

The Oregonian

Portland Issues Permits Allowing E-Scooter Companies to Begin Operations

By Lizzy Acker
July 25, 2018

The Portland Bureau of Transportation announced Wednesday it has issued two permits allowing shared electric scooters to operate in Portland.

The first two permits were issued to companies Skip and Bird, and the city said they expected scooters would be available to rent on the streets "as soon as this week."

The permits are part of a pilot program launched by the Bureau of Transportation called "Shared Scooter Pilot Program." The program will run through Nov. 20. During that time Portlanders can expect to see the scooters, which are rented via app, on Portland's sidewalks.

State law requires riders to wear helmets and ride on streets and not sidewalks.

"We've been working with PBOT for months and are impressed with the rigor and consideration they've applied to this process," Skip CEO and founder Sanjay Dastoor said over email Wednesday. "True community understanding and engagement is key for creating a long-term solution like the one we're working to build and we're excited to get rolling in Portland."

A Skip spokesperson said the company could have scooters available for Portland riders as early as next week.

Transportation spokesman Dylan Rivera told The Oregonian/OregonLive in June that the bureau had not yet decided if the program would be permanent.

The pilot program, according to the bureau, will allow the city to evaluate "whether scooters are compatible with the safe, efficient and equitable operation of Portland's transportation system."

Bird did not immediately respond to request for comment about when their scooters would be available.

The Portland Tribune

Turner Stands By 'Cesspool' Comment

By Nick Budnick
July 24, 2018

Police union leader blames lack of city services, not homeless for situation that is frustrating many.

Last week, the president of the Portland Police Association, Daryl Turner, ignited a firestorm of reaction by calling the city of Portland a "cesspool" in a statement blasting Mayor Ted Wheeler for "failed" homeless policies.

The comment was sparked by Wheeler's openness to an independent investigation after an analysis in The Oregonian found 52 percent of police arrests last year were of people who are transient or homeless — though they make up less than 3 percent of the population.

The flareup comes as Wheeler has been vocally defending the city's approach to homelessness in partnership with Multnomah County.

"Becoming a big city comes with big-city problems," Wheeler said in a statement. "In true Portland fashion, we have come together as a community — service providers, the business community and law enforcement — to address homelessness. Together we are making progress. Further, we all agree that we need to decrease interactions between police and those experiencing homelessness, and increase interactions between service providers and those experiencing homelessness. I urge us all to continue working together to achieve this important goal."

In the days since emailing out his statement on July 16, Turner has not backed down from his inflammatory language. To the Tribune, however, he said his comment was not blaming homeless people, but an underfunded local social service system that does not do enough for people who need help.

He brought the topic back to a favorite one of the police union, its support of a homelessness campus approach similar to one used in San Antonio, Texas, to provide social services — perhaps at the unused and recently resold Wapato jail.

This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

Portland Tribune: What has been the reaction to your public statement of concern about the city and its homelessness?

Daryl Turner: We've gotten a lot of emails, text messages, voicemails as well as the comments we saw in The Oregonian that obviously — and I knew some of this ahead of time — people who live here are frustrated. Business owners are frustrated. People in general are frustrated. People who are experiencing homelessness are frustrated. So, this is not something that's brand-new, this is something that's been going on for a few years.

We want to see policies that are not just half-solutions. We are not saying you can fix this 100 percent. What we're seeing is that right now the problem is not being fixed. It's getting worse.

Tribune: When you talk about solutions, what do you think we should be doing more of that we are not doing now?

Turner: There's multiple ways to get to solutions. Access to housing, especially for displaced families but not just displaced families, for people with disabilities, people with mental illness, people who are experiencing homelessness in general.

We need to enforce the laws, because across the board for everybody, we have to. But with that we need strong and sustainable networks of drug and alcohol treatment, rehab, mental health services, job placement and other social services. And those aren't the policies we have right now.

Tribune: The mayor has been aggressive in talking about his focus on housing and shelters. Are you saying it needs to be a lot more than that? Or a lot less than that?

Turner: City policy right now is a vicious cycle with no off-ramp for the most vulnerable in our community. It's a number of prongs that go to whose job it is to supervise the off-ramp. But the city must re-examine its policies. We can't keep doing what we're doing.

Tribune: Where does the money come from for these enhanced services? Some people have argued that the police bureau shouldn't get more money because it should instead go to services.

Turner: The mayor himself has reported that we have record tax revenues coming into the city. Where are those record tax revenues going? Are they going to breaks for developers who are

building in the city? Are we building more affordable housing or are we building a lot of high-end condominiums and homes?

