



CITY OF HOUSTON - CITY COUNCIL

Meeting Date: 10/6/2015

ALL

Item Creation Date: 9/15/2015

ARA-Amend Chapter 46 - Process Improvement Amendments

Agenda Item#: 5.

Summary:

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 46 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, HOUSTON, TEXAS, RELATING TO REGULATION OF VEHICLES FOR HIRE; CONTAINING FINDINGS AND OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO THE FOREGOING SUBJECT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Background:

The Administration & Regulatory Affairs Department (ARA) recommends that City Council approve an ordinance amending Chapter 46 of the City of Houston Code of Ordinances (Chapter 46) relating to vehicles-for-hire to incorporate housekeeping and process improvement changes to Chapter 46.

City regulations governing vehicles-for-hire are in place to ensure the health and safety of the riding public, ensure passenger service quality and encourage the operation of professional vehicle-for-hire services. Regulations also serve to ensure that vehicle-for-hire services are available to all Houstonians. Chapter 46 establishes the standards, regulations and permitting/licensing requirements for the vehicle-for-hire industry operating within the City of Houston. ARA's Regulatory Affairs Division is responsible for administration and enforcement of these provisions.

In August 2014, City Council approved omnibus changes to Chapter 46. In order to correct errors or oversights observed in Chapter 46 since the approval of those ordinance changes, ARA is proposing housekeeping amendments. In addition, as we continuously review our internal procedures to streamline the licensing and permitting process, we have identified amendments to the ordinance that would improve the customer service experience as well as reduce our processing costs. . The changes are summarized below:

Housekeeping

- Update TNC insurance requirements to mirror a recent State law change
- Remove the requirement for taxicabs to paint permit numbers on the roof of the vehicle
- Allow the taxicab airport zone rates to be posted on the ARA website instead of in the ordinance

Process Improvement

- Shift the burden for maintaining driver drug test and medical physical forms from the City to company owners
- Replicate federal Department of Transportation guidelines for the types of medical professionals that may perform driver physicals

Industry Parity

- Remove the 150,000 mileage limit for TNC vehicles
- Eliminate the re-inspection fee for pedicabs
- Reduce the time frame between the first and second installment payments for limousine, charter/sightseeing and jitney vehicles
- Eliminate the rate change fee for jitneys and low speed shuttles


Other Revisions

- Amend the dress code to allow drivers to wear shorts
- Allow for the collateralization of taxicab permits
- Create a five percent (5%) transfer fee for taxicab permits distributed in 2017 or later
- Require newly transferred taxicab permits to affiliate with a dispatch provider

Recommendation:

ARA recommends that City Council approve the housekeeping and process improvement revisions to Chapter 46 of the Code of Ordinances. These recommendations were presented to the joint meeting of the Public Safety & Homeland Security and Transportation, Technology & Infrastructure City Council Committees on August 25, 2015.

Departmental Approval Authority:


 Tina Paez, Director
 Administration & Regulatory Affairs
 Department

Other Authorization

Prior Council Action:

8/6/2014; Ord. #2014-754

Contact Information:

Lara Cottingham Phone: (832) 393-8503

Kathryn Bruning Phone: (832) 394-9414