

Mobility Committee Meeting Transcript – 03/25/2015

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>> Kitchen: Good morning, everyone.

We're going to go ahead and get started.

This is the first meeting of the mobility committee, and I trust that everyone has the -- the agenda in front of you.

We're going to start today with citizen communication, and then we're going to go into a number of staff briefings on TNC and taxicab-related matters.

And then at the end, we'll talk about the next meeting.

And I want to just give everyone a heads-up in regard to our next meeting.

We posted information on our council message board, but we haven't actually posted the agenda yet.

We are planning on having a public hearing at the next council meeting, so for those of you who are signed up for citizen communication, I want you to rest assured that there is going to be an opportunity to testify or give us -- or speak to us, talk to us about these matters because we're planning a public hearing at the next mobility committee meeting.

And so we'll be talking more about that at the end of this meeting.

So, first, our first citizen communication is David Witte.

And just a reminder, citizen communication works in front of us like it does in front of the council, so there's a three-minute limit.

And we're all new at this, so I'm not exactly sure how we handle our timing, so if one of the staff --

>> [inaudible]

>> Kitchen: He does it?

Great.

Thank you.

>> Thank you, council.

My name is David Witte.

I'll keep my comments brief so there won't be need for much time probably.

I understand that the agenda has a requirement for public comments or citizen comments to be

on non-agenda items, that's the requirement that I saw on the agenda last night, that's standard; but, unfortunately, I can't do that.

>> Kitchen: That's okay.

You can --

>> Okay.

Because the TNCs, the taxis are coming up before the council on such a timely manner, it was actually planned that way for the renewals to come up all at the same time before they -- for the taxicab franchises, but I've got to say that over the past -- well, it's been 25 years that I've been working with adapt on these issues, and since 1994, we've been working on taxicab performance for people with disabilities, especially those who use wheelchairs.

So for 20 years, we've seen a record of poor performance from taxicabs, so we really want you to strongly urge them to have a better performance for wheelchair accessible services.

There is something on your consideration today on the code regarding existing language and recommended amendments for the dispatch acceptance.

It requires that the nearest taxicab to any passenger, including those with disabilities, accept the -- as determined by GPS, accept the ride which is going to, I think, improve services a lot.

That was actually a recommendation that came out of the taxicab task force.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> So that's a good recommendation.

I urge you to consider that.

But the problem has been the taxi drivers, as entity contract providers, are often just basically refusing to accept trips.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> So this will help to address that.

On the other hand, the TNCs, I would love to have an alternative to taxicabs because, as I said, we've had poor performance for decades.

But the TNCs are non-performers for people with wheelchairs.

They just do not accept passengers with wheelchairs because they just don't have the infrastructure.

And they've shown an unwillingness to divulge any information about how they're going to develop an infrastructure.

The interim requirements for TNCs that were approved by council, the previous council, require that they have an app that has a button that requests a wheelchair accessible service, much like Greyhound even has that.

Well, the TNCs that I've seen do not have that app, application.

So they don't even track -- they're not even accepting requests for passengers with wheelchairs.

When you call them and request wheelchair service -- or excuse me -- when you ask for wheelchair service and you specify that you have wheelchair needs, they send a driver, any driver, and all he does is apologize.

That's been our experience.

Apologize they don't have service, says call the office, you call the office and they just don't have it.

I've worked on the TNC task force -- I'm not so brief after all -- and I don't think that they're committed to developing wheelchair accessible service in Austin or in the State of Texas.

Thank you.

>> Kitchen: Okay. Thank you very much for bringing that to our attention.

Next we have Chris Bailey.

>> This one work in good morning, council members.

I represent a company called bill green.

Chris Nelson is back there with electric cab and we're part of the electric vehicle industry.

I was also a member of the TNC stakeholder group.

One of the issues I'm really hoping to keep in the spotlight here is that what's happened since the council has adopted the temporary TNC charter or whatever you want to call it, is, we have really kind of become the wild west in Austin now.

And what we're finding is, the burden of regulations are really borne by the existing stakeholders now, and Uber and Lyft, Sidecar, whoever are getting a free ride here.

One of our main concerns, in order for a driver to become a licensed, chauffeured driver, they have to go through a background check.

You've got to go down to the airport, order the driving record, go down to the transportation office and take a test with them, then they issue a chauffeur's license.

Each one of these three steps -- well, they have to come to our office, have that signed, their chauffeur's application, then they have to go get it notarized.

So it's a whole lot of running around.

And if you do it as fast as humanly possible, with all the delays, you can do it in three days, and for about 60 bucks.

Uber and Lyft are currently allowed to just let people run without chauffeur's licenses.

And so what we're finding is, now, we're in direct competition for drivers.

All the drivers are leaving.

I have no problem with our -- with our companies competing for business.

I think we run a viable business and I'm happy to compete with them, but I'd just really like to keep it in the spotlight that when you have regulations, it needs to be equal for everybody.

And right now that's not the case at all.

And we're definitely feeling the impact of that on our businesses.

So that's all I have to say right now.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

Any questions?

Go ahead.

>> Thank you for bringing -- the last two speakers, thank you for bringing those issues up.

As a businesswoman, I am definitely a proponent of the free market system, but I'm a proponent of everyone being on the same playing field.

I think the users, to help us know how we can equalize that playing field, is much appreciated, so thank you for the comments.

>> Kitchen: Next, I think it's -- I'm sorry, I'm not reading this -- is it marge or Merga -- Merga.

Sorry.

>> Hello.

My name is Merga.

I'm from the taxi driver association.

Today I'm in front of you to address someone's issue that taxi drivers [inaudible].

That is unfair competition.

Uber is not regulated as taxi drivers.

Taxi drivers are regulated in every aspect.

And also when it comes to taxi drivers and the franchise, the franchise is not regulated, how much money they collect from us, but we are regulated, how much money we collect from the passenger, how much money we can get.

So we -- the drivers ask to the lease cab, so the company -- so the city can regulate how much the company gets profits and how much the drivers earn.

And another point we have is, we've been asking for permit directly to the drivers.

This has been going on for the last five, six years.

This time was considered to be issued as a pilot program, but we didn't get sponsors.

The company refused to dispatch for us.

So it didn't happen.

But this sounds obvious, going all over the country, and this very problem, we can't even use [inaudible].

If you guys issue some other permit on the drivers, like we're asking the 40% to be issued directly to the drivers, and, you know, drivers can get some benefit from that.

And the other one is workplace protection.

The drivers have no workplace protection.

I work for a company for 22 years.

I know what it means to work with protection, but in cab industry, there's no protection.

You can get fired for little or no reason at all.

And this, some of the cab industries around the nation, especially including Houston, they have some kind of mechanism, the way the driver should be fired.

And we're wanting to implement some of the third party who looks after the drivers.

So these are the important issues for the drivers.

And I want you to consider it.

We've been attending the tax board.

Some of our issues have been dropped.

Some of our issues are still been on the then agenda.

So we feel part of the community, but we've been neglected for a long time, and I want you to consider this doing [inaudible], the component the driver have, the protection of the drivers, and the drivers can make a livable wage to live in Austin.

Thank you.

>> Kitchen: Let me ask you one question.

Thank you very much.

I assume when you -- your operating this contract and so you don't have benefits like health insurance.

Right?

>> No, ma'am.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> We don't even have insurance coverage, you know, what is required as a driver, even the one that's stated that the city organized, was not in force, we never have any kind of coverage, the drivers.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

Thank you very much for bringing this to our attention.

Up next we have Ed Carga.

>> Good morning, council members.

Thank you for your time and thank you for taking up these issues specific to mobility in the City of Austin.

My name is Ed cargo.

I'm president of yellow cab Austin.

I just want to share with you guys that next week, Wednesday, April 1st when we meet, it will mark our 30-year anniversary serving the City of Austin.

We are happy to take up the responsibility of contributing to the public transportation infrastructure in the City of Austin.

Some of the responsibilities that go along with that are trying, as best we can, to provide citywide accessible ADA services with only 28 wheelchair accessible vehicles in our fleet, trying to provide citywide service to the nearly million people that live in the City of Austin, Texas, but also serving an MSA of 1.9 million people with 461 cars.

It's a challenge, but it's one that we take on and have taken on with joy in trying to solve that puzzle for a very long time.

I'm pleased to see that on your agenda today you have -- you're going to be addressing issues specific to taxis, transportation network companies, charters, and I would imagine in the future dealing with limos and shuttles and all of the others, because they all contribute to the ecosystem of public transportation that's available to all of the citizens.

I think one of the hardest challenges that we're facing right now is that the taxicab industry feels like, you know, we take up the responsibility of having to serve the entire city, which is a challenge that we enjoy.

We provide citywide service 24/7 and we provide access to every single person and visitor in the City of Austin.

And as you take on some of these issues simultaneously, I think it's really important to consider that there are other providers that do the exact same thing that we do, but don't have those responsibilities.

And so the reason that I'm excited that this group and the council will look at these issues in tandem is I think the city, you know, has to ask the question, what is it that we want from what is a de facto public utility on demand transportation for the City of Austin.

And once that framework is set, I think that all service providers that provide on-demand transportation, services, vehicle for hire, should be held to that standard.

So I'm a business person.

And the free market is one that we think is really important.

But I think historically, we've found that it's really important to regulate this space because if you don't, people that need access from a wheelchair standpoint won't get it because those trips are not profitable.

People who don't have credit cards and don't have access to smartphones, some of the more well-to-do passengers will get service in a quicker and more reliable capacity than other folks, but taxis, TNCs, that whole space is set up to provide service to all.

