

The Oregonian

Biketown bike-share launch date, pricing, station locations announced

By Elliot Njus

June 13, 2016

Portland's bike-rental program will launch on July 19, and annual memberships go on sale Tuesday.

Officials with Portland's Biketown are keen to kick-start sales because annual memberships, along with corporate sponsorship, are key to sustaining bike-share programs. They're hoping to sign up 1,000 annual members before launch day, and they're offering incentives in hopes of reaching that goal.

Pricing

Annual memberships, which will be available Tuesday at biketownpdx.com, will cost \$12 a month, with the first 500 receiving one month free, paid for by the Metro regional government. The first 1,000 members will get a T-shirt and a limited-run "founding member" keycard to access bikes.

Taking Portland's new bike-share for a test ride

A membership entitles riders to 90 minutes of ride time a day, with additional time charged at 10 cents a minute.

The program will also launch with per-ride and day pass options. A single trip of up to 30 minutes will cost \$2.50. A day pass for up to 180 minutes in a single day will cost \$12.

Stations and locations

The transportation bureau also identified where it will put 100 stations, where bikes can be rented and returned. (Bikes can also be left at any public bike rack for an added \$2 charge.)

The stations will be spread out throughout the Biketown service area, but the concentration is higher on the west side, where there will be 18.9 stations per square mile. On the eastside, the concentration falls to just over 9 stations per square mile.

Steve Hoyt-McBeth, a transportation bureau project manager, said he wishes the program had enough resources to be twice the size.

"If we had 200 stations, we could easily have put down 200 stations," Hoyt-McBeth said. "But we had to make some hard choices."

Stations were selected in part based on an online survey, but Hoyt-McBeth said the city made a concerted effort to put stations near areas with heavy foot traffic and near affordable housing.

"Bike share works best not only when you put stations in high-demand areas, but also when you have a high level of service within that area," he said.

Of 100 bike-share stations, 20 will be outfitted with kiosks where people can sign up for an account. (People who have previously used bike-share can reserve a bike using its onboard computer rather than the kiosk.)

Motivate, the bike-share operator, will start installing stations by the beginning of July, Biketown general manager Dorothy Mitchell said.

Portland developers pitch \$100 million homeless campus

By Brad Schmidt

June 13, 2016

A pair of high-flying Portland developers hope to build support for a \$100 million-plus homeless campus to serve as a "one-stop-shop" for 1,400 people in search of nightly shelter and on-site assistance.

The unparalleled vision is being pitched by Homer Williams and Dike Dame, who have elevated their careers by delivering grand, if not initially audacious, concepts in the formerly forlorn Pearl and South Waterfront districts.

They're now fixated on 14 acres of riverfront property owned by the city, hoping to emulate the successful "Haven for Hope" homeless facility in San Antonio, Texas. Williams is pushing the local concept – dubbed "Oregon Trail to Hope" – with a goal of securing some \$60 million from businesses and foundations, leaving government agencies to pick up the rest.

"I think we can get it done here," he said in an interview with The Oregonian/OregonLive Editorial Board on Monday. "It's not going to be easy."

If built, the campus could fill a void by offering long-term shelter and assistance for a large chunk of Multnomah County's homeless population, estimated last year at 3,800. And the prospect of steering homeless people off the streets could be alluring to downtown business groups who recently sued Mayor Charlie Hales over lax enforcement of anti-camping rules.

But the concept has been met publicly and privately with skepticism by some politicians who question the financial viability, size and underlying motivations of building such a campus. It's not yet clear if the idea can become anything more than a pipe dream.

"Everything should be looked at," said Josh Alpert, chief of staff for Hales, who praised Williams' ingenuity. But he cautioned that the concept may be so large that it borders on warehousing homeless residents. "In a nutshell, I don't think the scale is right for what we're trying to do here in Portland."

Williams and Dame have spent recent weeks working to build excitement about the idea, meeting with local non-profit providers as well as city and county leaders. Multnomah County Chairwoman Deborah Kafoury even flew with Williams to San Antonio, spending two days this month learning about the model that captured his attention.

