

AGENDA



Thursday, February 25, 2010

**Transportation
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION****Item No. 52**

Subject: Approve an ordinance adopting taximeter rates of fare, establishing three zones for basic rates of fare, repealing Ordinance 050210-12, and amending section 13-2-371 of the City Code relating to the taxicab fuel surcharge.

Fiscal Note: There is no unanticipated fiscal impact. A fiscal note is not required.

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Boards and Commission Action: Recommended by the Urban Transportation Commission.

The existing ordinance expires at the end of February 2010. Yellow Cab Company, Austin Cab Company, and Lone Star Cab Company have jointly filed an application to increase the taximeter rates of fare.

In 2005, the City Council approved a five-year plan to increase the taximeter rate by 14.3% in four phases. The last phase of the plan was implemented in February 2009, increasing the meter rate to \$2.00 for the first 1/8th mile (initial drop fee), \$0.25 for each additional 1/8th mile, and a waiting time fee of \$27.00 per hour. The cost of a six-mile taxi trip, the average trip in Austin, increased under the plan from \$12.00 to \$13.75. This cost does not include waiting time.

The taxicab franchise holders propose a three-year phased-in plan that will increase taxi fares by 12.7%, as shown in the following chart. In their application for an increase in the rates of fare, the taxicab franchise holders cite equipment and maintenance increases of between 12 to 21% from 2004 to November 2009. The proposed change on the fare for a six-mile trip, which is the average trip in Austin, will increase from the current \$13.75 per trip to \$15.45 per trip over the three-year period. The sample trip fares do not include a fee for waiting/delay time because the amount of waiting/delay time for a trip is not predictable.

In addition, the franchisees propose creating the ABIA Fare Zone, the Austin Central Business District Fare Zone, and the University of Texas/Campus Fare Zone. A description of the zone boundaries and minimum fares is set forth below.

The Taxicab franchisees also propose a bi-monthly review of the average gas price in Central Texas. Currently, the average gas price is reviewed on a quarterly basis. This review does not create any additional cost to the City of Austin or any independent contractor taxicab driver.

A chart showing how Austin taxi fares compare with other cities is attached.

The Urban Transportation Commission considered the proposed rate change on January 12, 2010. After comments from taxicab drivers and franchise holders, the Commission asked for additional information on flat rate fares and time to review the proposed rates. They asked that the City's RCA process continue while they review the rates.

The Transportation Department recommends approval of the proposed rate structure (below).

PART 1. In accordance with Section 13-2-370 of the City Code, the City Council adopts the following taximeter rates of fare.

The following rates apply from March 8, 2010 to March 7, 2011:

For the first 1/8 mile or fraction \$2.50
For each additional 1/8 mile or fraction \$0.25
For each 33.33 seconds or fraction of waiting time (\$27.00/hour) \$0.25

The following rates apply from March 8, 2011 to March 7, 2012:

For the first 1/7 mile or fraction \$2.50
For each additional 1/7 mile or fraction \$0.30
For each 40 seconds or fraction of waiting time (\$27.00/hour) \$0.30

The following rates apply from March 8, 2012 to March 7, 2013:

For the first 1/11 mile or fraction \$2.50
For each additional 1/11 mile or fraction \$0.20
For each 3 sec 24.9 seconds or fraction of waiting time (\$29.00/hour) \$0.20

The "ABIA Fare Zone" is the area bounded on the north by Hergotz Lane and the Colorado River, on the south by Burleson Road, on the east by SH 130, and on the west by Montopolis Dr. The minimum fee would be \$13.00 beginning in 2010.

The "Central Business District Fare Zone" is the area bounded on the north by 19th Street, on the south by Riverside Dr. (between I-35 and Barton Springs Road) and Barton Springs Road (between Riverside Drive and Lamar), on the east by I-35, and on the west by Lamar Blvd. The lesser of the meter or \$23.00 in 2010, \$24.00 in 2011, and \$25.00 in 2012.

The "University of Texas/Campus Area Fare Zone" is the area bounded on the north by 38th Street (between Lamar and Red River) and 38 1/2 Street (between Red River and I-35), on the south by 19th Street (including MLK), on the east by I-35, and on the west by Lamar Blvd. The lesser of the meter or \$27.00 in 2010, \$28.00 in 2011, and \$29.00 in 2012.