So thank you for your time.

>> Kitchen: Thank you very much.

Okay.

Dave Pasmore?

>> Hi.

Good morning, council.

My name is Dave Pasmore. I'm currently president of the taxi drivers association here in Austin.

And over the last couple of years that I've been president, we have been coming to council with our issues.

We were told by some of the council members that this committee would be set up for us to bring our issues to the table for us before it actually gets to the council.

We really appreciate this opportunity to use this time to do so.

However, I would like to also address some other issues that are facing the drivers.

We're hearing what the franchise are asking, what the TNCs are doing, what the service providers, who are the drivers in the City of Austin -- we are pretty much -- our issues are pretty much kept silent from time to time.

And there has been some times when council has asked staff and other folks to look at things pertaining to the drivers.

One of the things that we are also trying to see, if it's possible to have, is workman comp for the drivers.

We have no benefits since we've been working with the franchises.

We have seen across the countries where the landscape is actually changing for ground transportation.

There are some folks that are in the business, unregulated, as several of the speakers have mentioned earlier, and we're also concerned about that.

So we would like to know exactly what are the procedures and what it is that we, as drivers, have to do to hear our issues, you know, before council and see if we can get some type of guarantee, you know, within the workforce; workplace protection for the drivers, insurance coverage for the drivers.

I would just like to address some of the issues that are going to be coming forward today.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> That is on your agenda so I won't take all the time to speak but I'll wait until later on to address some of these issues.

Thank you all very much.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

Thank you very much.

>> Yes, ma'am.

>> Kitchen: Chris Nielsen?

And then after Chris will be Gerard Kenny.

>> Good morning.

My name is Chris Nielsen and I'm the chief everything officer for the electric cab of Austin.

I just wanted to touch on these TNCs.

It's been our understanding that as they got their temporary permit, they were to be able to issue their own chauffeur's licenses.

That's become an issue.

To echo what Mr. Bailey said earlier, we're not competing for rides, we're competing for drivers.

And why would somebody want to run through the gauntlet that they have to run through to get a regular city issued chauffeur's permit whenever all they have to do is click their mouse a few times?

Another thing I want to touch on is training.

Our drivers have to have three days minimum training.

Automobile is telling their drivers to give passengers bottled water.

That's not training.

I have no problem competing on the free market.

We fought for a long time to be able to compete on this free market, but I have to pay for the same permits the yellow cab, Austin cab, and everybody else does.

My drivers have to go through the same system.

But it would seem that it's kind of -- it's created, for lack of a better phrase, a separate but equal system.

And if Uber and Lyft are allowed to issue their own chauffeur's licenses, I would request that existing stakeholders be given that same option.

It would make it a lot easier.

Therefore ways to do background checks and driver's record checks in-house.

Dallas and Houston already do it.

With us it's a little bit different.

But that's all I have.

>> Kitchen: Thank you.

Gerard?

Yeah.

And after Gerard is Linnell Ripley.

>> Gerard Kinney, lifelong Austinite, neighborhood planner, other roles.

I feel like I didn't get the memo to speak about taxis and chauffeurs.

I'm not here to talk about that.

>> Kitchen: That's fine.

Just speak about what you'd like.

>> Thank you.

I came before the council before the committees that were being structured and suggested that I was very concerned about the fact that land use and transportation have been separated again as they once were.

And I just want to -- and Council Member kitchen, you said at that time, well, there would be a strong relationship between the committees, and I'm happy to hear that.

I am interested in hearing about how that is going to happen.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> Whether there's going to be liaisons between these committees, because many of us in both the transportation and land use arena have learned that it is really a mistake to talk about transportation planning without talking about land use planning.

And it's a mistake to talk about land use planning without talking about transportation.

They are symbiotic, and it's very, very important that they be discussed.

Transportation is a wonderful land use tool, and I don't know where that is going to happen.

So I'm concerned about that.

I also want to say briefly, I do serve on the pedestrian advisory council, so I will be attending the mobility committee's -- perhaps even officially in behalf of that committee, but -- the pedestrian advisory council, but also just as a person very interested in all the modes of transportation.

They all have to work together.

And so I think that's all I have.

>> Kitchen: Thank you.

I can say that in terms of coordination with land use, I absolutely agree.

And I think all of us recognize the connection.

And so how we actually do that, we're working that out.

I mean, that can range all the way from joint meetings on particular issues with other committee, to just making sure that when we talk about a particular issue, we also recognize the land use aspect of it.

But thank you for bringing that to our attention, and it is something we're well aware of and agree with.

Thank you.

Okay.

Linnell.

And after Linnell is David king.

>> Hi.

I am here as an individual driver with the Lyft community, and letting people know that we do have regulations and training that we have to go through.

It's not -- I'm just an individual.

I don't work for the company.

I'm a part of the community based program that helps people in Austin connect with their homes, to work, to play, to whatever, to get rides safely where they need to get it when there's sometimes just not other options, or not affordable options.

We have -- we do have a rigorous background check with Lyft.

I'm not sure about the other companies.

I can't speak to that.

But as a Lyft driver, I know I had to go through monitor training.

We had our background checks.

We had to get our vehicles approved and inspected, and we have to maintain that and upkeep it.

And if anything is out of sorts, we have -- we are -- we have a star system with our passengers, then they keep us in check.

And once your star rating goes down, then you have to either fix that or you don't get to drive.

So there is a system in place keeping us on our toes and making sure that we provide a safe and friendly service.

And that's one of the things that is lacking in the more outlying areas of Austin, and that's -- I love being able to fill in the gaps, especially now that we have the Lyft line.

We introduced the Lyft line, which is actually more of a car-sharing model where you can -- a ride-sharing model where you can pick up more than one new passenger and take them, more affordably, to their destinations, as long as they're on the same route.

So it's like true to the carpooling model and really more -- getting the community to trust each other again and get out there and help solve these issues that we have.

One of the things that I'm looking forward to speaking with this committee about is more on the ADA compliance and how we can get more of that going because, as individual drivers, we are not always aware of what needs need to be met, and we're just coming into this game here in Austin.

And that's -- you know, this is an exciting new time for the solutions that we have, you know, that we can choose to create for Austin.

I think south by southwest really showed how the car sharing, as well as the taxi services -- we made it safer out there on the streets.

I really -- I honestly think that there was only one incident, one accident on the road that was a fatality during that time, and it was not related to anything festival drivers had to do with.

And because of our increased presence, people were believable to get to their destinations safely and on time.

And that's our goal, as a city, as our influx of new people are coming into town, we need to start thinking about all the options that we have and how we can keep it going instead of squashing it.

>> Kitchen: Thank you very much.

David, then after David is deAnn Johnson.

>> Thank you, chair and vice careful. I just want to thank you for setting up this mobility committee.

I think it's the fruition of the ten one system and I'm glad that you've taken action so quickly to allow more public input into the process.

And I'm here to speak about two matters.

One is our policies on how we manage growth and how that impacts our transportation infrastructure.

And the then, two, about the MoPac flyovers, as the proposal to build the flyovers over MoPac there that have just come up recently.

During the recent council hearing on the Garza project, the mayor said we can't stop approving development projects because of bad traffic congestion, that's not a direct quote but that's essentially what he said.

So that's a very important statement because it raises the questions about our transportation and growth policies.

They go together.

They're hand in hand.

And traffic congestion is a function of the capacity of our traffic transportation infrastructure and the demand on that infrastructure.

So growth affects the demand on the infrastructure.

So our policies today seem to focus solely on the capacity, not on the demand side.

Not on the growth side.

So I think that's my point, is that we need to look at our policy on how we manage growth.

We need to have a dual policy that looks at both the capacity of the infrastructure and the demand on that infrastructure.

So I think there would be a time that we have to say this project can't go forward because our infrastructure can't support it.

There must be a time.

Otherwise, it will be done on our behalf.

Businesses won't move here because the congestion is so bad.

And I don't think that's where we want to be.

I think we want to get ahead of the curve on that and have a more comprehensive policy on that.

So to that end, the executive committee unanimous passed a resolution to ask this committee to review the best practice strategies and policies regarding traffic impact analysis, funding for upgrades and new transportation infrastructure for development and growth, and evaluation of applications for development projects in areas with insufficient or failing transportation infrastructure.

Other cities have dealt with these issues, and I think we could look at them and see what their policies are and maybe learn from those.

Regarding the MoPac south flyovers, I hope that this committee will urge CAMPO to delay their vote on that proposal to add more total lanes to MoPac south and to that flyover.

The proposal just came up in the last few weeks and there's been woefully lacking input on that.

I hope you will support keeping MoPac local so we can keep these big trucks and through traffic off of MoPac in that part of our city.

Thank you for considering my comments.

>> Kitchen: Thank you, David.

Thank you for the resolution from ANC requesting that we look at those issues.

Those are issues that I know we've had some conversation and I'm certain we'll be seeing those on our agenda in the future.

So thank you.

Do you want to say something?

>> David, before you leave, I've got a question, please.

You mentioned several other cities that had developed policies.

What cities would those be that you would suggest we look at?

>> That's a very good question. I'm just starting to do my own research so when I come back next time to offer suggestions I can be more specific.

There was some comments in the Garza case with other cities -- I don't recall the names --

>> Kitchen: Fort Worth is one of them, I think.

>> Maybe was Fort Worth had a lower threshold for requiring a traffic impact analysis.

Some cities have 700 as a threshold.