"We need the business community's involvement," Kafoury said. "And if this is an idea that sparks interest from the business community, I will be there to make it work for our entire community."

Williams hopes to nail down construction estimates, operating costs and a financing plan by March 2017. Among others, he is working with Don Mazziotti, Portland's ex-urban renewal director from the early 2000s, when Williams and Dame inked a city deal to develop the South Waterfront.

Williams said he's hoping to raise about \$360,000 to cover early costs, and has been collecting contributions from the business community.

"Nobody's turned me down," he said.

But despite his work championing the concept, Williams said he would not develop the project if it's ultimately built. "I don't want to get into a conflict," he said.

Williams envisions a project serving 1,400 people, with 700 sleeping in shelter space and 700 in transitional dormitory-style housing.

"It would be very simple," he said of the shelter. "It's going to be a lot of beds in a really big room."

Meanwhile, those living in transitional units could stay up to two years. "These people really need to rebuild their lives," he said.

Modeled after San Antonio's project, Williams wants to include office and meeting spaces for wrap-around services, such as health care and addiction counseling. It would also feature dining facilities, showers and outdoor areas for social events. He hopes to keep costs to \$100 million but said they could reach \$120 million.

San Antonio's project cost \$100.5 million to build. The campus, which opened in 2010, operates on an annual budget of about \$15.5 million.

One immediate bellwether to gauge the viability of Williams' plan will be the fate of his proposed location, at 2400 N.W. Front Ave.

The property – which long ago served as the Port of Portland's Terminal 1 – is zoned for industrial use and has a market value of about \$8.6 million, according to property records. City officials plan to list it for sale in mid July, and it could fetch far more from companies searching for a large, centrally located piece of industrial land along the Willamette River.

But the parcel is owned by the Bureau of Environmental Services, which is legally prohibited from spending ratepayers' money to subsidize non-utility endeavors. That means the City Council or Multnomah County would need to step in to buy the property with discretionary money – if officials are supportive.

Williams' involvement – and his record of piecing together big projects – should "jump start the conversation faster about, 'Well, should we buy this land?'" Alpert said.

Commissioner Nick Fish, who oversees the sewer bureau, isn't interested. Fish wants to see the property sold for top dollar to a business that adds jobs on scarce industrial land.

"Our job is to recover maximum value in the sale for ratepayers," said Jim Blackwood, a policy director for Fish.

Another sign that Williams may not have the necessary support: the typically publicity-adverse developer is openly talking about his proposal.

Williams and Dame made an initial pitch more than three months ago to Hales and Commissioner Dan Saltzman, who oversees the Portland Housing Bureau. They met at the developers' Pearl District offices March 10 with representatives from San Antonio, calendars show.

The next month, Willamette Week reported that Saltzman was interested in leasing part of Terminal 1 for a long-term shelter. No one mentioned Williams' proposal.

Saltzman confirmed that he supports Williams' concept generally. But Saltzman said funding hasn't come up, including any discussion about tapping money from a proposed \$250 million housing bond measures slated for the November ballot.

"I'd handicap it very favorably, and I think it's a great idea," Saltzman told The Oregonian/OregonLive of Williams' vision.

Williams, 71, downplayed any potential hurdles Monday and said his idea simply requires a lot of work.

That's not necessarily unusual for a developer versed in pitching the unimaginable, from the sprawling Forest Heights subdivision in Portland's West Hills to the high-rise condo towers that epitomize the South Waterfront.

Williams said he believes the Portland campus could become a national model to help homeless residents, offering workable solutions to complex problems.

And, if successful, Williams said it would represent a crowning achievement.

"This is just, I don't know," he said, shaking his head, searching for the right word. "Important."

The Portland Tribune

City begins attack on 'zombie homes'

*By Bianca Pahl
June 14, 2016*

The beginning of the end for many of Portland's zombie homes may have begun Friday afternoon, when Mayor Charlie Hales laid out his vision of a city with a new foreclosure process and better communication between city agencies.

