



TAXICAB DRIVER FAIRNESS TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

MAY 22, 2015



BACKGROUND ON THE TAXICAB DRIVER FAIRNESS TASK FORCE

On December 10th, 2014, Mayor Rahm Emanuel appointed a diverse group of licensed City of Chicago taxicab drivers and representatives from the City of Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) to the Taxicab Driver Fairness Task Force. The Task Force was tasked with reviewing the City of Chicago's current laws that regulate taxicab drivers and other pertinent issues with a view towards recommending changes to create and implement new laws, policies, and procedures towards fairness on how taxicab drivers are regulated.

The Task Force was created out of the innovative taxicab driver fairness reforms that Mayor Emanuel introduced in 2014. The reforms introduced ways to increase taxicab driver income, propel industry innovation, and improve the taxicab driver experience. The goals of the reforms included ensuring that taxicab drivers receive a fair deal from the industry and the City as well as cutting bureaucratic red tape towards enhancing their interaction with the City.

TAXICAB DRIVER FAIRNESS TASK FORCE MEMBERS

The Taxicab Driver Fairness Task Force benefitted from the diverse makeup of experience and knowledge of the Chicago taxicab industry towards the goal of introducing reforms that create a fair and vibrant environment for taxicab drivers in Chicago.

Alphabetical Listing of Taxicab Driver Fairness Task Force Members:

- **Ezzedin Abdelmagid**, Taxicab Driver, Cab Drivers United/AFSCME Council 31 Representative
- **Michael Agunloye**, