



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:
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Agenda Item Number: 3

Agenda Date: June 4, 2024

In Control: Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

DEPARTMENT: Police Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: William McManus, Chief of Police

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

A Just Transition from Horse-Drawn Carriages

SUMMARY:

Briefing and possible action on the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) update to the Transportation Committee on feedback received by the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) regarding the City Council Consideration Request (CCR) asking for a Just Transition from Horse-Drawn Carriages, background on current horse-drawn carriages operations, and a tentative timeline to address the CCR.

SAPD will ask the Transportation Committee for feedback on the scope of the CCR and tentative timeline.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

A City Council Consideration Request (CCR) authored by Councilmember Phyllis Viagran and Councilmember Jalen McKee-Rodriguez regarding the development of a plan to phase out the use of horses with horse drawn carriages in San Antonio, to include the abolishment or ordinance(s) or policies as they relate to Chapter 33 permitting equine drawn carriages was submitted on November 28, 2022.

The CCR requested the plan include:

1. Determination of the feasibility and establishment of a program to support a workforce transition from horse-drawn carriages to electric carriages and pedicabs;
2. The establishment of a prohibition of the use of horses with carriage rides; and
3. Immediate cessation of the issuance of all new horse-drawn carriage permits, medallions, and/or Special Event Permits so that eventually all valid permits, medallions, and/or Special Event Permits have expired.

The CCR was heard by the Governance Committee on April 17, 2024, and referred to the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Horse-Drawn Carriage Operations

Horse carriage operations are governed by Chapter 33 of the City Code. This Chapter includes regulations regarding areas and hours of operation, rates, treatment of horses, and operating conditions. Additionally, it also governs when horse carriages may operate, care for the horses, and horse working conditions.

The City has issued permits to the horse carriage industry since 1865. Currently, there are five permitted horse-drawn carriage companies in the City, and each company has five permits, for a total of 25 horse-drawn carriages. In addition, there are currently 81 permitted horse carriage drivers.

The San Antonio Police Department's (SAPD) Ground Transportation Unit (GTU) enforces Chapter 33. Since 2021, the GTU has issued 119 citations for violations of Chapter 33.

The SAPD also works in coordination with Centro to ensure proper cleanup of areas where horses operate. Although, the GTU has not received any complaints from citizens regarding the welfare of horses since 2020, there have been complaints regarding the odor associated with horses.

Transportation Advisory Board Meeting

On May 22, 2024, the Transportation Advisory Board met and discussed the CCR. At this meeting, carriage operators from all five carriage companies spoke on issues surrounding horse carriage operations to include, adjusting operating hours and carriage routes to lessen downtown congestion, the need for temporary carriage stands given downtown construction, and the importance of the carriage industry to carriage drivers and horse owners.

At this meeting, the Transportation Advisory Board unanimously recommended City Council consider keeping horse drawn carriages in San Antonio and for City Staff to work with the horse carriage industry to set conditions to continue downtown carriage services.

ISSUE:

The San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) will provide the Transportation Committee with an update on feedback received by the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) regarding the CCR, background on current horse-drawn carriages operations, and a tentative timeline to address the CCR. SAPD will ask the Transportation Committee for feedback on the scope of the CCR and tentative timeline.

The Transportation Advisory Board met on May 22, 2024, and unanimously recommended City Council consider keeping horse drawn carriages in San Antonio and for City Staff to work with the horse carriage industry to set conditions to continue downtown carriage services.

The San Antonio Police Department proposes the following, tentative timeline:

- June 2024 – Complete research on how other cities have transitioned from horse-drawn carriages to electric carriages and pedicabs or other methods of transportation.
- June through July 2024 - Obtain feedback from the Animal Care Services Board on CCR
- July 2024 – Meet with horse-drawn carriages stakeholders.
- August 2024 – Brief Transportation Committee on results of best practice research and input from horse-drawn carriages stakeholders and City’s Animal Care Services Board.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only.