section of the community.”

The High Road Standards obligate Motivate to:

- n Hire a workforce including “historically underrepresented and economically disadvantaged” people for at least 50 percent of total bike share employment hours. Portland’s program will start with 16 jobs at Motivate, 10 or 11 of them mechanics, drivers and station technicians.

- n Offer a living wage to bike share employees, at least 150 percent of the state minimum wage for part-time employees, or \$15 per hour after 90 days of employment, with wage increases. Fulltime employees will be offered full benefits and healthcare coverage after 90 days of employment.

- n Submit quarterly reports to document its progress in assuring workforce diversity and related goals.

- n Contract with businesses owned by “historically underrepresented or underutilized people” for at least 20 percent of program elements, except for equipment.

- n Work with the High Road Committee to designate a training provider(s) for bike share employment, such as WorkSource Oregon, PCC Workforce Network or Immigrant & Refugee

Community Organization. Those providers will be used exclusively to hire entry level and bicycle mechanic jobs until half the slots are filled by historically underrepresented and economically disadvantaged people, with at least 30 percent of job hours represented by people of color, low-income residents, veterans, disabled individuals, immigrants, refugees and formerly incarcerated people.

n Provide up to 500 discounted annual memberships to low-income residents for \$35 per year, to be purchased by the city or other organizations.

Hoyt-McBeth says he'd like to explore ways to bring that \$35 cost down further.

The city and Motivate also will explore providing a cash-only fare option for bike share users, as done in Philadelphia's Indego system to reach more low-income users.

"We're really trying to crack this nut," Hoyt-McBeth says of the cash option.

The Indego system allows users to sign up for a bike share pass online, show the barcode at a 7-Eleven or dollar store and make a cash payment. Their key is sent in the mail and they can then start riding a bike.

About 300 people use the cash option in Philadelphia, and most renew their membership by credit card.

"I think perception is a very powerful thing we're working to overcome," Hoyt-McBeth says. If people don't think a system is for them, they won't use it. We want to be like a cell phone — people just see the inherent value to use it, and they use it."

Hubway, the program in Boston, is also considered a model because it offers \$5 annual memberships to those who need it. In 2014, about 18 percent of its membership received the subsidy, which is offered by the honor system.

Billing schemes vary

Portland's High Road Standards aside, placement of bike stations and membership accessibility are two huge issues that crop up again and again in cities' case studies.

In a September report called "Can monthly passes improve bike share equity?" the National Association of City Transportation Officials identifies fee structures as the single biggest barrier.

"At pennies per day, bike share in the U.S. is the cheapest form of transit other than walking," the researchers cite. "However, low-income people are less likely to purchase annual memberships than people in higher-income brackets."

Faced with this reality, bike share programs have been adjusting their membership options and taken other steps to reach a broader audience

For instance, Motivate has recently led these efforts:

n Public housing residents in New York may now purchase Citi Bike membership for \$5 per month, which is promoted through social media, tenant newsletters, signs and community events.

n Chicago's "Divvy for Everyone" initiative allows low-income residents to access \$5 Divvy memberships, backed by a grant from the nonprofit People for Bikes.

n Boston's "Prescribe a Bike" program allows doctors to prescribe \$5 memberships for low-income residents.

Portland's NikeBike program will offer a single 30-minute ride at the same cost as a TriMet ticket, \$2.50.

Portland will also let users pay monthly costs of \$10 to \$15 for an annual membership.

East Portland getting snubbed

The University of Vermont Transportation Research Center's study found a large disparity in the share of whites and blacks with access to bike share programs in six of the seven U.S. cities surveyed — Chicago, Denver, Seattle, New York City, Boston and Philadelphia.

Only Washington, D.C., didn't show a large racial gap. But D.C.'s Capital Bikes did see a huge income disparity — half of the survey respondents reported earning six figures.

Researchers found that bike share stations tend not to be sited in areas with high concentrations of low-income people.

In Portland, the system is set to start with bikes across the central city and inner eastside. But in its first phase it will not reach East Portland — following a long history of inequitable distribution of city resources.

While there's need in East Portland, there's also high concentrations of low-income people in the central city and parts of Northeast Portland that will be served, Hoyt-McBeth says.

"Like any kind of transit service, it needs a certain density to function," he adds. "We hope to expand into all parts of the city once we find the funding to do so."

