



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:
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Agenda Item Number: 6

Agenda Date: July 17, 2024

In Control: Animal Care Services Advisory Board

DEPARTMENT: Animal Care Services

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Michael Shannon, Interim Director

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

A Just Transition from Horse-Drawn Carriages

SUMMARY:

Briefing from the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) to the Animal Care Services Advisory Board 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.

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 related 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. On June 4, 2024, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee was asked for feedback on the scope of the CCR and tentative timeline.

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, required 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 139 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. Representatives from all five carriage companies spoke on horse carriage operations to include, lessening downtown congestion, the need for temporary carriage stands, and the importance of the carriage industry to carriage drivers and horse owners. 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.

Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

SAPD briefed the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on June 4, 2024, regarding the CCR. The Committee heard input from the horse carriage industry and those opposed to horse-drawn carriages operating in San Antonio. The Committee directed SAPD to meet with the horse carriage industry to discuss transition, conduct a survey regarding carriage options with tourists and downtown businesses, brief the Animal Care Services Board, obtain an objective veterinarian

evaluation of the horses, research the Horse Carriage and Electric Carriage industries in other cities, and provide the Committee a briefing in August 2024.

ISSUE:

The San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) will provide the Animal Care Services Advisory Board with a briefing regarding the CCR, background on current horse-drawn carriages operations, and a tentative timeline to address the CCR.

The San Antonio Police Department is operating under the following timeline:

- June 2024 – Meet with horse-drawn carriages stakeholders.
- July 2024 – Complete research on how other cities have transitioned from horse-drawn carriages to electric carriages and pedicabs or other methods of transportation.
- July 2024 – Brief the Animal Care Services Advisory Board on the CCR.
- July 2024 – Survey tourists and downtown businesses on horse carriage operations.
- August 2024 – Brief the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on City staff's research, survey results, and possible alternatives to transition from horse-drawn carriages.

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

ALTERNATIVES:

N/A

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only.