



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:

Agenda Item Number: 1

Agenda Date: October 31, 2024

In Control: City Council Special Meeting

DEPARTMENT: Police Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: William McManus, Chief of Police

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Staff briefing on the City Council Consideration Request (CCR) on a Just Transition from Horse-Drawn Carriages

SUMMARY:

Staff briefing on the City Council Consideration Request (CCR) asking for a Just Transition from Horse-Drawn Carriages, including alternatives requested by the Transportation Committee for City Council feedback and consideration.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

A City Council Consideration Request (CCR) authored by Councilmembers Jalen McKee-Rodriguez (District 2) and Phyllis Viagran (District 3) regarding the development of a plan to phase out the use of horses with horse-drawn carriages in San Antonio, to include the abolishment of 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. Staff briefed the Transportation Advisory Board, the Animal Care Services Board, and twice briefed the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Transportation Advisory Board Meeting: On May 22, 2024, the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) met and discussed the CCR. Representatives from all five carriage companies spoke on horse carriage operations, including lessening downtown congestion, the need for temporary carriage stands, and the importance of the carriage industry to carriage drivers and horse owners. The TAB unanimously recommended that the City Council consider keeping horse-drawn carriages in San Antonio and that City staff work with the horse carriage industry to set conditions to continue downtown carriage services.

Transportation and Infrastructure Committee: On June 4, 2024, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee was briefed on the CCR. At this meeting Staff presented a timeline to address the CCR.

- June 2024 – Complete research on how other cities transitioned from horse-drawn carriages to electric carriages and pedicabs or another vehicle for hire industry.
- June 2024 - Obtain feedback from the Animal Care Services Board on CCR
- July 2024 – Meet with horse-drawn carriage 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.

The Transportation Committee agreed with the timeline and requested that staff:

- Conduct a survey regarding carriage options with tourists and downtown businesses.
- Obtain an objective veterinarian evaluation of the horses.
- Research the Horse Carriage and Electric Carriage industries in other cities including the transition to horseless carriages or another industry.
- Develop a draft plan that incorporates feedback from carriage operators, carriage owners and options.

Transportation and Infrastructure Committee: On August 19, 2024, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee was updated on the status of horse-drawn carriages in other cities, results of the community survey, feedback from the Transportation Advisory Board, Animal Care Services Board, and feedback from horse carriage owners.

The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee requested that City staff to develop the transition plan away from horse drawn carriages in San Antonio. That plan will incorporate a one, a two, and a three-year time frame and it will come to a B session for City Council feedback and consideration.

ISSUE:

Staff from the Economic Development Department, Ready to Work, Communications and Engagement Department (C&E), and San Antonio Police Department (SAPD), will provide City Council with a presentation highlighting what has been done to address the CCR and brief City Council with the alternatives requested by the Transportation Committee to transition from horse drawn carriages in San Antonio for City Council feedback and consideration.

ALTERNATIVES:

For briefing purposes only.

FISCAL IMPACT:

For briefing purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

For briefing purposes only.