Austin is 2000.

Some cities look at the comprehensive impact of multiple projects in a particular area that have been approved recently, not just individual projects.

So I just don't recall the names of those cities off the top of my head.

But I will be doing more research to provide some suggestions to you all later on. Thank you

very much.

>> Kitchen: Yes, David, that would be helpful to, you know, appreciate bringing forward a resolution from ANC.

That's very helpful.

So if you all have some background information you'd like to provide, that would be great, too.

>> Okay.

Will do.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

Dean, then our final speaker is Billy Carter.

>> Good morning.

My name is deAnn.

I'm branch manager of Texas Rio Grande legal aid.

I transport the tax driver association of Austin, I'm a member of the Austin advisory commission, the taxi task force, now I sit on Urban Transportation Commission, so welcome to the mobility committee.

I have a couple of things to speak on.

One, David spoke on accessible cabs, and there's going to be some recommendations coming forward to you from the staff, and that is to increase the percentage of the fleet from six and a half to ten percent on accessible cabs, which is a good thing to do.

I want you to understand that the number of accessible cabs is on top of the other number of vehicles which are supposed to be established by the formula.

It says that only three percent of the rides of those cabs have to be for accessible rides.

That doesn't make any sense if you're going to have 38 or 58 accessible cabs, why they're not dedicated cabs.

It says new cabs will be driven by employee drivers in the future.

There's no rationale for not making that happen right away.

There's a problem with accessible rides for people and that should be fixed, immediately, and there's no reason except maybe the franchises don't like it and don't want to do that, not to implement those type of changes immediately to serve that population.

There's also very limited green vehicle incentives that were being brought forward to you, and there are a number of different cities that have way -- they require all new vehicles, and about 10% of your cabs every year are going to go offline because they've hit their limit.

It doesn't make sense to citizen without establishing other incentives to turn our fleet over.

We have very, very few hybrid cars or converted natural gas vehicles to do that.

So Austin has regulated vehicles for hire since its charter in 1909, and there's lots of restrictions on them.

It's kind of managed competition when you talk about taxicabs.

But with the Uber and Lyft issues, you're going to see that now there is no -- there is no really market regulation of competition.

It's free market out there, except for in the taxicab portion of that.

And that doesn't make any sense.

And City Council over the years blows with the wind, and we have so many resolutions that haven't been followed through with, and different councils do different things.

There is supposedly a formula that's based on taxicab departures and population growth with

the City of Austin.

That hasn't been followed in the last four or five years at all.

And now the staff is asking for complete discretion to come up with whatever they want to.

The issue with adding more permits is, the company is going to get money because the drivers pay them every day.

[beeping.]

>> Kitchen: You can finish your thought if you have just another sentence or two.

>> So the companies make money and the market share then decreases for each of the individual drivers.

Adding a hundred new cabs, and they refuse to give Indie permits to drivers so drivers don't have to drive for a franchise and pay for them.

And City Council has passed our resolutions saying we should support the development of cooperatives.

So if you want to form a taxi cooperative, if there's going to be new permits issued, those should be Indie permits given to drivers directly so that they can form a cooperative and drive on their own without having to have an overseer of a franchise which -- and let them drive more like Uber and Lyft drivers.

Why could they be in the free market, as well as Uber and Lyft drivers?

It doesn't make any sense.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

Thank you very much.

Okay.

Our last speaker is Billy Carter.

>> I thank you for allowing me to speak.

Billy Carter with Carter transportation services.

We operate super shuttle of Austin and executive car of Austin.

I just want to bring back to your attention the -- when this temporary permitting process was put in place by the City Council, that at that meeting, every City Councilmember that voted for that said that we're going to pass this, but we want the city staff to look at the ordinance and make sure that things are changed to make it an equitable system for all involved.

And of course we had a City Council change, and -- but that process hasn't happened yet.

But I think it was very important to understand that everybody that voted for that wanted there to be an equitable situation put in place.

And there's just not.

You know, there's -- the rate -- classifications of the limousine classification has got a minimum rate that they have to charge.

The limousine classification and the charter classification and the shared ride classification have a -- a prereservation requirement of 30 minutes.

A customer wants to go, they still have to wait 30 minutes.

There's a restriction on the number of cabs.

There's no restriction on the number of Uber permits that are -- and Lyft permits that are to be issued.

So I think that I'd just like to see us come back to that and look and provide an equitable -- some changes that would make it equitable for us all to compete on the same

playing field.

I was interested in listening to this about Lyft doing multiple stops, and I heard that Uber was doing multiple stops.

There is permits for that.

It's a shared ride transportation system.

I believe super shuttle was the only permitted company that -- to do multiple stops and shared ride transportation.

So I would whether or not if that was included in that temporary -- temporary ordinance for them to perform like that.

But I would just like to see us come back and revisit this and if it's going to be a free market system, let's make it a free market system where we're all competing on the same playing field.

I appreciate your time.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

Thank you.

So now we're going to turn to the briefing portion of the agenda.

And let me just say that, you know, we will talk as a group, of course, but I think that I want to give the staff a heads-up.

One of the things I'm going to want to see is a grid that tells me like down the left side, here's the type of license taxicab, TNC, whatever.

Across the top is the area of regulation like, you know, rates, training, et cetera, something that will help us see -- because we've heard a lot of testimony about concerns about how different types of, you know, companies or options are regulated, and some concerns about discrepancies or differences across regulation.

For myself, and I don't know about my fellow council members, it would be very helpful to see a grid like that.

So that's just a heads-up.

Yes.

Go ahead.

>> And if somebody could also speak to the last point that was made by that gentleman, was this temporary TNC permit -- did it allow shared rides in that -- in that permit?

>> Good morning.

Carl to know, transportation department.

It is my understanding that the TNC agreement was -- would enable the TNCs to operate personal vehicles for ground transportation services.

As they have entered the market, their services are expanding to go over or cross other regulated areas where initially they both closely resembled the taxi operation.

Now they have services that act as charter services do with the larger vehicles, and as the multiple passenger type service, as Mr. Carter mentioned, it does closely resemble the shared ride system.

>> Kitchen: Our first briefing is on the TNC working group overview.

Shall we move to that or did you want to add something first?

>> Thank you, chairman kitchen.

I think I need to bring a personal experience into this.

I lived and traveled in eastern Europe.

In September of 1993 I went to Moscow, Russia for a couple of weeks, and was traveling mostly by myself.

In 1996 through '96, I lived in Ukraine.

So this is in eastern Europe after the fall of the Soviet empire.

You might be shocked to know that in this foreign country, I was able to do what the citizens there did.

I could walk out to a curb on any street, anywhere in this complex city, and you could hold out your hand in a certain way, and a car would pull over in a matter of seconds.

You would talk to the driver of this car that you'd never met in your life.

They would negotiate some taxi -- taxi rate, and you would go to where you would need to go.

And I just find this whole conversation about regulation and regulation licensing and training and insurance, and how is it that I can go to a former Soviet country and live and work and exist and get taxi rides with no background checks, with no licensing, in a completely unregulated, a completely free and open market, without any issues?

So when we talk about regulation, of course my -- where I come from is, we are overregulating the businesses.

And I want to bring that in as an anecdotal example of how other places in the world that we think are behind us in many ways, they're actually ahead of us in taking care of a market for taxi rides.

>> Kitchen: Well, I think the question you're bringing up is the essential policy question, which of course we'll have -- we will be discussing, and that's the level and degree of regulation, as well as the -- you know, the fairness, the fairness, the efficacy, the -- how they're applied across different kinds, so, yeah, that's an issue.

So -- all right.

Let's go to the first item which is the TNC working group overview and the staff recommendations on the regulatory framework, et cetera.

So if you'll start with that.

>> Thank you, Madam chair.

Robert Spiller, director of transportation.

Myself and my assistant director, Gordon, are going to give a brief introduction, then we're going to go into the presentations as you have them numbered on the agenda.

Between each presentation, there will be an opportunity, certainly you'll see a slide that says questions, and that will certainly give you an opportunity to at least recognize that we're switching topics a little bit.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> But if you have questions during the presentation, by all means, please ask.

The Austin transportation department regulates a number of different ground transportation providers.

These services include both motorized and non-motorized vehicles.

For instance, the non-motorized vehicles include pedicabs, conference bikes, so those are more like the public crawler where multiple people are pedaling a bike to tour around portions of downtown.

Of course horse-drawn categories.

The motorized categories are two distinct options, on demand and prearranged.

The on-demand type ground transportation services are those that provide services by both dispatch, as well as street hails, as was talked about just previously.

So those include the taxicab and the electric low speed vehicles. So both of those can either be dispatched, or you could hail them on street at specific areas.

The prearranged services require a reservation in advance of the services being provided and included.

And those are such services as limousine and sedan services, charter services, tours, and sight-seeing, as well as the airport shuttles.

That's different from the shuttles that originate at the airport.

Some of those that leave our area -- well, all of the trips that originate at the airport are regulated through specific regulations out at the airport, and we have director Smith here should you have questions there.

Most recently, transportation network companies began operation locally.

TNCs, as we call them, are on-demand services where request for transportation is arranged through online platform or mobile applications, and so you'll hear the apps talks about.

TNCs are prohibited from accepting street hails.

There are a total of 191 ground transportation companies authorized in Austin, operating approximately 1,947 vehicles.

There are also a total of 348 -- 3,487 drivers issued chauffeur permits.

There are four authorized transportation network companies, with two currently providing ground transportation services, Uber and Lyft.

