

The Portland Tribune

Portland increases electric scooter fleet to nearly 3,000

*By Zane Sparling
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Portland Bureau of Transportation increased the number of permitted dockless e-scooters to 2,887 in September.

The city's electric scooter fleet has recorded another growth spurt.

The Portland Bureau of Transportation increased the number of permitted dockless e-scooters to 2,887 earlier this month — compared with 2,630 in mid-August. This time, it's the scooter company Lime that is adding 257 more two-wheelers, bringing their total deployment to 782.

Portland's yearlong e-scooter pilot includes goals that are designed to encourage good behavior by offering fleet increases to scooter firms that comply. Other companies qualified for the good partner incentive last month, but Lime's data required extra scrutiny.

"We wanted to make sure that their numbers were accurate," said PBOT spokesman John Brady.

Lime ultimately achieved the utilization benchmark by showing an average of three to four trips per day per scooter parked outside East Portland.

"PBOT is working to ease congestion and provide environmentally friendly options for people to get around the city," officials said. "The yearlong e-scooter pilot program is designed to assess whether e-scooters support these goals."

Not everyone is pleased. Bob Weinstein, a downtown resident who formed an advocacy group to protest scooter scofflaws, questions why PBOT didn't formally announce the latest increase, except on Twitter.

"One might think that PBOT did not want a lot of publicity on this decision," he said. "The day after (the increase) I filed a complaint with Lime and PBOT about nearly being struck and injured by a Lime scooter on the sidewalk on Northwest 23rd."

Proponents argue that shareable scooters are an eco-friendly solution to auto traffic. A recent city study highlights that carbon dioxide emissions linked to transportation are "increasing dramatically" in Multnomah County, perhaps due to cheap gas prices.

Transportation emissions here were about 14% higher in 2017 than they were in 2012.

R2DToo homeless camp seeks funds to stay open

*By KOIN 6 News
September 29, 2019*

Costs increase every winter for the managed group, which has no record of police calls near the Oregon Convention Center.

Advocates for a short-term camp site that services up to 100 homeless people each night say they need community support to keep operating.

Right 2 Dream Too has provided temporary shelter since 2017 for up to 12 hours for homeless people, as well as shower and toilets at a city-owned parking lot across the street from the Moda

Center. Before that, the camp was in Old Town. It was moved as part of a temporary arrangement with the city to rent a Lloyd District lot. The lease ends in April.

Member Armando Saldivar has been staying at the facility for the past year. It has both group sleeping areas and individual tiny homes. He said that despite fairly smooth self-management of the facility, operating costs during the winter usually increases. "Every year there's a budget crunch around Christmas time. We start over and try to get back up the funds," Saldivar said.

One vocal supporter of the camp, Lloyd Community Association board member Keith Jones, told KOIN 6 News the facility has been an asset to his neighborhood. "We've had no crime issues whatsoever ... when we're looking for solutions to help our unhoused population, this is a good model to look at," Jones said.

Jones added that he hoped the city would consider offering a longer lease to the facility to help it gain more stability. It's housed in a parking lot used by Portland's Bureau of Transportation.

Jones said though the facility depends on community donations, it's a highly cost-effective method of getting people in shelter. It only costs around \$3,500 for all expenses each month to house up to 100 people each night.

Right 2 Dream Too said it would hold a fundraising event on Saturday, Oct. 13. Details of the event are still being determined.

Your City Hall: Police matters dominate City Council docket

*By Jim Redden
September 30, 2019*

A work session and two hearings will focus on the Portland Police Bureau this week

WHAT IS HAPPENING? Police issues will occupy much of the City Council's time this week. First, on Tuesday, the council will hold a work session to consider national best practices for police contracts. Then on Wednesday, the council is scheduled to accept the Portland Police Bureau's 2018 annual report and adopt its community engagement plan for the current fiscal year.

WHY TALK ABOUT THE CONTRACT NOW? The city is preparing to negotiate a new contract with the Portland Police Association, the union that represents rank-and-file bureau employees. Ahead of that, the council will listen to a presentation by representatives of Campaign Zero on national best practices in police union contracts.

Campaign Zero is a 10-point police reform plan proposed by activists associated with Black Lives Matter that was launched on Aug. 21, 2015.

In announcing the work session, Mayor Ted Wheeler's Office said, "This will help ensure a meaningful negotiation process that results in a contract that serves the interest and welfare of the public and supports our officers."

WHAT ARE THE CAMPAIGN ZERO RECOMMENDATIONS? When it comes to police contracts, the plan calls for: removing barriers to misconduct investigations and civilian oversight; keeping officer disciplinary history accessible to police departments and to the public; and ensuring financial accountability for officers and police departments that kill or seriously injure civilians.

WHAT IS THE ANNUAL REPORT? A report on the activities, accomplishments and challenges for the bureau for 2018. The 29-page report covers everything from staffing levels to crime statistics to the activities of all divisions. In her introduction, Police Chief Danielle Outlaw said the primary challenge facing the bureau is the ongoing staffing shortage.

WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN? The plan for improving the relationship between the bureau and the community, including activities required under the settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice intended to reduce the unnecessary use of force by officers, such as the appointment of the Portland Committee on Community Engaged Policing.

ARE THERE ANY CONTROVERSIES? There are always controversies concerning the bureau. Police accountability activists already have questioned how much public testimony will be allowed on the engagement plan.

"It would be extremely ironic for the PPB to talk about its great efforts to engage with the community and then silence community response to its reports," Portland Copwatch said in an email to the council and chief on Sept. 26.

WHAT CAN I DO? The work session is scheduled from 9:30-11:30 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 1, in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 1221 S.W. Fourth Ave. Public testimony is not allowed, but you can attend in person, watch it on community TV, or on the city's website at www.portlandoregon.gov/28258.

The hearings on the report and plan are scheduled for 2 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 2, in the Council Chambers. Public testimony is allowed, and you also can watch them on community TV and on the website.

Links to the report and plan are included in the online council agenda at www.portlandoregon.gov/auditor/26997.

Portland Street Response homeless program up for a vote

*By Nick Budnick
September 27, 2019*

Should the Portland Fire Bureau or a contracted nonprofit operate the CAHOOTS-style homelessness initiative?

City and county officials are hailing progress on a nascent initiative to send someone other than police to respond to 911 calls regarding Portland's homeless population — an effort dubbed Portland Street Response.

But as a work group meets to craft a pilot program to test out the concept, a potential area of disagreement — who will run it — is headed to the Portland City Council in November.

Portland's latest effort to help the people living on its streets was sparked by the success of a nonprofit-run program in Eugene founded in 1988 that handles nearly a fifth of the city's 911 calls. Called Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets, or CAHOOTS, it does so by sending out a medic teamed with a behavioral health expert in a van to help people in need.

Advocates say plugging a similar model into 911 response in Portland could help reduce the vast number of police encounters with homeless people — a figure that constitutes about half the total

number of arrests by Portland police, according to data processed by The Oregonian/OregonLive.

At a news conference Thursday, Sept. 19, to discuss research into how the program in Portland should operate, Portland city Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty — the idea's most vocal champion on the City Council — said, "The fact that first responders are responding to so many calls that have absolutely nothing to do with criminal behavior is a disgrace and a waste of public safety resources."

After Mayor Ted Wheeler and Hardesty visited the Eugene program in January, both supported setting aside \$500,000 in the city budget for a pilot program in Portland.

Street Roots, the nonprofit Portland newspaper that employs many vendors who are homeless, focused on the CAHOOTS program in its March 15 issue and analyzed which existing program could handle the job. Its conclusion: the fire bureau's one-person Community Health Assessment Team, which works with homeless people.

And while some are pushing for the city to simply use the CAHOOTS model, Hardesty says the city needs to come up with its own version of the program. Specifically, the city is considering whether to have the Portland Fire Bureau, which Hardesty oversees, manage the program — instead of having a third-party contractor run it.

Indeed, a work group of social service agencies and city and county officials is planning on submitting two recommendations for the City Council to consider in November: one operated by the fire bureau, and one by a contracted nonprofit.

Among those pushing the city to simply adopt CAHOOTS instead of going its own way, however, is Jason Renaud of the Mental Health Association of Portland.

"We don't need to reinvent the wheel," he told the Portland City Council at a Sept. 4 public meeting. "The most valuable and overlooked quality of the Eugene model is that the service is managed by an independent third party, not a city bureau or department, not the police, not the fire department. That really won't work."

Hardesty, however, immediately pushed back.

The Eugene program, she said, "has a lot of things that are very positive about it. But as you may know, it took them 30 years to actually create the model that they have today. We in Portland don't have that long to wait to get to a model that actually is intentional about sending the right first responder to the right incident at the right time."

Last week, at the Thursday news conference, Portland State University released a survey conducted in conjunction with Street Roots, which found that 184 homeless people surveyed strongly support a nonpolice response to some calls, one that could include medical support as well as connections to other services.

Multnomah County Commissioner Sharon Meieran, an emergency room doctor who has been deeply involved in mental health reforms and the street-response discussions, is sympathetic to the idea that the Eugene model benefits from relationships forged over decades. So simply dropping it into Portland's system of 911 response and homeless and medical services may not be as simple as it seems.

But given the importance of the program under consideration, Meieran said, "we have to get it right." She said she is happy that the process is underway, and she isn't wedded to any particular outcome. "I just want to do what the right thing is."

OPB

Portland's New Plastics Policy Is Almost Here. Here's What You Should Know

*By Rebecca Ellis
September 29, 2019*

If Portlanders want a package of soy sauce tucked into their takeout sushi order, they're going to need to speak up starting Tuesday.

That's when the city's new plastics policy officially takes effect. Food and drink purveyors could face up to a \$500 fine for automatically providing customers with plastic straws, stirrers, utensils, or plastic-packaged condiments like soy sauce or coffee creamer.

The ordinance, approved by the City Council in December, allows businesses to provide Portlanders with these plastics, but "only after customer request."

It's the latest move by Oregon lawmakers to curb the use of disposable plastic, which overwhelms the state's landfills and litters its waterways. Portland passed its first major plastic bag ban in 2011, and state lawmakers followed suit this summer.

But this plastics policy is not a ban. Though the city originally mulled an outright prohibition, officials changed course after members of the disability rights community said some with mobility and strength issues relied on plastic straws to drink. The city now recommends all businesses maintain "a small supply to provide when requested" for these customers.

Instead of forcing a ban, officials said they wanted to give customers the option to forego the items.

"These plastics are cheap and a lot of businesses have made it a point to just include them in whatever order is happening for food and drink – and that is the default," Pete Chism-Winfield, program coordinator with the city's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, told OPB in December after the ordinance was approved. "So what we're trying to do with this policy is reset the default."

The law affects nearly all food purveyors, including food carts, hotels, caterers and bars. The only services exempt are those that provide free or reduced-price meals to "vulnerable populations," such as a program that delivers meals to the elderly. And for places with counter service, plastic utensils are still allowed in a self-serve area.

The ordinance similarly leaves some leeway for the odd bit of plastic. An exception is made for items where the plastic is attached by the manufacturer, like a juice box. And a pass is given for products where a key ingredient is packaged in plastic, like container of salad with dressing packet.