

Portland's Strategy on Automated Vehicles

Bicycle Advisory Committee | March 10, 2026



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PBOT
PORTLAND BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION

Agenda

- State of the industry
- Review proposed Administrative Rule updates
- Introduce activity



Source: Waymo



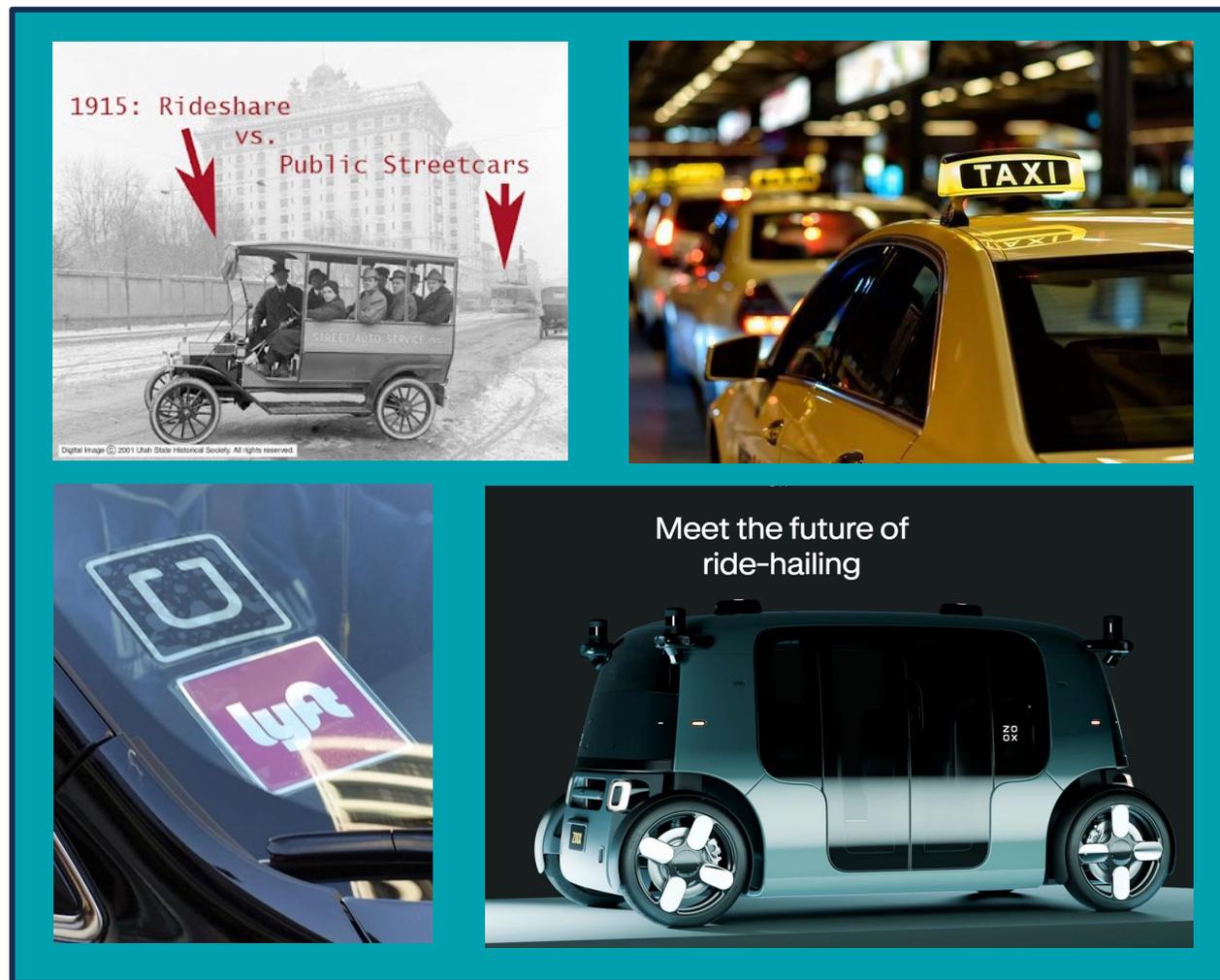
State of the Industry

Automated vehicles will have a dramatic impact on our transportation system

Portland has been successfully regulating the private for-hire industry for over 100-years. Just as the car reshaped urban mobility, for-hire AVs represent another significant shift.

Ready or not, this new technology is here. Now we have an opportunity to decide what it means for Portland.

We seek a **thoughtful yet collaborative** approach to introducing this innovative technology to our city.



Source: SLC History, Merriam Webster, Politico, Zoox

Smart Automated Vehicles Initiative ("SAVI")

- Resolution #37296: Support SAVI implementation adopted by City Council in June 2017 which charged PBOT with continuing to regulate and permit AVs moving forward
- SAVI objectives:
 - Public & community engagement
 - Develop permitting & policy framework
 - Data sharing & usage
 - Safety validation
 - Equity & accessibility
 - Climate & environmental goals
 - Economic development
- [Administrative Rule TRN-14.34](#) adopted in March 2018, enabled the testing of AVs in Portland with a permit

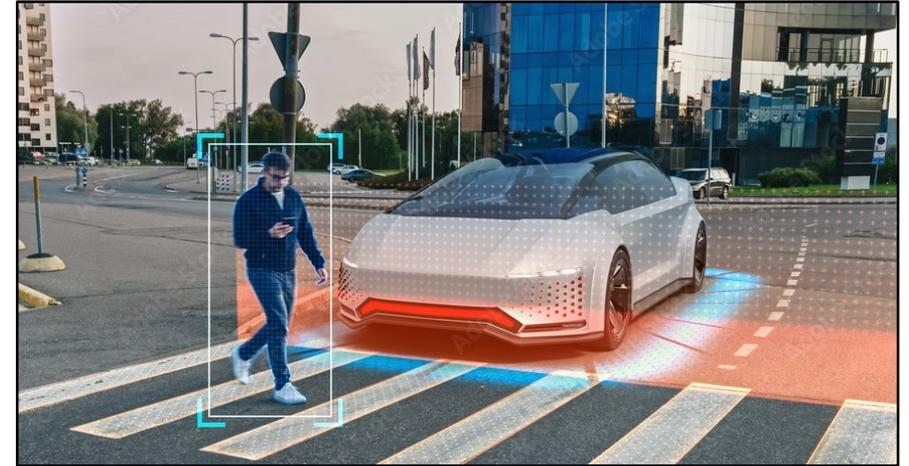


Source: AVIA

The promise of automated vehicles

There are potential benefits of a transition to AVs, including:

- **Safety**
 - Elimination of human errors
 - Faster reaction time
- **Efficiency**
 - Smoother traffic flow
- **Accessibility**
 - Additional mobility option for Portlanders who cannot drive
- **Free time**
 - Driving task is removed for occupants



Source: Adobe, Wired

The peril of automated vehicles

But the promise of the benefits isn't a given. There are concerns that need to be addressed:

- **Interaction with other right-of-way users**
 - Impacts to the flow of traffic, transit, bicyclists
 - Impeding first responders
 - Navigating work zones & events, like parades
- **Labor impacts**
 - Reduces need for human drivers
- **Congestion**
 - Early data from California shows ~40% of automated miles driven have no riders
- **Land use & privacy**
 - How will images and video be used?
 - Where will AVs charge? Will it cause sprawl?



Source: Zoox

We are seeing hopeful news about automated vehicles...

Robotaxis offer a path toward smarter and fairer urban mobility

Robotaxis can transform cities by improving mobile efficiency, equity, and safety — if cities adopt policies that prioritize the public good.

**Car Crashes Are A Public Health Crisis.
Autonomous Cars Are The Cure.**

Waymo hits 10M driverless rides, eyes expansion across U.S.

...but we are also seeing reasons to be concerned

NHTSA Investigating Waymo Over Allegations of Driving in Front of Stopped School Buses

The NHTSA demanded Waymo cease operations during school bus pickup and drop-off hours.

Waymo driverless taxi takes passenger into apparent police standoff

Waymo said the car was in the vicinity of the standoff for only 15 seconds.

Waymo robotaxi kills 'one-of-a-kind' bodega cat, owner claims

A convenience store owner and patrons are grieving the loss of their b

San Francisco power outage puts 130,000 in the dark, as self-driving car service stops vehicles in the street

One-third of PG&E customers in city lose electricity with significant transit disruptions and traffic jams reported

Waymo faces protests in Seattle amid concerns over impact on local rideshare drivers

US opens probe after Waymo self-driving vehicle strikes child near school, causing minor injuries

Is it too soon to claim broad safety benefits?

Each company's "driver" uses separate software, and their safety records must be considered separately:

- Waymo has 200M driverless miles, but Waymo's Director of Safety Research acknowledges "there is not sufficient mileage to make statistical conclusions about fatal crashes"
- NHTSA recently found Tesla robotaxis have a crash rate of 1 per 55,000 miles – compared to the human driver's rate of 1 police-reported crash per 500,000 miles



AVs may prove to be safer than human drivers, but that doesn't necessarily translate to safety improvements:

- Biggest benefits would come from replacing the worst human drivers
- Humans bend the rules, AVs may too without oversight
- AVs can react faster, but they're also making mistakes humans would not



Source: Wired, NBC News

After slow growth, AV companies are now starting to scale operations

● SERVING RIDERS IN

Atlanta, GA RIDE ON UBER

Austin, TX RIDE ON UBER

Dallas, TX

Houston, TX

Los Angeles, CA

Miami, FL

Orlando, FL

Phoenix, AZ

San Antonio, TX

San Francisco Bay Area, CA

● UP NEXT

Baltimore, MD

Boston, MA

Detroit, MI

Denver, CO

Las Vegas, NV

London, UK

Minneapolis, MN

Nashville, TN

New Orleans, LA

New York, NY

Philadelphia, PA

Pittsburgh, PA

Sacramento, CA

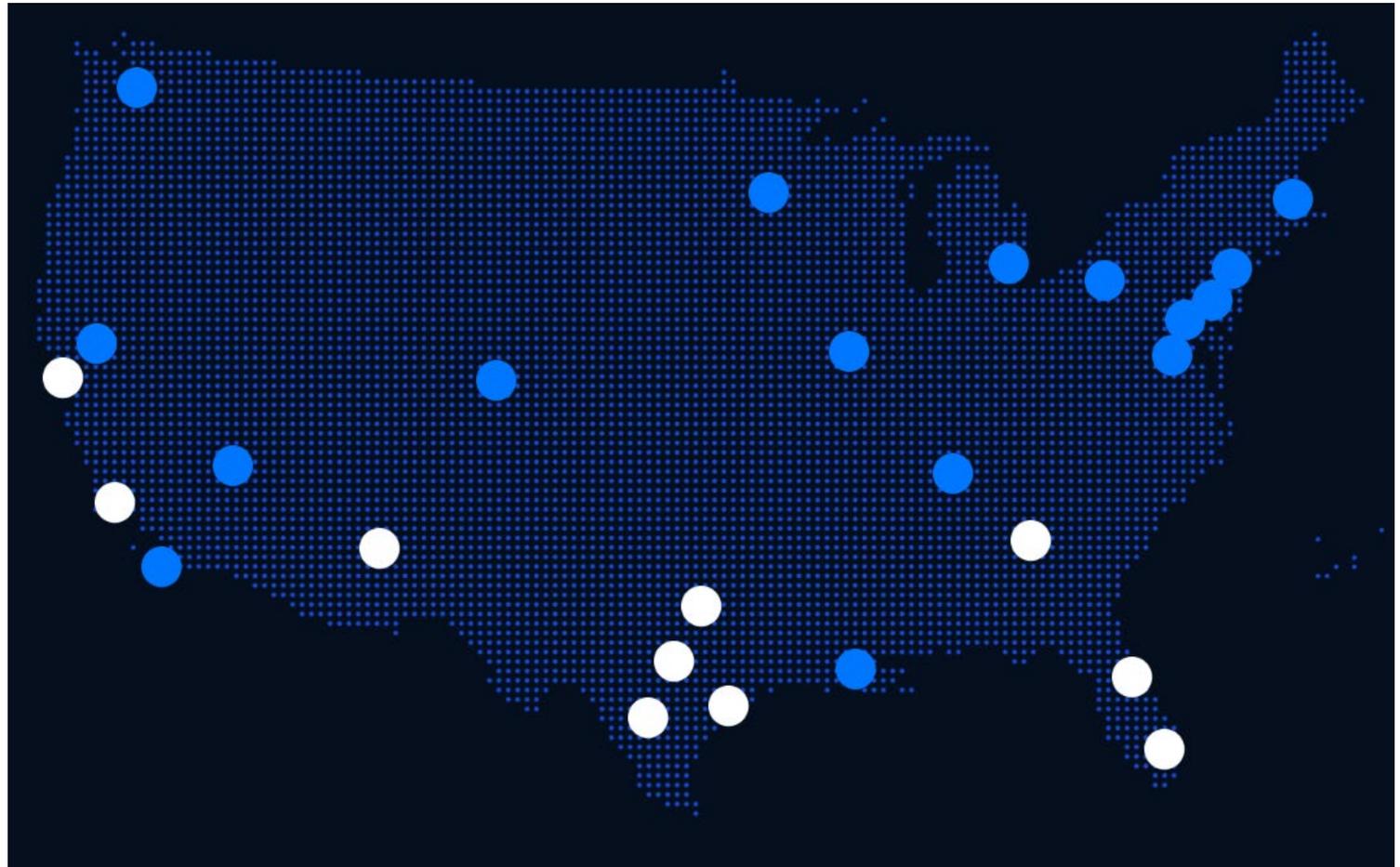
San Diego, CA

Seattle, WA

St Louis, MO

Tokyo, Japan

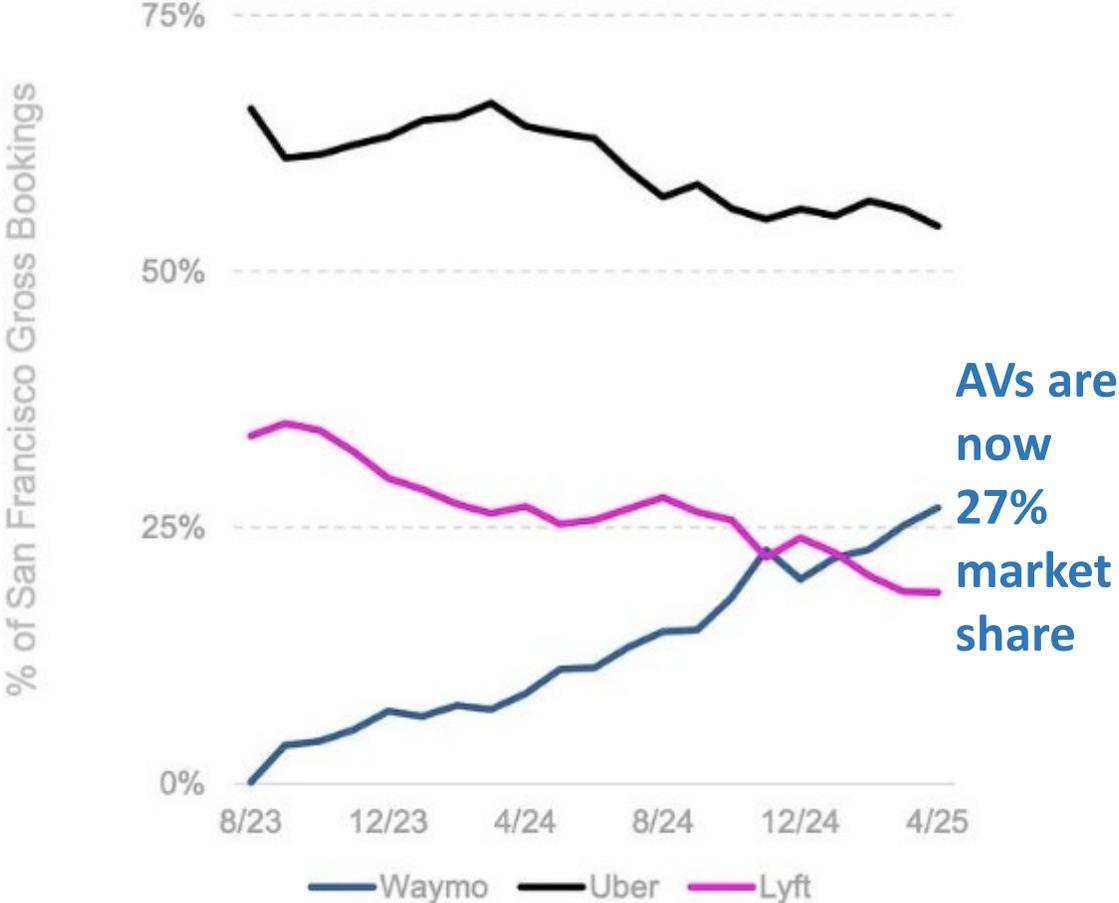
Washington, DC



Waymo current markets & expansion plans (as of 2/26)

For-hire AVs are already disrupting the taxi and rideshare market

Estimated Market Share (Gross Bookings) – 8/23-4/25, San Francisco Operating Zone, per YipitData



Robotaxi report card: Waymo is getting more competitive with Uber and Lyft, while Tesla undercuts everyone on price



Source: Bond, Waymo

Cities are the epicenter of many of the operational and regulatory issues

The main relationships AV companies will have are with the cities whose streets they're operating on.

Core local issues include:

- Traffic operations, congestion, safety concerns, and street confusion
- First responder interactions
- Data privacy
- Enforcement and accountability
- Should be regulated as for-hire

However, like Uber/Lyft before, there's a now concerning trend of statewide preemption...

Santa Monica orders Waymo to stop noisy overnight operations at charging stations. Neighbors rejoice



Waymo operations persist despite Nov. 26 deadline to end overnight work in Santa Monica

Self-driving vehicles charge at the Waymo station at the corner of Euclid Street and Broadway in Santa Monica. (Hon Wing Chiu / For The Times)

Source: LA Times

HB 4085: Proposed state legislation to enable AVs and preempt localities

- HB 4085 introduced to House Committee on Transportation
 - Submitted letter in opposition signed by PBOT Director
 - PBOT staff testified in opposition at the hearing
 - **Bill did not move forward**
- Concerns about the very complicated bill included:
 - Preemption
 - Regulating personal AVs, passenger and goods movement
 - Public safety
 - System management
 - Labor impacts
 - Data sharing and privacy
 - Enforcement & accountability





**Proposed updates to
the Administrative Rule**

Administrative Rule update process

- Builds on policy direction from SAVI resolution
- Staff subject matter experts made updates based on:
 - Research
 - Conversations with peer cities
 - Other existing regulations
- Built upon our successful history of developing go-to market frameworks for new technologies, like Transportation Network Companies (Uber & Lyft) and e-scooters
- Received +75 comments from City Attorney, Police, Fire, Vision Zero, BPS, Chief Sustainability Office, and Office of Equity & Human Rights



Source: Zoox

Proposed updates: Managing daily operations

Similar to California's requirements, to understand companies' intended operations, they must provide:

- A description of the conditions they will operate under, including:
 - Time of day
 - Environmental conditions (e.g. weather)
- A description of restrictions on operations, including:
 - Speed of travel
 - Roadway type
- A map of their intended operating area