We do not have a count of the number of drivers working for the TNCs.

That is a piece of information that we do not have access to.

Austin has adopted a managed competition form of regulation for taxicab services.

With this form of regulation, the City of Austin franchises the authorized companies and regulates market entry, number of permits issued, fares, and exits from the market.

There are three taxicab franchises in Austin operating 756 taxicabs.

All three franchises come up for renewal this year in 2015.

That was specifically designed so that this council could have an opportunity that, if the franchise approach wanted to be changed, that it could affect all franchises at once.

I would also tell you that the primary reason why the City of Austin historically has regulated the taxi industry is the concern over safety and the service that's provided to visitors to our community, and that is pretty typical of the regulating industry throughout the U.S., is that it's typically done by cities with aware the primary interest is making sure there's a base level of service, as well as a basic understanding of a safe service that's being offered out there.

With that, Mr. Derr is going to give you a little background on just the data, some more data, then we'll turn it over to Carlton, who is actually our for vehicle hire, or for service vehicle manager, and is really our department's expert on this issue.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

Thank you.

Thank you, Gordon.

>> Good morning.

Gordon Derr, assistant director of the Austin transportation department.

Sorry about my voice, but something is floating around in the air.

I did want to briefly tell you what our department does and who's responsible because you'll see me up here on certain related topics.

I oversee traffic engineering, special events in the public right of way, long range planning, and air quality planning, active transportation, vehicles for hire, and the complete streets.

Jim Dale back there is the acting assistant director over

arterial management right of way, management signs and markings, then Steve grassfield is over the parking enterprise.

So those are the different areas of responsibility, and that's why you'll see a variety of us up here talking about specific topics.

So, if we can go to the slides.

So I wanted to give you some perspective of the taxicab industry.

This first slide is about data from the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

So we have three franchises that are reporting.

This reporting is for 745 permits.

In that year, we did 3.4 million trips by taxi, as reported by the companies.

The total fares, not excluding any tips or anything, was a little over 56 or close to \$57 million.

The average income permit was 76,000.

The average fare per trip over the whole year was \$16.75 and the average trips per day per permit was 12.

>> So we have three franchises, but they operate a little bit differently, you can somewhat see it from this data.

So on the left hand is the average for all the companies.

Then in Yellow Cab, Austin cab and Lone Star cab.

You'll see some differences in annual trips.

You'll see differences in fair per trip and for number of trips per day.

Lone Star taxi, a lot of their drivers choose to work the airport so they look -- they have fewer trips per day, but usually longer trips.

And there are some -- there's some difference in fare per permit based on activities of the different franchises.

Dispatch operations, this is kind of unfortunate the line goes through that one set of data, but they report to us each month the number of requests they have for service and then what portion of that service can they actually serve.

So they had 3.28 million calls, somebody wanting to get a taxi trip.

They dispatched to 65% of those, but they only completed 51%.

Again, there's some variation between the particular franchises, but this is the space that the transportation network companies have come into, and we're trying to track and see what the effect is on the taxi operations of the TNCs.

So there's four TNCs registered with the city.

Two of them are in operation.

So this is some taxi data from January and February of this year.

The numbers for total trips are comparable to what they were in December and last year.

The average trips per day is very -- varies somewhat.

The average fare varies a little bit.

We're not seeing a dramatic drop in taxi operations.

And we can speculate why that is, but we're not seeing and we'll continue to track this month by month to see if there's a point where there's an impact on the actual operations.

We're going to -- Carlton is going to talk about the formulas used in the past.

We want to do a data-driven process that looks at how many calls are coming in, how many trips are being served so that we can make a good decision about how much service should be on the street.

And those will be part of the recommendations related to the franchise renewals.

>> Gordon, this may be part of the formula that you referenced, but if there's an approach that you have to assessing what kind of need there is out there, that might be helpful for us also.

>> Well, again, the best data we have at the moment is the number of people that called.

>> Okay.

>> And didn't get service.

Again, the transportation network companies have moved into that gap, but at this point, just from my -- just some anecdotal I've heard the taxi companies get fewer calls.

Some of the companies, people didn't rely on dispatch trips.

They were out hustling their own trips.

They were sitting at hotels.

They have customers they serve every week.

So that's probably part of why there hasn't been a tremendous change in that data.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> Can you help me understand why we feel like we need to regulate the number of vehicles that are on the street providing these services?

Regulate from the standpoint of numbers, the numbers of vehicles that are on the street.

I mean that seems to be that we are injecting ourselves into companies' business models versus letting the service provide as much service as possible as competitively as possible.

So I'm just trying to understand the thought process that goes behind the regulation of the number of vehicles.

>> So we -- several years ago, maybe four, we had a report done by Dr. Mundai, who is the foremost person in the country looking at taxi franchises, and he spoke to that issue.

What we've seen historically with deregulation, that service drops off and the price for the average person goes up and really our primary concern is is the vehicle safe, is the driver safe, and are we getting a fair priced trip and somewhat consistently and regularly.

So those are some of the things we look at as we regulate, but we have stories across the country, we have the data on cities that have deregulated and the eventual impact and in most cases have gone back to regulation.

All of these regulations were built because at some point there was a problem.

At some point there was a problem so they decided we needed to do background checks on drivers.

So these weren't just arbitrarily made up.

They're to speak to certain regulatory and safety concerns.

And I think we can provide you that information as we move forward on why we think this is the best structure.

>> Gallo: Okay.

But I see kind of two subjects or topics in the discussion.

One is the permitting, which I understand the reason for that would be for the safety.

But the second, the permitting of the drivers, but the second is putting a level that we feel like is appropriate on the numbers of cars or drivers that can be out there.

I mean, to me those are two separate issues, and I don't see that the number of drivers affects the safety.

It seems like the permitting of the drivers is how we can help address the safety issues.

>> Yes.

They are two separate issues.

>> Gallo: So my question is, you mentioned Dr. Mundai, I guess, was his research done prior to the impact of organizations and companies like Lyft and Uber?

Was that done prior to that business model coming into cities?

Do you know?

>> Yes.

>> Gallo: Okay.

>> Although we've been in communication with him subsequently, asking him about how we should consider those activities, and I think it's something that we're struggling with as they are all over the country, about how to balance the need.

To me the baseline is we need good data about what's going on and what the needs are so that we can make an informed decision.

>> Gallo: Are there other cities that are a couple of steps ahead of Austin as far as evaluating the data when Uber and Lyft have come into the cities?

Are there other cities out there steps ahead of us that we can look at and see what have been their issues, how they addressed it?

>> Councilmember, Robert, transportation director again.

We are always on the lookout.

This is a new market change and so I think a lot of cities are sort of grappling with the same questions.

I will tell you I've seen in the popular press, newspapers that Uber and Lyft point to Austin and Dallas, at least within Texas, as their preferred models for moving forward.

So if that tells you anything, I think we're all sort of grappling with the same questions about how to respond and react to a new market change.

Getting back to your original question about why we regulate the numbers, because -- and I would tell you that councils before this one are policymakers because y'all ultimately make the policy that staff followed, have always viewed the taxi industry, since 1900s, at least, as a public utility so therefore have conveyed -- have been concerned about public conveyance, the safety issues, as well as the level of service, and meeting the necessity.

And so that is, I guess, the fundamental concept of why the numbers of those vehicles are being regulated.

As you've heard, the industry is regulated in terms of safety and permitting and chauffeuring and traditionally the thought is in return then the public entity regulating it wants to make sure that those participants in that market have a fair market wage and so forth.

And so it is a balancing just like any time a public entity takes control of a industry.

As a utility there becomes this duel balancing, trying to balance the good of the community with the needs of the business.

As you can probably imagine, it's never easy to manage that device.

But the alternative of fully deregulated taxi city manager as we've seen quite interesting, twice in Seattle, have deregulated and both times their ridership or service that they were concerned about providing collapsed.

And so that's where we take a lot of our notions from.

>> Gallo: Once again, my question would be the model that you looked at in Seattle and the experience they had, was that before or after entities like Uber or Lyft came into the city?

>> One was definitely before, desire to deregulate.

And one was they were both before.

>> Gallo: Okay.

>> So I think you're right.

There is a new market force out there changing the dynamics.

I would argue that the community still has a public interest to make sure that the services are safe and provide a basic level of transportation for folks that for whatever reason can't use public transportation or private transportation other than a car oriented service.

>> Kitchen: I think we're going back to the basic question.

These are the kinds of policy questions we will have lots and lots of discussion about.

>> Very good questions.

>> Kitchen: Yeah.

The basic question, when you're regulating to what extent do you do that?

What are you protecting?

You obviously want to protect safety but also want to protect access, you know, from a cost standpoint so that it's not just people of higher incomes that can afford taxicabs or other means of transportation.

So in any case, if it's all right with everyone, maybe -- can we move on?

>> Gallo: Could you, in addition to the information that our chair requested, as far as a graph, could you also give us a little bit of information as far as other cities that are, like I said, maybe one or two steps ahead of us, where we can actually look at those?

I hope when we look at data we're looking at current situation data because this market is evolving so quickly and changing so rapidly that I think we need to quit looking at the way it was done before this entity -- these entities appeared in the market, but I think we need to keep comparing ourselves to other cities that are in the same situation that we are right now.

So thank you.

>> We belong to the international association of transportation regulators, Carlton is a member of that organization, and we are actively involved with keeping up with what's going on around the country and around the world with the issues related to this.

My last slide is related to wheelchair accessible taxi use, just with -- for December, January, and February, how many requests, how many were served.

And basically the totals.

So what we anecdotally, as was discussed earlier, this -- you know, this 900 or so trips a month that you see completed here by the three companies, I don't think it begins to scratch the surface of what the community needs.

And part of the discussion about franchise renewal is about how we can get additional resources in place so that those persons can have the service, comparable service.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

Thank you.

>> So that's my questions.

>> Kitchen: We can move on if it's okay.

We have a lot to cover.

>> Samantha Alexander is going to come up and talk about the transportation network companies and the committee we set up in the process -- and the process we went through.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> Good morning, councilmembers, I'm Sam Alexander with the transportation department up here presenting with Carlton Thomas.

We're here today because we were two of the staff members who worked closely with the Transportation Network Company working groups.

Just in terms of flow of the agenda our team thought it would be helpful to lay down the baseline data before we get into the specific briefings and presentations.

So to get deeper into the transportation network companies, the first thing I wanted to start the conversation with, and I think you're hearing it with our speakers and you're hearing some of the data is often people compare transportation Network Companies to taxis because it's a comparable service that we know we understand.

So I wanted to walk through some of the differences between them something that's important to know is it does always spark this conversation but they are regulated differently in Austin.

So you've got kind of a side by side comparison here of how they differ.

Something important to note, this is not all of the differences but some of the noteworthy ones.

For instance, taxis in Austin, they are owner operators verses TNCs, they also drive their own vehicles that they own.

Fares. That's something you'll probably hear about quite a bit.

So in taxis the fares are regulated.

With TNCs you'll hear dynamic pricing, surge pricing but that's where you hear when the demand is greater that the pricing could double, triple, depending on the evening and the demand and supply.

>> Kitchen: Let me ask a question.

>> Sure.

>> Kitchen: Does that mean that the taxi companies are not allowed to do surge pricing?

Is that what that means?

>> At this point in time, yes.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> As you heard earlier, taxis --

>> Kitchen: I'm sorry.

>> Sure.

>> That's fine.

>> Kitchen: More specific question.

When you say regulated fares, does that mean -- give me a concept of that.

Does that mean there's a total dollar amount per ride?

Is it amount per mile?

I mean, you know, I'm not as familiar with that.

>> Carlton Thomas again.

So according to the city code, what a taxi company or taxi driver can charge is very strictly regulated.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> So the -- there's an initial drop fee that all taxi meters must register when it's turned on and then there's a charge per mile, as well as there's a wait time charge per hour for taxis and they cannot in any shape or fashion deviate from those required numbers.

>> Kitchen: And is the difference between the fares that taxis can charge and the fares that TNCs can charge, is it only the surge pricing or do the TNCs not have any kind of requirements on their pricing?

>> Currently, the City of Austin has placed no requirements, no requirements at all on TNC fares.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

Thank you.

>> And so continuing down the taxi drivers, there's a chauffeurs permit required.

The way the current ordinance regulating TNCs is written their drivers are required to have the driver's license that you and I probably both have as well.

The vehicle safety inspections there's a specific safety inspection for ground transportation vehicles and our ground transportation code that taxis abide by.

The TNCs need to pass the state inspection.

In terms of ADA compliance for taxis there's a six to six and a half% requirement of their fleet to be ADA accessible.

For the TNCs the way it's written in the ordinance right now, is it's kind of two parts.

It's written so that for every ride given they were standard to set aside 10 cents per ride to put into a fund that would later fund services intended for those needing accessible rides.

The second piece is that they were required to put an indicator on the application that says if you are or the passenger need a accessible ride -- that's what he was referring to earlier in his comments.

>> Kitchen: Let me ask a question about that.

You mentioned that that's in the future.

Does that mean that's not available right now?

>> The app indicator?

>> Kitchen: Right.

>> That is my understanding, it's not available right now.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> Street hails, taxis can accept street hails.

TNCs cannot accept street hails.

Something important to state about that is the TNC companies themselves also don't want their drivers to accept street hails. That's something that the city and TNCs see eye to eye on.

Branded vehicles we call it trade dress, meaning whenever you see a tax it's got some sort of branding on the outside of it.

Taxis have to have their branded vehicles whereas TNCs there's no requirement to have a branded vehicle, though what you might see with like Lyft, they have the pink mustaches that's a branded vehicle.

Currently Uber in Austin does not have them.

Records this was a big topic we discussed so records for the other ground tapping vehicles come to the City of Austin the way the ordinance is written for TNCs is that they must maintain the records.

However, they have to be available for quarterly audits via third party whenever the city requests it.

I misspoke earlier.

We don't regulate TNCs, but do have an agreement with TNCs, that what was required in the ordinance, an operating agreement.

>> Kitchen: When you say they're not regulated you mean the ordinance doesn't set forth a bunch of requirements?

It's just an operating agreement?

Is that right?

>> It sets forth requirements that had to be in the --

>> Kitchen: In the operating agreement.

>> So these are specifically laid out in the operating agreement.

>> Kitchen: Did you have a question?

I'm sorry.

Go ahead.

>> And then -- oops, sorry.

>> Gallo: Before you get off the audits, so at what point will we hit the quarterly point that you can do the audit on the TNCs?

>> So we actually in January received the first quarterly reports, and so next week will be the first time that we are able to do one of the first quarterly audits.

We have not done an audit yet but we will be able to do one next week.

Separately in the ordinance it says that the TNCs must submit quarterly reports to the transportation department and so we did receive those reports.

It has certain data laid out.

But the audit requirement can start next week.

>> So when would that information be available to this committee?

>> I believe so.

We actually are in an interesting position right now.

So the data that has been provided to us by the TNCs, they have stated it's confidential and proprietary and we are actually waiting on a ruling from the Attorney General right now because we do have open requests request.

I can we can chair it with the mobility committee but we've got public information requests from other folks who want to see the data as well.

>> I think you can share it with the committee.

>> To dance around your question there, but yes.

>> Gallo: So once you evaluate and audit the information will we have the same graph information that you've given us for the taxi companies as far as number of rides and average

fare.

>> Not in a public forum like this until we get the Attorney General's ruling.

>> Kitchen: Don't worry about that aspect. We'll talk about that.

>> Yes.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> Gallo: Thank you.

>> Kitchen: My question follows up on that.

Is it the same type of data that Mr. --

>> The [indiscernible] passed right now says they have to provide data that shows the impact on the transportation ecosystem in Austin.

What the -- the staff recommendation you saw was distributed their specific data sets we would request but the ordinance that was passed did not say specifically what they had to provide.

So the type of data we have gone back and asked for is stuff -- it includes, like, the ZIP codes where the rides are originating from, but it is not as in-depth as what we're getting from the taxi companies.

>> Kitchen: Elette let me ask you this.

Have you asked for the same data you've gotten from the taxi companies.

>> We are seeking comparable data.

>> Kitchen: Are you getting it?

>> Not completely.

>> Kitchen: In other words you've asked for certain data that these companies have declined to provide?

>> That is correct, chair.

>> Kitchen: I'd like the specific information on that.

You don't have to go over it right now but if you'd let me know what you've requested and what that is reason declined and how that relates to that type of information that you get from taxicabs.

>> Okay.

>> Kitchen: Go ahead.

>> Zimmerman: Just to make an important distinction, there's a big difference between information that they have available that they're refusing to release verses data that doesn't exist.

>> Kitchen: Thank you for --

>> Zimmerman: Let's distinguish that.

>> Houston: Thank you for making the distinction.

I would like to understand that too.

>> Okay.

>> So to walk through how we got here today, the transportation network conversation with covers and TNC actually dates back to 2012.

There was a local company that entered into the market as a TNC and that was the first round of conversations about how do you regulate this new industry in the market.

One notable distinction that came out of those discussions was the city code actually defines what ride sharing is in the City of Austin now.

So I'm not sure if you're familiar with a company called car ma, they provide ride sharing services.

The distinction there is ride sharing or carpooling, is whenever you pay somebody for a ride but that person is getting paid under the federal reimbursement limit for carpooling.

It's not considered making a profit.

If you are paid to provide ground transportation services, then you're making more than that limit.

So there is that distinction in the city code right now, and so that's whenever you talk to transportation staff and we consider TNCs to be a ground transportation service.

It's because the drivers are making more than that federal reimbursement rate.

And so that's how we distinguish them between carpooling and ride sharing and ground transportation services.

So the most recent history, last year in 2014, there were some illegal TNC operations during south by southwest.

Shortly after in May of 2014, the City Council passed a resolution that basically had staff go into a working group process to create recommendations on how to develop a pilot program in Austin that would legalize those TNC operations.

That did not legalize TNC operations.

It started a process.

But at that same time, TNCs illegally launched in Austin of May of 2014.

As they were operating, we conducted a working group session.

We had nine meetings, and we -- I've got a next slide that will show you everybody in those working groups but it include everybody from representatives from the TNC companies themselves, from taxis, university professors and students, potential riders.

It was a robust group and we had a lot of great conversations.

I put two to four hours each meeting there because anybody in this room who is in those meetings can attest they were very in-depth meetings.

But as we were meeting with that working group, the City Council did pass the ordinance to legalize TNCs.

That is what created the operating agreements that they are operating under right now.

That happened on October 16.

We had our final TNC working group on the 24th.

And the city and TNC signed the operating agreements in November of 2014.

So we got their first quarterly reports earlier this year, as I mentioned, and what you would have received yesterday was a memo that went out in regards to staff's recommendations that came out of that working group.

As how to amend the ordinance that's currently in place to create some of those assurances that somebody referenced earlier whenever the ordinance was passed.

In regards to how the working group functioned with city staff, so we brought a variety of topics to them.

Actually, I'll get to that in a second.

I want to show who you was in the working group first to give you an idea.

We have adaptive Texas, City of Austin departments, downtown Austin alliance, ground tappings and ride share companies, JP Morgan chase was there as a stakeholder, Lyft and Uber,

TNC customers, taxi drivers association and some of our taxi drivers, university professor and some students and some UTC members as well.

It was a very large group.

So the way we functioned we brought a variety of topics to them.

So these are kind of a myriad of the topics that we discussed.

Safety was probably discussed at every meeting because the reason, as Gordon mentioned earlier and Rob is the reason behind these measures it always comes back to safety, so safety not only for the passengers but also for the drivers in Austin.

We really wanted the drivers to understand if you drive for a company here are some of the risks or liabilities at this point in time you might be assuming.

Data requirements as Carlton was discussing earlier.

Insurance is a really big topic when it comes to TNCs and transportation in general.

ADA fleets, size of fleets, trade dress.

Financials, for instance right now there is not a fee collected from TNCs to the city.

And then, finally, logistics of the operations.

So some of the questions we are getting, with a if I'm in a TNC and lose something?

How does lost and found work with TNCs?

So we went through all of these topics in that working group.

They acted as the sounding board and could give us their feedback, their recommendations and then our transportation staff developed the recommendations that were distributed yesterday.

>> Kitchen: Let me ask you a question.

Okay.

So there wasn't a separate report from the TNC working group.

>> No.

>> Kitchen: Okay, got you.

>> This is mentioned earlier but the four companies who have signed agreements in Austin, it's Lyft and Uber, side car, Z trip but currently Uber and are the only ones in operations so the other ones have agreements but are not in operations.

And then to go over a few of the staff recommendations that were sent out yesterday, here's a few of the differences from the -- go ahead.

>> Kitchen: Well, no.

I would just want to understand if -- you know, I'm trying to -- I'm thinking through the process.

I would just want to understand if there were recommendations that came from the group that for whatever reason in y'all's experience you felt like were not appropriate, that you're not bringing forward to us.

I just want to understand that also at some point.

>> Okay.

>> Kitchen: Go ahead.

>> To give you kind of a general response to that question, so within that group, we did have stakeholders who fundamentally disagreed on some topics but really came to a point where we could find some common ground on others.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> So we really did try to work through where even if not everything in the staff recommendations met this one group's needs, maybe there would be something in there that

helped to meet some of their concerns while meeting the other groups too.

>> Kitchen: Thank you.

>> In terms of the staff recommendations, so you have a full copy, but here are just a few of the points I wanted to pull out.

In particular, fees.

So right now there is an administrative cost and enforcement cost whenever a new industry enters the market.

Some of the fees to help cover those costs that are currently being paid by tax dollars.

Insurance.

So we consider there to be different stages of operation with TNCs.

Stage one being whenever the TNC driver is logged into the application but does not have a passenger yet.

So if I was a driver, it means I've got the app on and I'm available to pick up a passenger but I haven't picked one yet.

That is stage one.

Stage two is whenever you have a -- you've accepted a ride and stage three is when there's somebody in your vehicle.

Stage one is where our recommendations differ on the insurance requirements.

Currently, the agreements have -- they have lower requirements for insurance coverage during that stage one.

From the city's perspective if you're on the phone, looking for rides, then there should be coverage for what incidents could happen while you're in that operating mode.

Data, we would like to lay out specific data required to be reported to the city by TNCs so that we can get a better picture of ground tassings operations in Austin and be able to compare those operations and see how it impacts the market as a whole.

We do want to strengthen the ADA requirements that are currently in the ordinance right now.

They need to be in compliance with the federal law but we also -- what we have laid out in the staff requirements are some ideas on how to get into compliance with the law.

And then finally vehicle safety inspections.

Currently, ground transportation vehicles go through a separate safety inspection from the safety inspection that you might have on your personal vehicle, whereas TNCs are getting the state safety inspection that you have on your personal vehicle.

>> Kitchen: Go ahead.

>> Gallo: Questions, of course.

So I'm just going to go through your list and thank you for doing this because it's really helpful.

So on fees, if the staff recommendation is the TNCs pay 1% of the gross revenue, how does that compare to what the city is collecting from taxis?

>> Kitchen: Right.

>> So that number would rely completely on the level of participation that the TNCs have in this city.

So by not knowing -- throughout the discussions the TNCs resisted providing information or did not show a willingness to share information as to the number of drivers that will be participating in their platform.

Because the city is required to charge a fee that only covers the cost of administration, by

charging a percent of their gross revenue could directly relate to the level of participation they have in the market.

And when you look at other cities, as you mentioned before, this is one thing that another city is ahead of us on, where Houston has implemented a 2% charge to their gross revenue.

And that's the state allowed maximum.

>> Kitchen: So I think it would be helpful, I won't speak for you, but it would be helpful for me, when I see the recommendations, then I also see a comparison to what is the comparable requirement for the -- for taxicabs.

>> I think the grid that you mentioned earlier --

>> Kitchen: Would do that?

>> Yes.

Fees could be one of the columns if that grid.

I could see that all integrating together.

>> Gallo: Back to the question of how are taxi companies charged?

How does the city charge --

>> Currently the city charges per permit.

So by knowing that there are 756 permits, the city can establish a number that directly relates to the amount of enforcement and administration required.

So by implementing a fee per vehicle, that number has been established.

>> Gallo: So it doesn't make any difference what company the permit is issued for, it's the same cost per permit?

>> That is absolutely correct.

>> Gallo: Are there any other fees that tax companies are charged that they have to pay into the and I other than the permit charge?

>> There's only -- no.

Other than the chauffeur permit fee, which there's a \$20 cost for a chauffeur to secure a two-year driver permit.

>> Gallo: Okay.

Thank you.

>> Kitchen: Yes, go ahead.

>> I thought there was a fee that the city assesses when, like, somebody is picked up from the airport?

>> So I think -- if we have someone from the airport that can speak to that.

I think there is a fee associated with doing business at the airport that is across the board for ground transportation service providers.

>> Kitchen: So that would be related to the rates as opposed to to just a business fee that you pay?

>> It is not related to the rate.

>> Kitchen: It's not, okay.

>> Jim Smith, the airport.

The airport has a separate fee that we charge all entities that operate at the airport to help recover the costs of running the airport.

So we have to put ground transportation controllers to monitor the curb, we have to pay APD for police services out there.

So we charge fees for limos, taxicabs, TNCs, you know, anybody who is going to use the airport to recover the expense.

Since no tax dollars go to pay for anything at the airport, the airport has to recover its expenses through charging various people who use the airport to earn a living.

>> Kitchen: Okay let Councilmember Garza finish.

>> Garza: I'm trying to get a final number that Councilmember Gallo is trying to get, which is we get the 1% from TNCs, we get that but it sounds like the city gets -- I want to know what the city gets from taxicabs.

>> Kitchen: Total, right?

>> Garza: Total.

There's a permit fee and now there's a fee they might pay to the airport.

What else does the city get from taxes?

Is that it?

>> Gallo: And how many is the -- before you leave, what is the permit fee -- or what is the fee at the airport that the taxis -- you talked about there being a fee, but what is the fee?

How is it charged?

>> Our manager of ground transportation, she can answer that.

The TNC fee we have, we only have a temporary agreement with the TNCs right now so we took a upfront payment from them and then we allowed 45 days to continue the negotiation.

So it isn't a per trip fee we have with the TNCs fee right now but for the cabs.

>> Ground transportation at the airport.

For the cabs it's \$1 per trip.

But they get that \$1 back through a surcharge they pass on to the customer.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

Thank you.

I'm going to do a quick time check with my fellow councilmembers.

And I'm not -- don't want to cut off -- you know, our options will be to -- you know, to continue with the level of detail we're asking, which is important, and we can do that if we'd like.

But that -- I can see that means we're going to have to push off some of our briefing to our next meeting because I don't think we're going to get through all of it at this rate.

So -- and/or we can identify background information that we'd like to get and make sure -- and I'm sure staff will make sure that we get that and then move a little faster through.

It's really up to the pleasure of the councilmembers.

So -- but I want to let everyone know we're not going to make it through all these briefing items at the current rate of progress.

How do y'all feel?

Do you want to -- and I know you have some questions, Councilmember Gallo.

>> Gallo: So the -- asking the questions and getting the responses is fine, but I want to make sure that that dialogue is public because the advantage of asking them here is that this is recorded and the public can listen to all of this conversation.

So I would be fine with that if we figure out a way to make it easily public.

That would be my only concern.

>> Kitchen: My suggestion would be, see if y'all agree with this, is that we -- you know, we can continue to ask some questions, but we make a list of all these questions.

We make that public.

We can put it on the message board, for example.

We make that public and then our next meeting we're scheduled for a public hearing on this same -- these same issues.

So we'll continue to have that conversation in the public.

So if that makes sense to y'all, would that -- yes.

>> Zimmerman: I'd like to second that idea, council message board, publicly ask questions.

There's some data here, right?

>> Kitchen: Yeah.

>> Zimmerman: Our data we were more interested in, you know, what is it costing the taxicab drivers, I wanted to know what those permits were.

I had the very same questions.

I kind of thought it would be here but it's not here.

>> I can provide that number.

>> Kitchen: I'm hearing a theme.

>> Zimmerman: Yeah.