If the city had decided to buy Wapato from the county, in 60 days we could have about 600 beds with the facilities for medical, dental and administrative offices for social services as well as places to shelter and feed 600 people in transitional housing for a period of time, which would take several people off the street and give them the social services in a hub, which is a one-stop social service network.

Tribune: I heard someone say the union is just complaining because it doesn't want its members to be social workers.

Turner: That's not true. We're tired of the constant carousel of people who are not getting the services they need. And they are being put back out on the street again. And not because social services aren't doing their job but the resources just aren't there right now. ... There's this vicious cycle, it just keeps happening. So, imagine a social services hub like Harbor of Hope, which they have in San Antonio, Texas, with wrap-around services. Obviously, it would have to be tailored to fit Portland's needs. Transitional housing, sleep areas, restrooms, showers, peer interaction, socialization, personal storage, connection to mental health and medical services.

Tribune: Some think the police union just wants a jail so they can take homeless people to Wapato and get them off the street.

Turner: We want to be able to get people resources, we want to be able to get them housing, the housing they don't have right now, the transitional housing that they can stay in for a longer period of time than some of the shelters downtown.

It may not be Wapato, it may not be that facility. But I do know that the people who bought Wapato, their dream is to be like the Harbor of Hope in San Antonio. And that's a good start. Obviously, the city and the county would need to step up to make that a possibility, or a reality even.

Tribune: I want to come back to your use of the word "cesspool." Is the Portland Police Association saying that Portland is a cesspool and homeless people are causing that cesspool?

Turner: What I meant by that is if you look at the city 20 years ago, 15 years ago, 10 years ago, maybe even five years ago, Portland was a thriving, vibrant, beautiful city. It was a place where people hoped to move to. It was growing exponentially. And now we are experiencing some problems with people who are experiencing homelessness. They are not the problem. The problem is not having the policies.

This is something we've been hearing for a couple of years. And the word cesspool doesn't mean it's the worst city in the country. What it means is that from what Portland was 20 years ago, 15 years ago, 10 years ago, we are seeing a downhill slide that is unprecedented. We are not blaming it on people who are experiencing homelessness or mental illness or joblessness. We are placing the blame on policies that don't allow people to get the resources that they need to empower them to take over their own lives.

Tribune: Anything else you want to explain about your statement?

Turner: Our rank and file officers and investigators work very hard. And if, in fact, the numbers are correct that in 2017, 52 percent of the people arrested were homeless, that's a failure of policies, that's not a failure of the people who are out there doing the work every day.

I think once we see the policies change, once we see a model like they have in San Antonio with Harbor of Hope, we will see a big turn with that.

Willamette Week

Portland Groups Push for Massive Number of Affordable Units and Free Transit Passes for Residents at Old Post Office Site

*By Rachel Monahan
July 25, 2018*

Healthy Communities Coalition is pushing for changes on the project and potentially others going forward.

A coalition of organized labor, environmental groups and racial and social justice nonprofits are pushing a dramatic vision for the future of the old Post Office site in the Central City.

The Healthy Communities Coalition is asking Prosper Portland, the city's economic development agency, to commit to a wide range of proposals to benefit low-income, working-class and disabled Portlanders at one of the largest proposed housing developments planned near downtown.

In 2016, Prosper Portland (formerly known as Portland Development Commission) purchased the site for \$88 million, and agency officials have said they want to make sure the project, known as Broadway Corridor, addresses some of the agency's past failings, including redevelopment that led to rapid gentrification.

The agency and the developer have committed to including what's known as a "community benefits agreement." Now comes the work of hashing out those specifics with the groups representing Portland residents.

In Portland, community benefits agreements have in the past been applied to construction projects, but the commitments the Healthy Communities Coalition are seeking are much more than that—and more than Prosper Portland has committed to in the past. They include:

- Offering free public transit passes for anyone who lives or works there,
- Making half the apartments on site be affordable,
- Making a quarter of units accessible to disabled people,
- "On-site, affordable childcare,"
- "Good jobs" for everyone that works there, including after construction, and
- Funding investments in the Cully neighborhood to improve air quality and transportation to address the U.S. Post Office's move into that Northeast Portland neighborhood.

The vision from Healthy Communities Coalition will be presented to Prosper Portland at a meeting tonight in Northeast Portland.