It has been more than 50 years since the city has foreclosed on an abandoned home, and, as detailed in a Portland Tribune series last month, more than 400 of the vacant properties now blight neighborhoods on the east side.

The vision Hales outlined was short on specific fixes to the problems highlighted in the Tribune series, but the mayor did announce that the City Council will meet Wednesday, June 15, to vote on changes to outdated city ordinances governing the foreclosure process.

The council also will vote to proceed with the first five homes chosen for foreclosure by the city since 1965. These properties are: 4112-4118 S.E. 91st Ave.; 15803 S.E. Powell Blvd.; 7101 N.E. Prescott St.; 9120 N. Tioga St.; and 8515-8517 N. Portsmouth Ave.

Hales said he has the council's support on both the foreclosure of the initial five homes and the process changes that will allow a number of city bureaus to get involved in tackling the larger problem.

"The vote is just the beginning," said Chad Stover, livability project manager for the mayor's office. "It's a long process."

The city has not yet finalized a full plan and process for foreclosures, but a number of changes are being considered, according to the mayor and his staff.

Stover said the city is looking at Multnomah County's foreclosures in the hopes that some of the county's process can be applicable to city foreclosures. The county forecloses on a few homes each year in cases where property owners fail to pay their property taxes for a minimum of six years. The city would foreclose on problem properties that have been vacant and accumulating liens for nonpayment of city bills and zoning code violations. Some vacant properties have amassed more than \$100,000 in unpaid liens.

Stover said a key element of any new plan might be building a vacant home registry program, a sort of "centralized hub" to keep track of the city's abandoned homes.

"There is no silver bullet, but using a number of tools harmoniously can push the needle on this and ensure livable neighborhoods," Stover said.

At Friday's press conference, held at the first zombie home on the foreclosure list, Hales said another thing being considered is a receivership program, which is used widely in some East Coast cities because it allows cities to avoid the foreclosure process and more quickly get houses fixed up.

"We're not interested in foreclosure for foreclosure's sake," Hales said. "The city is not interested in holding on to these houses. We want to move them out into the hands of a receiver, like a nonprofit organization."

Trisha Basler, founder of PDX Outreach Nursing LLC, attended the press conference, anticipating hearing something along those lines. She hopes some of the zombie homes can be turned into shelters or medical care centers for the homeless.

Hales said the Oregon Bankers Association has begun working with the city to help untangle the complex ownership issues that sometimes stall the foreclosure process. Often the mortgages on abandoned homes have been bundled and resold a number of times, and cities cannot take action until they know who legally owns properties.

Several neighbors of zombie homes attended the Friday press conference. One neighbor and her children shared their frustration with living next to one of these boarded-up dwellings sometimes occupied by illegal squatters.

"It's fun because you get stickers from the policemen," said a daughter of neighbor Sally Bowman. But Bowman didn't see the issue in the same light as her daughter.

"That's not something you want your kid to be excited about — seeing the police come to your house over and over to make people leave that aren't supposed to be there," Bowman said. "It's really good that the mayor is doing something about it. I'm really pleased."

Hales said final decisions on a foreclosure plan and process will be decided Wednesday at the City Council meeting.

“We’re not done,” Hales said. “We’re just getting started.”

City Council to hold public hearing on Superfund cleanup plan

By Jim Redden and Steve Law

June 14, 2016

City Council members are declining to endorse or recommend changes to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s recommended Superfund plan for the Portland Harbor until the tail end of the 60-day public comment period.

The EPA proposed a \$746 million cleanup plan for a 10-mile stretch of the Willamette River last week. The federal agency proposes to dredge some 150 acres of the most polluted sediment on the river bottom, dredge and cap 17 more acres, cap another 64 acres and leave the polluted sediment in place, and rely on so-called “natural recovery” for the remaining 1,900 acres.

