



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:
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Agenda Item Number: 4

Agenda Date: August 29, 2022

In Control: Transportation and Mobility Committee Meeting

DEPARTMENT: Police Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: William McManus, Chief of Police

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Proposed Amendments to Chapter 33 of the City Code and to the Transportation Advisory Board Chairperson category restriction

SUMMARY:

A briefing on the recommendation by City Staff, the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), and industry members on proposed amendments to Chapter 33, Vehicle-for-Hire (VFH) ordinance of the City Code. These amendments impact all VFH industries but primarily the Taxicab industry. The amendments would bring relief to the taxicab industry, provide flexibility to specific requirements, create a new industry category and update language of the City Code.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Taxicabs:

At the February 28, 2022, Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) meeting, the TAB listened to

taxicab industry members' ideas on what changes would best assist the industry in the current vehicle-for-hire (VFH) market. After deliberation, the TAB recommended amendments to Chapter 33. The amendments would allow flexibility to specific sections and provide the taxicab industry relief. The following amendments would allow the following:

1. Sec. 33.034 and Sec. 33-930: Provide companies more time to replace or add a new taxicab. The change would increase the number of days a company is required to replace or add a taxicab to 180 days. The current requirement is 90 days.
2. Sec. 33-018: Require only taxicabs that are in-service to be insured. The change would require only permitted taxicabs to be insured and would not require vehicles that are not in service to be commercially insured. Permits of vehicles not insured would be returned to the City.
3. Sec. 33-929: Streamline the process to relinquish and apply for taxicab permits. The change would remove the requirement of the Taxicab Permit Allocation Committee (TPAC) to issue permits. This will allow taxicab companies to apply for permits as needed directly to SAPD. (like other VFH industries).
4. Sec. 33-981: Adjust the language in the Taxicab Fuel Surcharge adjustment to allow for adjustments if the average fuel price increases or decreases by \$0.25 per gallon with no limitations on the number of changes per year. Currently, the limit of changes is two per year.
5. Sec 33-928: Extend the maximum taxicab vehicle age to 15 years. Currently, the maximum age of a taxicab vehicle is 12 years. Vehicles will still be required to pass the safety inspection required by the State and SAPD.

Staff recommends the approval of all amendments to Chapter 33 as relief for the VFH industries.

The TAB also recommended an increase to the taxicab rates which have not been increased in over ten years. The change to the rates is as follows:

Rate	Current Rate	Recommended Rate
Per Mile	\$2.35	\$2.70
Drop (Fee to enter a taxicab)	\$2.50	\$3.50
Wait/Traffic Delay (per hour)	\$24.00	\$27.00
Downtown Minimum	\$5.00	\$10.00
Airport Minimum	\$10.50	\$20.00
Additional passengers over 4 (Taxicabs may only carry a maximum of 6 passengers)	none	\$2.00

Staff recommends the approval of amendments relating to taxicab rates to Chapter 33 as relief for the taxicab industry.

Alternative Vehicle for Hire:

At the May 24, 2021, TAB meeting, the board recommended the addition of a new VFH industry, Motorbike Side Cars. City staff is often approached with new innovative VFH ideas but cannot assist these small companies since the ordinance does not allow for new industries without an amendment to Chapter 33. City staff presented the idea of creating a new category encompassing these types of industries. During the February 28, 2022, TAB meeting, the board recommended the establishment of a new category, Alternative Vehicle-for-Hire. The new category would require a new VFH industry to obtain the recommendation of the TAB, and approval by the City Manager's office and the Chief of Police. Currently, new VFH industries not listed in Chapter 33 must obtain TAB recommendation, approval from the City Manager's Office, Chief of Police and Council.

Staff recommends approval of the addition of alternative vehicle-for-hire to Chapter 33.

Group Cycle Services:

The TAB recommended at the February 28, 2022, TAB meeting to remove the requirement to advertise group cycle permits and allow them to be issued upon request, like all other industries.

Staff recommends approval of proposed amendments to the group cycle services.

Transportation Network Companies:

Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) are app-based VFHs like Uber and Lyft. All TNCs are regulated by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulations. The City has no jurisdiction over TNCs.

City staff recommends removing any reference to TNCs from Chapter 33.

Composition of the Transportation Advisory Board:

At the May 24, 2021, TAB meeting the board recommended Ordinance 74977 be changed to allow for any TAB member, irrespective of the industry they represent, to serve as the TAB Chairperson. Currently, ordinance 74977, approved on December 19, 1991, states, "No ground transportation Industry representative may serve as Chairman of the board."

The Staff does not recommend this change as the TAB should oversee the needs of the riding public, not the needs of the VFH industries.

ISSUE:

Staff is requesting to move Staff recommended items to City Council for approval.

The taxicab industry has been adversely impacted by the introduction of TNCs and the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the industry is less than 50% of what it was in 2019, taxicabs continue to be a vital part of our overall transportation system in San Antonio.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact

ALTERNATIVES:

The committee may choose to recommend portions or none of the recommended changes.

If the committee chooses not to recommend any or some of the proposed changes, Staff will re-evaluate the recommendation with industry members.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends this committee approves the Staff recommended amendments to Chapter 33 of the City Code to move forward to the City Council for consideration in September 2022.

To ensure balanced recommendations for the riding public, Staff does not recommend changing the composition of the Transportation Advisory Board.