



# City of San Antonio

## Agenda Memorandum

**File Number:**  
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**Agenda Item Number:** 2

**Agenda Date:** September 20, 2022

**In Control:** Transportation and Mobility Committee Meeting

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**DEPARTMENT:** Police Department

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:** William McManus, Chief of Police

**COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED:** Citywide

**SUBJECT:**

Proposed Amendments to Chapter 33 Vehicle-For-Hire Ordinance of the City Code

**SUMMARY:**

A briefing on the recommendations of City Staff, the Transportation Advisory Board, and industry members on proposed amendments to Chapter 33, Vehicle-for-Hire 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 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 in-service taxicabs be insured. The change would require only permitted taxicabs to be insured and would not require vehicles that are not in service or being repaired to be 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 to issue permits. This will allow taxicab companies to apply for permits as needed (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 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.

Staff recommends the approval of all amendments to Chapter 33.

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
Drop Rate - Day (Fee to enter a taxi)	\$2.50	\$3.50
Drop Rate – Night (7:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m.)	\$3.50	\$3.50 (No Change)
Per Mile	\$2.35	\$2.70
Wait/Traffic Delay	\$24.00 per hour	\$27.00 per hour
Downtown Minimum	\$5.00	\$10.00
Airport Minimum	\$10.50	\$20.00
Additional passenger over 4 (Taxicabs may only carry a maximum of 6 passengers)	none	\$2.00 fee for each additional passenger

Staff recommends the approval of amendments relating to taxicab rates to Chapter 33.

### **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. 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 Motorbike Side Cars as a new vehicle-for-hire industry under Chapter 33. Staff does not recommend removing the requirement that City Council approve future additions to the VFH industry and does not recommend the addition of a new category to Chapter 33, titled Alternative Vehicles-For-Hire.

### **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 and a cap of five (5) total group cycle permits be available.

### **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."

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 requests to move Staff recommended items to full City Council for approval. Although the introduction of TNCs and the pandemic resulted in a decrease in the taxi industry, taxicabs remain a vital part of the City's overall transportation needs.

### **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 the taxicab rate increase, Staff will re-evaluate the recommendation with industry members.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Transportation Mobility Committee forwards this request to amend Chapter 33 of the City Code relating to taxicabs, the addition of Motorbike Side Cars as a new VFH Industry, group cycles, and removal of references to Transportation Network Companies to full City Council for approval in October 2022.

Staff recommends approval of the Motorbike Side Cars as a new vehicle-for-hire industry under Chapter 33. Staff does not recommend removing the requirement that City Council approve future additions to the VFH industry and does not recommend the addition of a new category to Chapter 33, titled Alternative Vehicles-For-Hire.

Additionally, Staff does not recommend changing the composition of the Transportation Advisory Board.