Source: Forbes

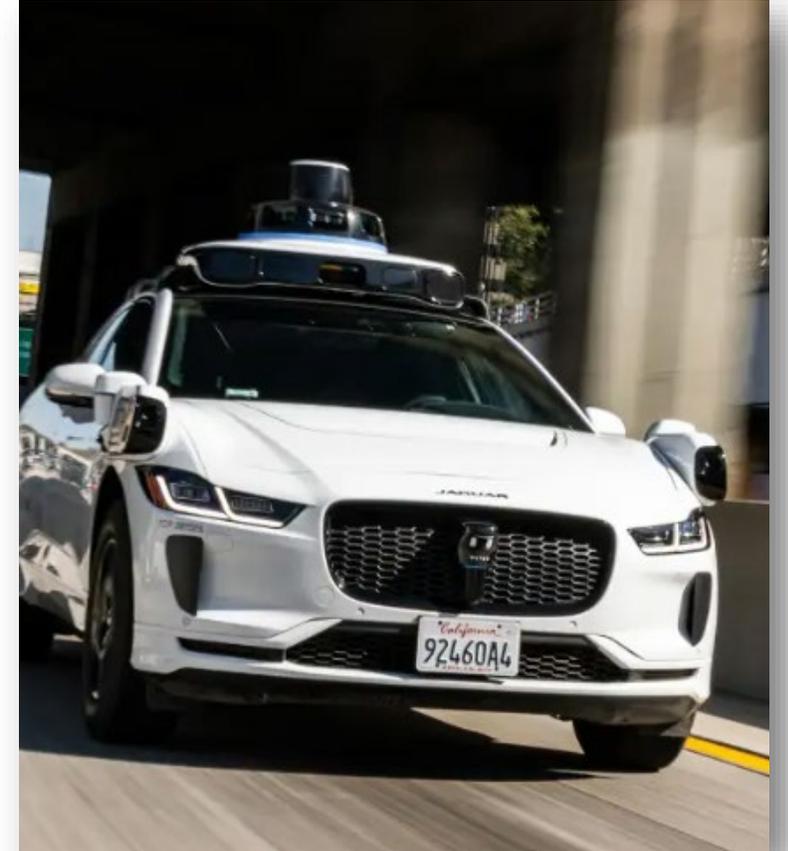
Proposed updates: Working with safe companies and ensuring access

To ensure that the City permits safe companies and not possible bad actors:

- Companies must:
 - Provide a statement of testing or deployment experience
 - Comply with robust insurance and liability requirements
 - Comply with all state and local laws, including traffic laws and parking regulations
- Permits can be suspended or revoked for non-compliance

To ensure widespread access, AV companies must:

- Provide reasonable accommodations to passengers with disabilities
- Host at least two public outreach events annually



Source: Waymo

Proposed updates: Prioritizing safety

To ensure companies are supporting the City's Vision Zero goal, they must:

- Provide a Passenger Safety Plan
- Provide a First Responder Interaction and Disengagement Plan and host at least one in-person training annually
- Provide PBOT with copies of NHTSA collision reports
- Comply with all federal, state and local laws, including traffic laws and parking regulations
 - Do not pick-up or drop-off passengers in a vehicle or bicycle lane
- Comply with federal AV requirements
- Submit documentation on annual vehicle inspections



Source: Zoox

Proposed updates: Data and privacy

To ensure that companies are committed to data privacy and data sharing, they must:

- Share trip level data with the City, like taxis, Uber and Lyft, BIKETOWN, e-scooters, and car-share
- Comply with the Oregon Consumer Privacy Act
- Submit a privacy policy showing how they will safeguard passengers' information

AV companies should work with the city to integrate our data about street closures, school zones, work zones, and first responder conflicts



Source: Waymo

Proposed updates: Climate and right-of-way impacts

To ensure that AVs contribute to the City's decarbonization goals:

- All AVs must be fully battery electric vehicles

Standard private for-hire permit and per-trip fees will apply to for-hire AVs, just like taxis, Uber and Lyft:

- Supports administration
- Supports maintenance and operations of transportation system



Source: Waymo

Proposed updates: Addition of a For-Hire AV permit

- To receive a permit for commercial operations, AV companies must either:
 - A) Start with a Portland AV Testing Permit and complete at least 500,000 automated miles across their fleet without their permit being suspended or revoked
- OR
- B) Have tested/deployed in at least 5 other U.S. cities, have completed at least 500,000 automated miles, and have no permit suspensions or terminations in the U.S. in the last three years
- Permits can limit fleet size
- Permits can be suspended or revoked for noncompliance



Source: Zoox



Administrative Rule update process

Current Stage: Seeking feedback from our community

- Released proposed Administrative Rule updates for public comment on Feb 18th:
 - Extended 45-day public comment period from Feb 18 - April 4
 - Hosted a listening session with For-Hire industry on Tues, March 10
 - Public hearing scheduled for Weds, March 11 (hybrid, at Portland Building)
 - Presenting at the Bicycle, Pedestrian and Freight Committees
 - Continuing to engage with internal and external stakeholders
- After public comment period ends, will engage with city leadership to determine next steps



Source: City of Portland

Discussion

