



Mobility Committee
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Taxicab Ordinance: Proposed Amendments

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Austin Transportation Staff Recommendations for Proposed Amendments to the Taxicab Ordinance

Hours on Duty

(Existing Language) §13-2-55 Rest Period for Drivers – A driver who operates a ground transportation service vehicle for 12 consecutive hours must take an eight-hour rest period before resuming operation of a ground transportation service vehicle.

(Recommended Amendment) – A driver who operates a ground transportation service vehicle may only operate the ground transportation service vehicle for a total of 12 cumulative hours within a 24-hour period.

Dispatch Acceptance

(Existing Language) §13-2-345 Response To Dispatched Service Requests – While operating a taxicab, a driver shall respond to service requests from the driver's dispatch terminal when the location for pick-up is within a reasonable distance from the location of the taxicab.

(Recommended Amendment) – While in service, a taxicab driver shall affirmatively respond to service requests from the driver's dispatch terminal when the taxicab has been determined to be closest to the location of pick-up by GPS.

Accessible Service Performance Measures

(Existing Language) §13-2-404(B) – For a franchise holder to qualify for special franchise permits during the second and succeeding years after this ordinance takes effect, each modified ground transportation service vehicle for which a special permit was issued during the preceding year must have been in operation for at least 12 hours a day for 274 days of the preceding 12-month period.

(Recommended Amendment) - For a franchise holder to qualify for special franchise permits, each modified ground transportation service vehicle for which a special permit was issued shall:

- Maintain an average response time to requests for accessible service within seven minutes of the franchise's average response time for non-accessible service requests; and
- Provide service to a minimum of three percent of the total dispatched accessible trips completed by the franchise each month.
- All future allocated special franchise permits be utilized on company-owned wheelchair accessible vehicles operated by employee drivers.
- Staff recommends increase the wheelchair accessible fleet requirement from 6.5% to 10%.

****Failure to satisfy performance measures should result in the assessment of administrative fees, up to permit revocation for continued underperformance. ****

Credit Card Acceptance

Although credit card payments are widely used by all existing taxi franchises, this method of accepted payment should be mandatory.

Green Vehicle Incentives

To incentivize the use of alternative fuel vehicles, staff recommends the 8-year service life of “green” vehicles utilized as taxis be increased to 10 years, with the potential of a longer term should the vehicle continue to successfully pass the required vehicle safety inspections.

Calculation of Necessary Franchise Permits or “The Formula”

(Existing Formula)

The City of Austin sets the numbers of taxicab permits by multiplying the previous year’s number by the average of the percent of annual change in: (1) the population of the City; and (2) the number of taxicab departures from Austin-Bergstrom International Airport.

(Staff Recommendation)

Staff shall determine the annual increase or decrease in the number of necessary taxicab franchise permits by assessing performance measures reviewed and approved by City Council

Need for Specialized or Additional Taxicab Permits

(Staff Recommendation)

Increase the number of permits issued to each taxicab franchise by 100, thus increasing the local taxicab fleet to a total of 1,056 taxicabs.

Providing additional franchise opportunities.