"We identified Broadway Corridor as a once-in-a-generation opportunity to get development right in city of Portland—to show that the public sector, private sector and the community as whole can benefit from this opportunity as whole," says Vivian Satterfield, deputy director of OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon, one of the lead organizations for the Healthy Communities Coalition.

The Portland Mercury

OHSU Responds to Occupy ICE Sweep

By Alex Zelinski

July 25, 2018

In the days leading up to this morning's sweep of the Occupy ICE encampment, both Mayor Ted Wheeler and ICE protesters acknowledged that the protest camp had become a problem for OHSU.

According to Wheeler, OHSU had become increasingly concerned that the blockade created by federal police on SW Bancroft St. would disrupt patient care and emergency access to its facilities nearby. While the protesters themselves hadn't set up barriers to block off the road—federal officers said they wouldn't lift their road block until the protesters no longer posed a threat to federal property. And, it appears, it's easier to evict a protest camp than get the federal government to lift a road block.

Juno Suarez, a spokesperson for a certain faction of the ICE protest (one that voluntarily left the camp Monday morning), echoed Wheeler's reasoning.

"We don't want to negatively impact people needing to access health care," Suarez told the Mercury yesterday.

This morning, OHSU confirmed those concerns. Here's how OHSU spokesperson Franny White explained it, in an email to the Mercury:

"OHSU respects the rights of citizens to demonstrate. Many OHSU faculty and staff have expressed outrage over the separation of children and families at the U.S.-Mexico border.

However, OHSU was concerned demonstrations at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Portland office at SW Macadam Boulevard & SW Bancroft Street could disrupt OHSU operations. Road closures or events that disrupt traffic flow always have impacts on OHSU's operations on the South Waterfront, including patient care. Patients access lifesaving care on OHSU's South Waterfront campus a few blocks from the demonstrators' encampment. OHSU also has a warehouse nearby that stores medical supplies, which are transported to OHSU hospitals and clinics via local roads.

Soon after the encampment was formed, OHSU met with both the Mayor's staff and ICE demonstrators to discuss these concerns, and we are grateful the road closures near the encampment were infrequent. OHSU has been largely able to minimize the impacts of these road closures through advance communication with employees, patients and vendors."

City Council to Vote on Creating a Massive Database for Portland Rentals

By Alex Zielinski

July 25, 2018

Portland currently has no way of tracking the number of rental units on the market. The city also lacks a comprehensive database of structural updates to rental properties, housing code

compliance reports, or tenant complaints. Perhaps most importantly, the city has no organized system to track information on negligent landlords.

This morning, Portland city commissioners will vote on a policy to create this type of missing dataset, a fix proponents say will help protect Portland tenants' tenuous rights. The "Residential Rental Registration Program," will require all landlords register their properties with the city and be subject to routine inspections. According to Mayor Ted Wheeler's office, the program could also enshrine tenants' rights trainings, track legal representation for households threatened with eviction, help facilitate landlord-tenant mediation services, track rent prices, and collect what seems like a bottomless supply of other crucial data.

According to Sophia June, a spokesperson for Wheeler's office, landlords will be expected to register by April 15, 2019 if this vote passes. Landlords won't face penalty fees or registration costs during the program's first year.

"The rental registration system will benefit current and potential tenants by giving the city access to real-time data, which will help direct policies to better address Portland's housing crisis," said Wheeler in a Tuesday press release.

It's an idea that's been brewing in the Portland tenants' rights community well before before Wheeler entered city hall—but his administration's creation of a Rental Services Commission (made up of both tenants and landlords) helped galvanize the program's creation.

The city's budget office estimates [the program will cost \\$648,000](#) to get off the ground within the next year, and an annual reoccurring cost of \$565,000 to keep it running. That initial cost will be covered by 2018-2019 budget funds specifically earmarked for this program, a budget slice from the Office Management and Finance, and from funds the council will squeeze out of the coming fall "budget bump." ([More on that here](#)).

Portland isn't the first to come up with this model. A number of other rent-strapped cities across the West Coast (and beyond) have already incorporated this kind of registry.

[Seattle's rental registration program](#), approved by city council in 2012, primarily focuses on rental inspection standards, with the city keeping records on landlord neglect or refusal to keep a property up to code. The program partially relies on the city conducting random inspections on rental units—regardless of whether or not tenants have reported a problem—to protect tenants who may avoid filing a complaint for fear of landlord retaliation. Landlords who don't register their property are stuck with serious fines.

But the program is still working out a few kinks. According to our sister paper the Stranger, the city's inspection program gives landlords 60 days to prepare for an investigation and tells landlords exactly which units it will inspect—not allowing the city to conduct a realistic survey of a rental unit. Tenants say the program doesn't incentivize landlords to make permanent improvements.