Some environmentalists and community activists say the proposal does not go nearly far enough. For example, Travis Williams of Willamette Riverkeeper says 1,000 of the most polluted acres should be dredged.

“The people of Portland deserve a more robust plan. It needs to be much more robust for the health of people and wildlife,” says Williams, who does not know how much his proposal would cost.

Commissioner Nick Fish, who is in charge of the Bureau of Environmental Services, says the council will withhold judgment until near the end of the 60-day public comment period. The city is potentially responsible for paying a yet-to-be determined portion of the cleanup costs, and BES has so far spent more than \$50 million in ratepayer funds, advancing money to help cover early Superfund expenditures and prepare the city’s response.

“There is an EPA process for public comment and the council will weigh in on it, too, and I don’t want to get out ahead of that,” Fish says.

Commissioner Steve Novick does not endorse the EPA plan, but wants to know the public benefits of spending more money on the cleanup. The EPA also released a fact sheet last week with a range of cleanup options and their benefits. The most complete one totaled \$9 billion.

“So, as EPA sees it, for \$746 million, you get to eat carp, bass and catfish from the harbor five times a year, starting in seven years from the beginning of cleanup. For \$1.7 billion, you get to eat carp, bass and catfish from the harbor 10 times a year, starting in 19 years from the beginning of cleanup,” Novick says.

The council will host a public forum to help shape its official response from 6 to 9 p.m. on June 30 at the Bauccio Commons at the University of Portland.

“We want to hear from the public before taking a position,” Fish says.

Regardless of where the city finally comes down, the final decision about the scope of the plan and who pays for it is up to the EPA.

Lowered cost estimates

The EPA proposed its seven-year plan last Wednesday to finally clean up the Portland Harbor Superfund site. In a conference call with reporters, agency officials said they made few changes from a preferred alternative announced last November, but the price tag went way down from that nearly \$1.4 billion proposal, largely due to reduced cost estimates.

“This offers a fairly balanced approach to achieve cleanup at the site. It also provides, I think, the most cost-effective approach,” says Jim Woolford, who directs remediation of cleanup sites for the national EPA.

Those on the hook for the cleanup cost were probably pleased by the decrease, although none said that publicly.

“We support the cleanup and want it to be complete enough that we’re not back here talking about it again in another 15, 25 or 40 years,” Port of Portland Executive Director Bill Wyatt told the City Club last week during a presentation on the port’s 125-year anniversary.

Wyatt said the port does not have a revenue source for paying its share of the cleanup costs, and expected to work with the state of Oregon — which is also potentially liable — on that in the future.

River wouldn’t be pristine

The EPA proposal, which now goes out for two months of public comments, involves dredging the most serious “hot spots” in the river, removing 1.9 million cubic yards of contaminated sediment. Much of that would be shipped to off-site landfills capable of handling toxic material.

In one of the most controversial aspects of the plan, EPA proposes to stow some of the contaminated sediment in a confined disposal facility in a side pocket of the river, essentially walling off part of the Willamette. That likely would take place at a Port of Portland boat slip near Terminal 4.

If the confined disposal option is eliminated, that would boost estimated cleanup costs up to \$811 million.

Contamination in the river, which has accumulated over more than a century, has not resulted in any health concerns about eating salmon. But eating fish that feed near the contaminated sediment is considered a health hazard, and signs along the river now warn fishers of those risks.

Public comment period commences

The EPA, along with the city of Portland, hopes it can submit a final cleanup plan by December, before a new U.S. president and EPA administrator take office. Local environmental and neighborhood activists are seeking a longer comment period than 60 days.

Public comments on the plan can be mailed to: Attn Harbor Comments, US EPA, 805 S.W. Broadway St., Suite 500, Portland, 97205. They must be postmarked by Aug. 8.

Four public meetings to discuss the plan also have been scheduled, and more are likely among various community groups.