@jenmomanderson

There are many unanswered questions about Portland's BikeTown program, such as:

n What will happen during the Naked Bike Ride? Boston's bike share operator urged riders last summer to "please wear clothes." PBOT bike share project manager Steve Hoyt-McBeth laughs. "Someone from New York sent me seat covers," he says. "We will certainly ask people to wear clothes." Portland will have a year to figure it out: the World Naked Bike Ride is set for June 25 this year, a few weeks before bike share hits the streets.

n How long until a BikeTown bike ends up on a cross-country road trip, racking up a hefty fee? A New Yorker made headlines this week for riding his Citi Bike to California after quitting his job, calling it "convenient, sturdy and hassle-free." He's trying to figure out how to get it back.

n How safe will Portland's bike share users be on city streets? While there's no clearinghouse for bike share fatalities, an Aug. 2014 report showed that after 23 million bike share rides nationally, there were no fatalities since the first system launched in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 2007.

n Will Portland's bike share workers unionize? Five cities' bike share employees have already moved to do so.

Sources: Fritz to Hales: Thanks, but no thanks

*By Jim Redden
January 28, 2016*

Portland City Commissioner Amanda Fritz will not accept a \$1,000 contribution from Mayor Charlie Hales' political action campaign committee because she does accept PAC contributions. It also surpasses her voluntary \$500 limit. Hales reported the contribution on Dec. 31, but Fritz said she had not received it when Sources mentioned it last Thursday.

"I appreciate and value Mayor Hales' support for my re-election, along with the endorsements of former mayors Adams and Potter. I have never accepted political action committee money. I don't accept donations from unions, corporations, or any entity that is not an individual living human being," Fritz told Sources.

In the meantime, Hales has begun giving prorated refunds to contributors who asked for their contribution back after he dropped out of the mayor's race last year. His most recent filings show 23 refunds to contributors, ranging from \$48.27 to \$2,896.21.

Campaigns suddenly heat up

Four months before the May 17 primary election, City Hall races suddenly shifted into high gear with the two leading candidates for mayor fighting over campaign contributions, a new candidate entering the race for mayor, two more candidates challenging Commissioner Steve Novick, and Fritz officially kicking off her re-election bid.

And there's still about two months before the filing deadline.

In the mayor's race, state Treasurer Ted Wheeler challenged the other candidates to oppose independent committee spending on their behalf, prompting Multnomah County Commissioner Jules Bailey to slam him for not limiting his contributions to \$250, like Bailey has. Then Sarah Iannarone, who works with first lady Nancy Hales at Portland State University, became the first female candidate to enter the race.

In addition, architect Stuart Emmons and disability rights activist Sue Stahl entered the race against Novick, who released details of the proposed 10-cents-a-gallon gas tax he wants on the May ballot. And affordable housing activist Chloe Eudaly, longtime owner of the independent bookstore Reading Frenzy, also filed against him Monday.

'Express' campaign pitch

Incumbents like to run on their records, but Bailey has figured out a way to do so in record time.

Last Thursday, the Multnomah County Commission unanimously passed a resolution introduced by Bailey to oppose more trains carrying crude oil through the county and the Columbia River Gorge, and calling on Washington state regulators to require a more thorough risk assessment before it allows a major oil transport terminal project to move forward in the Port of Vancouver.

Two days later, Bailey sent an email to supporters touting the resolution and asking for contributions.

“Together we can protect Portland’s natural legacy by investing in clean energy solutions instead of oil,” it said before asking supporters to “Express Donate” anywhere from \$5 to \$65 to his campaign.

The Portland Business Journal

10-cent-a-gallon gas tax to hit Portland’s ballot in May

*By Andy Giegerich
January 28, 2016*

Portland's City Council is taking the matter of a gas tax to Rose City voters.

[As the Oregonian reports](#), the Council voted unanimously Wednesday to put the notion on the May ballot. Voters will thus decide whether the city should impose a 10-cent-per-gallon tax that would raise \$64 million over four years.

Commissioner [Steve Novick had called for the public vote](#) on the idea in October after various efforts squelched previous transportation funding drives.

The O story notes that petrol industry types will campaign against the measure, which will land on the May 17 ballot.