>> Kitchen: That theme is that we want the details, also want to understand across the board what is the comparison so that we can understand if we're talking about fees for TNCs, what's happening with taxicabs.

And, you know, we're talking about TNC and taxicabs.

There are other types of entities, at least one of our speakers spoke to those other types of entities.

So I think we need that grid and some details.

So, okay, so we're going to proceed if that's all right with everyone.

Y'all can still ask questions.

We're going to proceed to making sure our specific questions are publicly stated, put them on the message board and have additional opportunity at the public hearing that we're going to have -- actually, next week that we can have more discussion.

Councilmember Garza.

>> Garza: I just want to reiterate to please ask staff to provide us, as chair kitchen said, that side by side.

I feel to a certain extent -- this is just my perception of it -- we're kind of being led down a -- they're not the same thing.

TNCs are different from taxis.

And I want just to make the public comment now we want a real side by side, even if -- if you think they're different, we still want a side by side of all -- how these two things compare to each other, please.

>> Kitchen: Yes.

I would say there's a number of policy issues that we've raised and I'm sure there will be more, one of them is to what level do we regulate.

The other one is a fair playing field.

So to understand that, we have to know the regulations and we have to know how they compare.

>> Zimmerman: Other thing, if I could, on the idea of taking a gross off of a fee, I kind of

wondered why wasn't that done with the taxicab companies?

If I have to pay a permit fee, I'm going to guess that that fee is the same whether I work 60 hours a week or ten hours a week, it's probably the same license fee, isn't it?

>> That is correct.

>> Zimmerman: So that kind of makes no sense to me because I've got this overhead, now I'm going to have to work more hours and the advantage of the TNCs is I can work future hours but they're still paying the same 1% gross. That's the kind of policy stuff I'd like to see us get.

>> Kitchen: Thank you for bearing with us.

We're all learn this but I think we're trying to give you guys some idea of the kinds of information we need to address these policy questions.

So with that, keep going.

>> I can wrap up pretty quickly here.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> Two more slides, next one being it is important to note there's state legislation involving TNCs right now.

Our kind of general synopsis of it it basically takes away the city oversight and regulatory authority of TNCs.

The fees are paid to the state and not to the city.

And the varying definitions and purposes differ than what the city's are right now.

So our priority would be maintaining that authority to the City of Austin so that we can have direct oversight for safety of our residents, the TNC drivers and the passengers.

So wanted to make sure to put that in there because it's directly related to what happens next.

Next week, as you mentioned, there will be more public comments on the staff recommendations, and I do want to be clear that those are just recommendations at this point.

They haven't been instituted.

>> So there's no collection of that 1% gross revenue right now.

But the next steps from -- that we would recommend to y'all is that whenever we made those staff recommendations that was prior to the ordinance -- really step in step, when the ordinance was passed.

So those recommendations were developed and we've been monitoring now how the operations impact ground transportation as a whole.

So our best recommendation would be to keep collecting the data that we are able to get right now, see what happens at the state but take all that information into consideration and come back to y'all with an action that would say here are the staff recommendations that we recommend implementing.

Or y'all -- yes.

>> Kitchen: Well, I appreciate that.

I mean, as a group we may decide to move more quickly.

>> Yes, okay.

And that is it.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

Thank you.

So help me out.

Are we now on to the next area?

Okay.

Go ahead.

>> Yes.

And I will encourage the committee to stop me at any point you have a question.

Although I understand we are pressed for time.

I do not want to appear as though I'm glossing over some very significant recommendations.

>> Kitchen: Just so everyone can understand, we're now on item number four, which is the proposed code amendment related to taxi services and task force recommendations, right?

Are we on the same page?

>> To provide you a background of the task force, the Austin transportation department assembled a task force in late 2013 because we were aware that there were issues related to the taxi industry as well as upcoming taxi franchise renewals.

The task force was composed of a diverse array of perspectives, where we had the city staff, aviation, airport commission, representatives from urban transportation commission, taxi drivers association, as well as the franchises, and the list goes on.

>> Kitchen: Mm-hmm.

>> So although you have the complete set of recommendations in front of you, we decided to highlight a few.

The first will be changes to our existing code.

As mentioned earlier, dispatch exception as well as hours on duty are issues we felt needed to be addressed, where drivers are currently required to work a 12-hour shift and after 12 consecutive hours they are to go out of service for eight hours and can return.

What we've noticed in practice is the drivers will work a shift that is less than 12 consecutive hours, they can go out of service within that 12 consecutive hour period starts again.

So staff would like to recommend that thereby a total of 12 cumulative hours within a 24 hour period that taxi drivers would be allowed to operate.

Mr. Woody mentioned earlier the importance of a driver that is closest to the requested -- request for service be identified by the company's GPS city manager and that driver be required to service that call.

The dispatch acceptance language is what we're trying to achieve.

There are recommended changes to our assemble service requirements.

Earlier it was -- about a 3% requirement.

I think I need to make it clear that our expectations of the franchises are to provide 100% service or service 100% of their requests for accessible service, but to take it a step deeper, each driver in the company should have a responsibility to that company's achieving the 100%.

So the drivers -- if the company has 26 drivers, each of those 26 drivers is responsible for serving 3% of that number so that the company could achieve the 100% service requirement.

Also, as mentioned earlier, our recommendation would be to increase the fleet requirement from six and a half percent accessible vehicles to 10%.

And we also had some recommendations that would require new code language.

So although credit card acceptance is wild used by all three franchises it's not mandated by code, and we believe that it should be a requirement so that in instances where companies, city manager goes down, the city actually has leverage to ensure that the company gets that service back up as quickly as possible because it does impact the drivers as well as paying customers.

Another recommendation was that the eight years service life limit currently on taxis be extended for alternative fuel vehicles from eight years to ten years, with the potential that that vehicle could remain in service longer if it were able to successfully pass the required safety inspections.

Calculation of necessary franchise permits, the formula, it's been mentioned earlier today.

After looking at the data, it is definitely a concern of the department as to the effectiveness of the current formula.

It should be noted that in 2012, council effectively waved the formula and issued 75 permits.

Currently there are 712 franchise permits.

And 44 wheelchair.

So to take a look at the formula, it's -- it basically takes into consideration the previous year's result, averages the sum of your population growth, and taxi departures and we have a real life situation where there's actually the formula that the -- the department used in 2014.

>> Gallo: I have a question because I've confused at this point.

So the fee that the city collects from the permits, is that different from what you're talking about a franchise?

>> So the city currently does not have a franchise fee.

>> Gallo: Okay.

>> The fee is according to the number of permits operated.

>> Gallo: So it's the fee that you talked about before that's per permit.

>> Correct.

>> Gallo: Collected with the permits, okay.

>> With the number of taxicabs currently operating that fee is at \$340,000 a year across all three taxi franchises.

>> Gallo: Okay.

>> So the need for additional or specialized permits, the recommendation from the task force is for additional -- from the department as informed by the task force is for an additional 100 permits for each taxi franchise.

And that would increase the local total of taxi franchise permits from 756 to 1,056.

And staff has also -- is also going to make a recommendation on an additional franchise opportunity, and I'll speak to that in the next presentation.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> So our next steps will be to come back next week to allow for public engagement and additional discussion and to submit an item for council consideration on the April 23 council agenda.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

So now we can move on to item number five, I believe, which is the taxicab franchise renewal process.

>> Okay.

So there are currently three franchises operating in town.

Austin cab and Yellow Cab have a franchise that expires on August 8 of this year, Lone Star cab, their franchise expires August 28.

When addressing franchise ordinances the city chart set very specific as to how it should be done and there are several requirements that determines how that's done.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

Determines the timing?

Yeah.

>> Absolutely.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> The first is that they must be addressed on three separate readings.

>> Kitchen: Those requirements are an ordinance; is that correct?

>> That's a charter.

>> Kitchen: Charter, I'm sorry.

You said that, sorry.

>> So the Austin transportation department has set out a track that we would recommend that council take in addressing the franchise ordinances, which would require the first reading to occur on April 23, considering the requirement that the third reading can't occur within 30 days of the first reading.

There are multiple opportunities for a second reading that council has, although we would recommend a second reading of May 21, and because the franchises -- the earliest expiration is August 8 and another charter requirement is once the franchise agreements are approved on third reading there's a 60-day waiting period before that franchise agreement actually becomes effective.

So with the earliest expiration on June 8 it's recommended council address the third reading prior to June 8 and the last possible council meeting to make that happen would be June 4.

>> Kitchen: So okay.

So all of this time line is dictated by the requirements as you're setting forth, okay.

And all these requirements are in charter versus ordinance?

>> That's correct.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> This is my understanding that none of those requirements can be waived.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> If I could, madam chair, I would point out hopefully what's the obvious, is that the actual ordinance passed by council or the franchise ordinance can change between the first reading and the third reading.

>> Kitchen: Yes.

>> So it's important to achieve the guidelines, the dates, that are required in the charter, but certainly there's plenty of opportunity for policy to change between the first and the third reading.

>> Kitchen: Yes.

Thank you.

Did you want to say something?

>> Gallo: I do have a question.

This question is purely a question, not to give anyone a heart attack whether I will support or not support this.

[Laughter]

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> Gallo: So if we were to deregulate, would we be dealing with franchises?

>> I would assume not.

>> Gallo: Okay.

>> Because the franchise agreement sets out the city's expectation for performance as a taxicab company in town.

>> Gallo: Okay.

Thank you.