For more information go to EPA's website at: <http://go.usa.gov/3Wf2B>

The Portland Mercury

Bike Share is Coming July 19! Here's What You Need To Know

By Dirk VanderHart

June 13, 2016

Portland's years-long wait for bike share ends July 19.

That morning, 1,000 bright orange bikes emblazoned with the Nike swoosh will be up for grabs as far north as Killingsworth, and as far south as roughly Clinton Street and the South Waterfront. People in Downtown and Northwest Portland will practically be stumbling over stations—19 of them per square mile—while east-siders (at least those living within an eastern boundary that fluctuates between NE 7th and SE Cesar Chavez) will need to plan a little more carefully.

Biketown is almost here, Portland. And we've got new details.

The Portland Bureau of Transportation on Monday unveiled for the first time a final bike share station map—100 system-specific bike corrals pared down from 305 possibilities.

The bureau also released its price structure, which has three options for purchasing bike time: by the trip, by the day, and by the year.

Annual memberships will cost \$144 a year, or \$12 per month (including 90 minutes per day of ride time). That's lower than a \$15 per month fee officials had mulled last year, but it's more expensive than annual passes in cities like Washington DC (between \$7 and \$8 per month), Chicago (\$9.95), and Seattle (\$7.95). It's less expensive than NYC's \$14.95 per month system.

(If you're really jazzed about bike share, you can sign up as early as Tuesday morning at 6 am on Biketown's website. First 500 people to do so get a month free. The first 1,000 people get a t-shirt, and status as "founding members.")

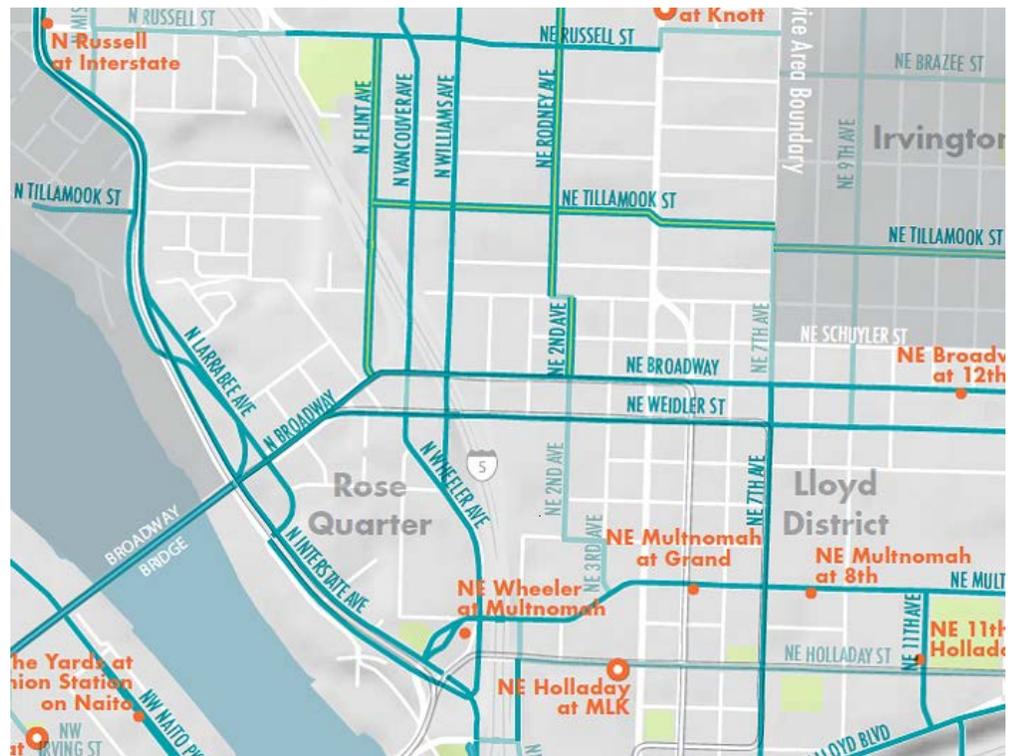
Meanwhile, that same \$12 will also purchase 24 hours of system access (with 180 minutes of total ride time), if you don't want the full membership. And Portland has also decided to offer something not seen in some cities: A single ride pass, for up to 30 minutes, will set you back \$2.50.