Gresham has a smaller, yet similar program, [with city employees prioritizing tenant protections](#) by conducting randomized inspections. [Meanwhile, Eugene's 23-year-old rental registration](#) policy solely relies on tenant complaints to start an investigation.

Other jurisdictions, like Baltimore County, Maryland, have used rental registration mandates to create a public, searchable database for all rental units in a region. For some cities, like Boston, that data can be used by the city to track landlords who consistently fail rental inspections.

In Portland, this kind of data collection could help the city avoid unexpected data dumps from outside investigators—like the meticulous research that informed the city council's decision to make the city's renter relocation program apply to single-unit-owning landlords.

The exact use for a Portland registry remains undefined—for now. Today's council discussion and vote could kick off a conversation that will start focusing the program's purpose. Stay tuned.

Are You Ready to E-Scoot, Portland?

By Alex Zielinski

July 25, 2018

Bikeshare getting you down? Lyft no longer fun? Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) has the solution for you: E-scooters.

In a matter of days, PBOT will unleash a new "Shared Electric Scooter" pilot program for Portlanders interested in paying money to ride a scooter. In an afternoon press release, PBOT announced it had issued permits to two e-scooter companies (Bird and Skip) hoping to win Portland over during the pilot program's 120-day trial run. After that 120-day period, the city will use public feedback to determine whether or not PBOT should extend the companies' permits to a year.

Unlike Biketown's bikeshare system, the e-scooters are dockless, meaning you can leave them (almost) anywhere when you're done riding. According to PBOT's website, it costs \$1 upfront to rent an e-scooter and \$0.15 per minute of use. The e-scooters top off at 15 miles per hour.

As it turns out, e-scooting comes with a lot of rules. A few: Riders must be over the age of 16, e-scooters can't carry more than one person, no e-scooters on TriMet, and people can't ride e-scooters in public parks, on sidewalks, or "near bus stops." It's also illegal to ride an e-scooter without a helmet—but PBOT says companies may mail riders helmets on request (WHAT? Can we exploit this?) [Update: YES WE CAN. See below.](#)

PBOT made a delightful, slightly patronizing graphic to help drive home these rules. It reads like a elementary school teacher enforcing classroom rules that you want to break: "We wear helmets," "We don't ride scooters on the sidewalk," "We don't park scooters in the bicycle lane."

You can just see the pursed-lip official watching to see if you'll fall into line. The passive-aggressive announcement includes a few rules that will undoubtedly be broken from the start. An example: "We don't park scooters in the sidewalk path. We park scooters with care, on the sidewalk, by the curb." Apparently, it's on the e-scooter companies to keep sidewalks free of discarded piles of e-scooters like this one:

[\(In searching for an image of a scooter pile, I encountered the most Silicon Valley story you'll ever read.\)](#)

In an online FAQ about the new pilot program, PBOT suggests it wasn't entirely their choice to introduce e-scooters.

"Shared Electric Scooter companies have been aggressively launching in cities without seeking permits," the website reads. "In order to protect Portlanders from a rogue launch and unregulated companies, the City felt it important to set up a pilot permit structure within an accelerated timeframe."

Glad we dodged a rouge launch. Because that's just not how we do it.

OPB

Portland To Develop Database Of Rental Housing Inventory

By Amelia Templeton

July 25, 2018

Portland City Council voted Wednesday to create an inventory of rental housing in the city.

Landlords will now be required to list the addresses of their rental properties when they submit their annual business license tax filing.

“Quality data in our rental system is something that tenants and landlords have been asking for, and in the absence of this system, there has been no single source of reliable quality data,” said Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler.

The mayor said creating the inventory will make it easier for the city to conduct health and safety inspections and to track whether policies meant to protect renters are working, like the city’s policy that requires landlords to pay tenants if they evict them without a cause.

All landlords must register, including those who only rent out a single unit. The city’s revenue division says it will use property tax records to find people who own more than one home and to notify them of the registration requirement.

The requirement will go into effect for the 2018 tax year, meaning landlords will be required to register as part of their city tax filings in April 2019. In the first year, they will not face a penalty for noncompliance. In future years, the penalty is \$500.

The city estimates the registry will cost \$648,000 to establish in the first year. It plans to cover the initial cost using general fund tax dollars. In future years, it plans to charge landlords a fee to fund the program.

Seattle, Eugene and Gresham have similar rental registration systems.