>> Kitchen: To further the heart attack, but basically because all this is in charter we're not talking about an ordinance change?

To change any of these time lines we'd have to do it in the charter?

>> According to the charter, when you are addressing a franchise ordinance, those -- the process cannot change.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> Although you will in effect be changing the franchise ordinance.

>> Kitchen: Thank you.

>> Just one other sort of heart attack issue, what happens if you miss these deadlines?

If a franchise expires, our typical Fridays practice is to notify them they have 30 days to correct a action.

In a sense at the end of this period you have up to a 3rd-day window where they can be in limbo even though it's not their fault their franchise has fallen out of compliance.

So if we miss the dates by a couple of weeks we can typically and in the past we've done this, notify them per our requirement to notify them that their chart ser out of compliance, that they have 30 days, but we've always been able to then have the charters come back into compliance because the date.

So there's a small window, but I would not recommend relying on it.

>> Kitchen: Did you have a quick question?

>> Zimmerman: Quick question.

Can you provide me to what charter that is or ordinance?

Anybody know?

Save me the trouble looking for it.

Second thing, before you go, director, so have there been any, to your knowledge, historical precedents for -- [lapse in audio]

>> Zimmerman: Okay.

Back to Councilmember Gallo's point, there's another way of looking at the whole thing.

This is not deregulation, per se, but changing it to where -- what the city is actually doing is, say, a certification program.

So that the taxicab licensees or whatever you want to call them they would be certified that they complied with a certain number of regulation that's the city put forward.

In other words, they're not compelled to do it, it's just that they choose to do it, they've got a sign that says we're licensed by the city, and it's conceivable that the market we keep talking about, the market would say, you know, I like something that's been approved and registered by the city.

City has the -- requires background checks, all the things that are required.

They could have a market value and people would prefer to use a city cab, right, because of the licensing and the safety checks.

Just throwing that out there as a concept, you know.

It shouldn't be mandatory or required, it could be something people would actually choose.

>> Understood.

>> Kitchen: We do have a lot of ideas and policy issues to discuss.

We will need to understand -- I don't know if we will need to understand but I'd like to understand and I'll go back and look at it, what's in charter because that requires a change -- a vote change when you're talking about charter.

>> That's right.

>> Kitchen: Go ahead.

>> Angela, from the city law department, to answer Councilmember Zimmerman's question and yours as well it's in charter Article 11, section 3.

And it's just a small paragraph, it's the order -- sorry, ordinance granting a franchise and it states that for every ordinance granting renewing, extending or amending the franchise, there should be three readings.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> It goes through exactly what Carlton described but it's Article 11, section 3, ordinance granting franchise.

And exactly, I believe if you're talking about deregulation there would have to be a finding by council as a body that the taxicab industry is no longer seen as a public utility and proceed from there.

>> Kitchen: Thank you very much.

>> Okay.

>> Kitchen: So shall we move on to the proposed code amendment, now we're getting tight on time.

How much time do you think you need for the last one?

>> So I have a couple of slides left on this presentation.

>> Kitchen: Okay, all right, keep going then.

>> Councilmember I would suggest you get to the taxi franchise and [indiscernible]

>> Kitchen: All right, thank you.

>> So currently the applications have been received for the three franchises and staff is reviewing those.

Preparing to make a recommendation to, first, the mobility committee on its April 1 meeting and then to the urban transportation commission on April 14.

These are some of the items staff would like to see addressed in the franchise ordinances, reporting requirements, GPS requirement, mandatory credit card acceptance, approving a franchise term for ten years, as well as establishing an expectation for 100% accessible and 100% green fleet by the end of that franchise term.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

Thank you very much.

>> I -- there is --

>> Kitchen: Oops, sorry.

Go ahead.

>> And there's also the recommendation for -- staff would like to recommend the council consider creating a new franchise opportunity for a company that's wishing to come in and

operate a franchise of 100% accessible vehicles with up to 105 permits.

And if council does approve that, staff would be forced to advertise to bid out for companies wishing to provide that service.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

Thank you very much.

I would like to use the remaining few minutes to just talk about the next meeting and then see if any people have other questions.

So -- go ahead.

>> Garza: I want to make a quick comment to my colleagues, that San Antonio just -- I don't know if y'all are aware but San Antonio just implemented more regulations for the TNCs and in effect those TNCs have decided to leave San Antonio.

I'm not saying that's where we're going, but if we want to look to what another city did, what happened, that that might be an option for us.

>> Kitchen: Well, I think that's a good question.

I think I'd like to understand from staff too how our regulations in this city compare -- for TNCs compare to other cities, and if there's, like, councilmember Garza mentioned if there's results from that, that would be helpful.

So next week, which is the first, we are scheduled for -- which is our first regularly scheduled mobility committee meeting, we're scheduled from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, we have -- I put out some information on the message board about what we were considering and what we've talked about so we have two briefing item and then a public input session.

So my thought is that we establish a time certain, beginning and end time certain, for our public input and that that be from 5:00 to 7:00 and that we have our briefing from 4:00 to 5:00.

And then I'd also like to suggest, and if it's agreeable to the other councilmembers, is that we start the public input session with perhaps some comments from stakeholders.

Now, from identified stakeholders and then continue with the rest of the public input session.

We can talk about -- I know that we've got a lot of identified stakeholders but I thought that might be helpful to our stakeholders if we did that.

So yes?

>> Zimmerman: So we had a public safety meeting, we had our public safety meeting yesterday, and we -- that was kind of our purpose, for us to, as a committee, to try to identify people that had specific messages because what happens is when people come in and they get three minutes, some of those speakers, when you listen to them, you think they have a lot of depth and a lot of understanding, it would be better if we can get ten or 15 minutes from those people.

So if the committee -- I think as part of the leadership of the committee's responsibility to pick some really good testimony that reflects, you know, a large group of people and invite them and give them ten or 15 minutes to develop their ideas because in three minutes you can hardly do anything.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

I will talk with my fellow councilmembers about a proposed approach.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

I will talk with my fellow council members about a proposed approach and we will make that

decision very shortly so we can let the public know how we want to structure that.

Does that make sense to everybody?

>> Madam chair, I would point out there's one presentation today we didn't get to, presentation on the City of Austin regulation of charter services.

That is an important issue that we need to convey to you.

It is on your next council meeting, which I believe is on the second.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> The reason it is important is, we currently have regulations in effect that were the subject of a legal discussion at the courts, and so the changes in the regulation that are being proposed for your consideration on the second are directly related to the direction that we received from the court to make sure that we're in compliance there.

And so it's a short presentation that we can do next --

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> On the first, but it is important because it then directly relates to an issue you'll see on the second.

>> Kitchen: Does that work for -- how much time do you need to make that presentation?

>> Maybe five minutes.

>> Kitchen: Let me ask my fellow council members.

Would you all like to hear that right now, or would you like to wait?

If we could keep it to five --

>> If we can keep it to five.

>> Kitchen: If we can keep it to five, let's hear it right now.

>> I will stand behind him and make sure he does.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> So to give you a little background, a year or so ago -- well, in 2013, the City of Austin, throughout the process of updating its regulations for ground transportation services, addressed charter services.

And that includes vans, mini buses, and buses.

The change to the code prompted a lawsuit that was filed against the city by the united motor coach association, challenging the city's authority to regulate buses.

So the city does regulate for safety to protect the public, ensure buses and vans and vehicles used, as well as drivers, owners, and holders, are accountable and safe.

And as a city, the city is authorized to regulate for -- regulate and control the streets and highways.

And the city's regulation to remain compliant with federal law does not generate an economic benefit, nor maintain a local business preference for buses.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> So here's a timeline of how we ended up here today.

In 2013, the city did change its code.

There was the challenge.

The city responded by -- well, the judge, during that hearing, generally held in favor of the city, but did enjoin two provisions of the code related to vehicles with a capacity of 16 or more.

The city then responded by making changes to the code.

Council did approve those changes.

Recently there was an amended complaint filed, and this action that we're speaking to you today is to respond to those complaints, and again make several changes to the code to -- in an effort to be compliant.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> So, basically, we're making changes to definitions in the code.

We're removing the term "solely" where it doesn't fit.

We've added a definition of a non-city regulated charter services as to not capture services that are currently regulated at a federal level.

The city does not wish to regulate those services that are currently regulated federally.

And there are also changes to clear up cross-references that no longer exist, several minor changes to the code in an effort to clean it up.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> And as Mr. Spiller indicated, it will be submitted for council consideration on its April 2nd council agenda.

>> Okay.

Do we have questions?

No?

Okay.

Thank you very much.

>> Thank you.

>> Kitchen: Now, let me -- I also wanted to note, just because -- and then we'll close, but the next council -- our next committee meeting is also important because we will have a briefing on transportation funding, which I -- you know, I think is very important for our committee to understand because as we weighed in to the challenges that our city has, congestion and traffic, et cetera, we have got to understand where all the funding comes from and what options are available to us.

So I'm looking forward to that.

>> Right.

And, Council Member, what we're planning is a very high level overview.

I'm sure it will generate more questions that we'll be able to go into in subsequent meetings as well.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

It might be helpful to the extent that you can.

I want to thank you all for all the information you put together for us.

We're putting a lot of demands on you.

But you can also provide us the detailed background, that might be helpful too.

>> We will do the best we can.

We're still running to catch up.

>> Kitchen: All right.

Thank you very much.

All right.

With that, does anyone have anything else they'd like to say before we close?

Thank you all very much and thank you to everyone who came to speak to us today, and we invite you back next week.

Thank you.