Go beyond your allotted time for any of those options, and you'll be charged 10 cents a minute.

Where you park your bike also figures into your cost. Biketown is slated to be the largest "smart bike" system in the country, meaning the bright orange rigs have computers and locks on the back that allow you to lock and unlock the bike pretty much anywhere. But there's a fee for the convenience of not taking your bike back to an official station: \$2. (Conversely, if you find a bike

that's been parked away from a station and bring it back to one, you get a \$1 credit). And parking the bike outside of Biketown's centrally located service area will cost you \$20.

About that service area: It's unchanged from March, when PBOT began accepting input for more than 300 potential stations. The biggest news out today is where the 100 officials selected will be—and where they won't. Popular southeast corridors like Hawthorne, Belmont, and Division, for instance, are well-stocked with bike stations. Alberta (and the vast majority of Northeast Portland in general) don't have any.



It was always supposed to be this way. With a limited rollout (though 1,000 bikes is larger than Portland envisioned before Nike came on board), the bike share system has been billed as a central city amenity first. Demand is highest there, between jobs, tourists, and general density. As revenues allow, PBOT has said it will seek to expand bike share into other parts of the city.

Even given all that, there are some pretty barren portions of the eastside service area. While 2.5 square mile area west of the river has nearly 19 stations per square mile, the 5.6 square miles east side of the Willamette have roughly half that. One bare patch I noticed right away: This bike share desert east of the Broadway Bridge.

Steve Hoyt-McBeth, the PBOT project manager who's running point on Biketown, says there are plenty of places the bureau wanted to put bike share, but it was limited to 100 options. The ultimate decisions were based on more than 4,500 online comments, 5 open houses, dozens of community meetings, and an analysis of demand.

"There are many more stations that we wanted to put down," Hoyt-McBeth says. "We chose to put stations where we had the highest demand. We would love to fill [the network] in."

Hoyt-McBeth is insistent that the system is equitable within its service area. That area contains a little less than 13,000 affordable housing units, Hoyt-McBeth says, which is around 55 percent of the nearly 23,600 affordable units in Portland tallied by Metro last year. Of those 13,000 affordable units, 96 percent live within a quarter mile of a bike share station, and more than 60 percent live within several hundred feet, according to PBOT.

The city's also working with the Community Cycling Center on using a \$75,000 federal grant to create the equivalent of 500 low- or no-cost annual memberships for disadvantaged Portlanders.

How's this all going to play in the country's bikeiest big city? PBOT and Motivate, the company that's running the system, are anxious to find out. Dorothy Mitchell, Biketown's general manager, said today she thinks the 500 reduced price annual memberships (\$132 instead of \$144) will get snapped up fairly shortly. The hope is that 1,000 annual memberships are purchased prior to launch.

You'll begin to see stations springing up around town by early July.

The Portland Business Journal

Nike-backed \$10M Biketown program has a date, a map and, for early birds, a discount

By Andy Giegerich

June 14, 2016

Biketown has a start date.

City officials said Tuesday morning the Nike-backed program will launch July 19. Membership sales for the program also began this morning.

The first 500 members to sign up, using the access code PDX500, will get their first month of membership for free. Annual memberships cost \$12 a month.

The first 1,000 members to sign up will become Biketown "founding members." They'll receive a commemorative key to access the system and a "Biketown Founding Member" T-shirt.

What's more, Portland's Bureau of Transportation and other program partners also rolled out a map of the first 100 Biketown station locations.

The "smart bikes" are designed so that customers can check them out in several ways, including via smartphone.

The memberships allow for 90 minutes of riding time each day. Single-ride passes and 24-hour passes will become available when the system launches.

Nike designed the bikes and contributed \$10 million toward the system.