

New Taxi app in Portland, Oregon – From KOPB, Oregon Public Broadcasting, by Amelia Templeton

City of Portland, Bureau of Transportation press release

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## **Portland Pilot Project Aims To Make More Cabs Available On Weekend Nights**

The city of Portland is testing a pilot project to try to put more cabs on the road late at night on the weekends.

A new smartphone app, called [Curb](#), connects people to drivers with Radio Cab and Broadway Cab. And tracks whether they get a ride. The city says that on a recent Saturday at about 2 a.m., more than 200 people tried calling a cab but only 50 were picked up.

Steve Endler, with Radio Cab, says that time of night is called bar break. “You’ve got a lot of people out there partying it up and they all want to go at the same time.”

So, starting this weekend, Portland is allowing vehicles licensed to take patients to doctor’s appointments to double as taxis during those late-night hours. The city says the new program could add 100 or so vehicles to its existing fleet of 460 cabs.

Ridesharing company Uber has said it wants to start operating in Portland. The Department of Transportation is reviewing its taxi regulations, but says it has no timeline for reaching an agreement with Uber.

## **News Release: PBOT launches pilot program Nov. 7 to increase taxi service during holiday season**

(Nov. 6, 2014) In response to high demand for taxi service on weekend nights, the Portland Bureau of Transportation will launch a Seasonal Taxi Permit Pilot Program this weekend.

Starting Friday, Nov. 7, 2014, companies and vehicles currently permitted to provide non-emergency medical transportation will be eligible to provide on-demand taxi service Friday and Saturday nights, from 5:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m. each night. This pilot program will terminate on January 2, 2015.

The change comes as PBOT prepares to begin a top-to-bottom review of the City’s regulations for taxis, limos, town cars and other services, which are regulated by the Private for Hire Transportation (PFHT) Division. The City Council moved the division from the Revenue Bureau to PBOT effective July 1, 2014.

New tracking software has identified times during which there is a definitive shortage of taxicab vehicles available to serve the public during periods of peak demand.

Initial reports indicate that during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, there is an approximate 90 percent availability of Broadway and Radio cabs requested through their contracted smartphone application, called Curb.

On weekends, that percentage drops to 60 percent and lower. For instance, on Saturday, Oct. 25, between 2 and 3 a.m., 206 requests for rides were made to Broadway Cab and Radio Cab through Curb, but only 50 of those requests were fulfilled.

“As we enter the holiday season, the busiest time of the year for taxi companies, there is a pressing need for more cabs on weekend nights,” said Leah Treat, Director of PBOT. “Further review of how best to serve increased calls for on-demand, private for hire transportation service in Portland is needed. We’re committed to look at ways to modernize and improve taxi service in Portland.”

Complaints regarding the availability and long wait times for taxis account for the majority of complaints received by the PFHT Division. At this time, the most current data on taxi availability and response times is only available through Curb on calls to service for Broadway and Radio cabs. However, this data is consistent with the availability of other taxi companies permitted by the City of Portland.

The [Seasonal Taxi Permit Pilot Program](#) was authorized under Administrative Rule 16.40.520.J by the Director of Transportation and expires on January 2, 2015. As many as 100 vehicles are expected to be eligible to apply to participate in this pilot program starting Friday, Nov. 7.

### **Key Points:**

- ┌ Portland testing taxi app called “Curb”
- ┌ Friday and Saturday nights only
- ┌ It’s temporary – ends January 2<sup>nd</sup>
- ┌ Car service vehicles will double as taxis

### **Lesser Points:**

- ┌ Not enough cabs on Portland streets at night

### **I left out:**

- ┌ Riders get picked up by Radio Cab and Broadway Cab
- ┌ Ridesharing company Uber wants a share of this market
- ┌ Unclear when Uber might start operating
- ┌ The time of night is call “bar break”

### **Short sentences for a short story (assumes a Portland audience)**

People looking for cabs downtown on weekend nights have a new option. City officials have approved a temporary taxi service called “Curb”. It’s a mobile app

that connects people with rides. The new taxis are service cars already licensed to take patients to doctors' appointments. / The program is only available Friday and Saturday nights. / And it's temporary. Curb expires on January second.

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