



COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORT MOBILITY COMMITTEE

Date: June 3, 2015

Agenda Item #: 4

Sponsors/Department: Austin Transportation Department

Summary of Discussion:

- The Committee recapped the last two readings of the taxi items, discussed that the actions taken at the June 3rd Committee will then be discussed at the June 4th City Council Meeting, and provided an overview of what changes will be discussed today.
- City Council Member Ann Kitchen proposed language to be incorporated into the franchise agreements and City Code. The Committee voted to move forward the proposed language to the June 4th City Council meeting with a recommendation to approve. A separate document is provided as backup information to this item that summarizes the approved language. ATD staff provided input that the measure stating “that each modified ground transportation vehicle provide service to no less than 3% of total dispatched modified ground transportation service trips completed by each accessible taxi” is not scalable to the size of the franchise, and proposed an alternative approach.
- Additionally, Mayor Pro Tem Tovo presented language that she plans to discuss at the June 4th meeting addressing due process and lease fees.

Public Comments:

- Bob Batlin, Austin Interfaith: advocate for taxi drivers, stated accessibility measures being proposed are not adequate, stated concern that moving forward with a 5 year agreement will not address the accessibility requirements.
- David Passmore, Taxi Drivers Association: supported due process provisions and a lease cap to be incorporated into taxi contracts.
- Ed Kargbo, Yellow Cab of Austin: believes a lot of the franchise components are good, but needs time to digest the amendments provided by Council Member Kitchen. Supports the measure that requires drivers to pick up passengers with disabilities; states the issue to be that drivers are dispatched to accessible calls but do not service the calls. Supports the performance measure system for obtaining new permits. Against lease caps.
- Antonio Rojas, Taxi Drivers Association: against any additional permits going to the companies. He supports the lease cap; he understands the lease cap to give the drivers a certain level of stability. Believes City Council should create a new ordinance to create a process to implement a lease cap.
- Biju Matthews, National Taxi Driver Association: believes performance measures should be put in place before franchises are awarded any additional permits. Against any increase in permits to any of the three franchises. He wants there to be an ordinance that establishes a lease cap.
- Haiawa Salovits, Adapt of Texas: does not think adding permits will solve the issue of serving the community needing accessible services. He does believe the GPS requirement will help address the issues; does not want access for persons with disabilities to be separated nor provided by a separate service.
- Jennifer McPhail, Adapt of Texas: wants flexibility and spontaneity in transportation options. Believes proposed provisions won't be enough to meet the demand for people who want to use taxi services. Wants to require them to do what ADA requires- stating that if the taxi vehicle is a van then it would be required to be accessible.

- David Witte, Adapt of Texas: reviewed how the accessible vehicle requirements have performed over the years, but stated that he hadn't seen an improvement in service. He has concerns about how measures will be recorded and calculated. Does not believe there are currently consequences for nonperformance.
- Solomon Kassa, Lonestar Cab Company: he is in support of the franchise renewal. He supports the changes in the Code, but is concerned that some the measures would disadvantage to smaller companies -concerned about how the measures will impact business expenses.
- Joan Khabele, Austin Cab Company: Believes there should be a timeframe during which the companies can transition their fleets to meet the 10% requirement for accessible vehicles. Concerned that franchises are criticized for actions the drivers fail to do. Explains that the lease caps are complicated due to how the system is set up.

Direction:

- Council Member Gallo motion: to recommend Council Member Kitchen's draft language for the franchise agreements and Code amendments to move forward to the full City Council at the June 4, 2015 agenda with a recommendation to approve, with the discussed changes to the 3% requirement for service in Section 13-2-504(B) and the 10% requirement for special franchise permits in Section 13-2-502(A)
 - Council Member Kitchen seconded motion
 - Vote: 2-1 (Council Member Zimmerman voting no, with an explanation that there were a number of provisions he did not support)