GoLocalPDX

Bailey Pledges Support for Unions

*By Brendan Murray
January 28, 2016*

Multnomah County Commissioner and Mayoral candidate Jules Bailey made another strong commitment to labor unions this week, pledging support for fair share in Portland regardless of the upcoming Supreme Court Decision surrounding the practice. As GoLocal reported, Bailey has in the past received significant campaign contributions from labor unions.

“The bargaining process relies on partners at both sides of the table who can bring their best ideas and have the ability to carry them out,” Bailey told GoLocal. “Crippling representation in our workforce serves no one, and erodes the foundation we’ve worked so hard to build.”

Fair share or fair bargaining is a union practice that requires an employee covered by a union to pay union dues, regardless of whether or not they would like to be a member. The US Supreme Court will soon issue a ruling on *Friedrichs vs California Teachers Association*, which could overturn the precedent that allows for fair share practices.

Bailey said he had two plans for keeping the practice in use, depending on how the Supreme Court writes their decision.

“First, that the City require all employees covered by a contract to contribute to the cost of crafting and administering that contract -- either through a recognized bargaining unit or through a fee to the City,” Bailey proposed. “Or, in the event of a broad ruling by the Court, simply to reserve contractual relationships to employees who contributed a fair share to the cost of crafting and administering their contract. Employees who opt out would be subject to existing civil service laws and have their salary and benefit levels set by city staff.”

Union Ties

As GoLocal reported previously, nearly one-quarter of Bailey’s campaign financing during his run for County Commissioner in 2012 came from labor organizations such as worker’s unions and trade associations.

GoLocal review of campaign contributions showed that more than \$32,000 of the \$141,167 Bailey raised during his campaign for County Commissioner from January to June of 2014 came from labor organizations. That makes up roughly 23 percent of his overall contributions during that time period.

What’s more, many of Bailey’s biggest individual donors during the campaign were labor unions and trade associations. Five of Bailey’s ten largest donations came from unions, including two of the top five. In fact, Oregon AFSCME Council 75, which gave Bailey two separate donations of \$2,5000. None of Bailey’s other top contributors gave two such donations.

Jim Moore, Director of the Tom McCall Center for Policy Innovation at Pacific University, told GoLocal he was not surprised at Bailey’s close relationship with unions.

“Bailey was part of a Democratic caucus in the legislature that unions wanted to help win majority power,” Moore explained. “Unions might play a major role, but only if they see that Bailey has a chance of winning against Wheeler. Otherwise, there are better places for union political money to go.”

Will It Make an Impact?

Experts told GoLocal that having the support of labor unions could prove helpful for Bailey as he fights an uphill battle against opponent Ted Wheeler.

“Unions are a big player in political fundraising,” according to John Horvick, Vice President and Political Director for DHM Research. “I suspect that he has a very good relationship with those groups.”

Gary Malecha, a Professor of Political Science at the University of Portland, told GoLocal that donors want to ensure that they have a good relationship with those in power.

“They want to make sure they have access to those who are going to be making these decisions,” Malecha said. “It’s not uncommon to see heavy contributions by those who are going to deal often with a government entity.”

How Will Support Continue?

Bailey will likely need the support of labor leaders once again in this race against Oregon State Treasurer Ted Wheeler (D). Wheeler began his campaign months ahead of Bailey, and has wasted no time racking up endorsements and campaign funding.

Making it even more difficult for Bailey to close the fundraising gap is Bailey's decision to limit campaign contributions. Bailey told GoLocal he was self-imposing a limit of to \$250 during the Mayoral campaign. Horvick said that decision could cost him dearly.

"I think it puts him at a real disadvantage," John Horvick, vice president and political director for DHM Research, told GoLocal regarding the decision. "I think he's making it as a philosophical decision and as a tactical decision, but it's not the norm and it could hurt him."

Horvick said that the move could especially hurt considering his past contributions from unions. In place of high-ceiling contributions from labor groups, Bailey will need them to help in more creative ways.

"If the unions can't contribute financially, they could help on the ground," Horvick said. "People on the grounds, knocking on doors and sending mailers, things like that. But even still, those all cost money."

Moore agreed.

"It means he had better have a strong volunteer base to have a chance in the election," Moore said. "That has happened before, but Bailey is not nearly as well known as former Mayor Tom Potter, who had a big base of support from his very public role as chief of police."