

The Oregonian

Portland will require all landlords to register their apartments -- by late 2020

*By Betsey Hammond
July 26, 2018*

The Portland City Council unanimously enacted new rules this week to require landlords to register the addresses of all rental units in the city each year.

The idea, city officials said, is to create an accurate citywide census of apartments and homes for rent and also make it easy to send communications to all renters and landlords. Landlords will submit the addresses along with their yearly city business tax filings.

That will require an estimated 10,000 or more landlords who haven't been required to file business taxes, because they gross less than \$50,000 a year from their rentals, to begin filing.

The rules requiring landlords to submit the addresses of all their units kicks in for tax year 2018, meaning the vast majority of owners would need to send theirs in by April 15, 2019. But they can automatically get a six-month extension, officials said.

What's more, Mayor Ted Wheeler decided to make the requirement optional for the first year, until the city can better get the word out, plus work out the technology landlords will use to submit their information. The rest of the City Council present at Wednesday's meeting fully supported that decision. (Commissioner Nick Fish was absent.)

The upshot is that a substantially complete census of Portland rentals can't be expected before late 2020, officials said. Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, elected in part on her pledge to help struggling renters, said she hoped landlords would see it in their own interest to comply in 2019 to generate reliable data about the rental housing supply.

The census bureau estimates that Portland has about 127,000 occupied rental homes and apartments. By its estimates, rental units make up nearly half of all homes inside the city limits.

City commissioners expressed strong support for the new registration system and their belief that better data will help the city make better policy decisions and communicate more effectively with tenants and landlords.

They made it clear they plan to charge a yearly registration fee beginning with tax year 2019. They did not say how high that might be, although they suggested it would be set high enough to cover the costs of running the registration program, estimated to be \$565,000 a year.

Cities including Denver, Seattle, San Diego and even neighboring Gresham already require landlords to register rental units, Wheeler said.

Speaking for advocacy group Portland Tenants United, Anthony Bencivengo also called the change a "positive step forward" that he hopes will lead to mandatory safety inspections at all rentals and soon be accompanied by robust fees to support pro-tenant programs.

No landlords testified about the proposed registration requirement ahead of Wednesday's 4-0 vote.

Skyrocketing rents have left many Portlanders aghast over the past several years, and economists have said the laws of supply and demand mean that adding more apartments and rental homes is the only large-scale solution to make renting more affordable.

A new city rule requires nearly all landlords who build large apartment complexes to include discounted units set aside for renters of limited means or pay substantial fines. In the short run, that policy appeared to dampen developers' appetites for building such complexes more than it yielded a surge in new reduced-rent apartments.

Applications for big new housing developments have nearly ground to a halt over the past year.

Wheeler has vowed to get the 1,300 new rentals promised under the city's \$258 million voter-approved housing bond built or underway before he leaves office. But that would meet only a fraction of what city housing analysts say is needed to house low- and moderate-income people in Portland.

E-Scooters Now Available to Ride in Portland

By Lizzie Acker

July 26, 2018

Grab your helmets (it's the law), because shared electronic scooters are now in place in downtown Portland, ready for riders.

Bird scooters, finable by app, are the first of the e-scooters to appear on the street. The Portland Bureau of Transportation announced Wednesday it had issued two permits -- one for Bird and one for another company called Skip -- allowing the scooters to operate in Portland.

Bird's scooters are now available as far south at S.E. 50th Ave. and Foster Rd. and as far north as N. Killingsworth and Burrage Ave.

The scooters cost \$1 to unlock and \$.15 a minute to ride.

Bird announced in a press release Thursday that the company would be giving away helmets in Pioneer Courthouse Square between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Thursday.

In the release, Bird said it will abide by "its industry-leading Save Our Sidewalks Pledge."

Bird said it commits to: "collecting all of its vehicles each night for charging and necessary maintenance; practicing responsible growth by only adding more vehicles when each Bird averages three or more rides per day; and remitting \$1 per vehicle per day to the city to build more bike lanes, promote safe riding, and maintain shared infrastructure."

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

A spokesperson for a third company, Lime, said they are still working with the Portland Bureau of Transportation on permitting and "are excited to launch Lime-S scooters in Portland very soon."

The Daily Journal of Commerce

PBOT Poised to Add Office Space Downtown

By Chuck Slothower

July 26, 2018

The growing Portland Bureau of Transportation has reached agreement on a five-year lease of space at a downtown office building.

The transportation agency will take additional office space at Sixth + Main (formerly named the Congress Center), at 1001 S.W. Fifth Ave. The building is diagonally adjacent to the Portland Building, PBOT's usual office, which is undergoing an extensive renovation.

PBOT is already using portions of the fourth, fifth and sixth floors at Sixth + Main. That space is fully occupied, according to a draft City Council ordinance to authorize the lease.

The bureau is "experiencing unprecedented growth in terms of workload and staffing," the draft ordinance states. PBOT plans to hire 72 additional employees this year. The Portland Building cannot accommodate the increased staffing, according to the draft ordinance.

There are no city-owned buildings with sufficient space to meet PBOT's growth, the ordinance states. Leases by city bureaus must be brought to the City Council for approval.

It's not clear how much additional space the bureau is seeking. A PBOT spokesman did not respond Wednesday to a message seeking comment.

The lease is estimated to cost \$612,500 a year, or more than \$3 million during the lease period.

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.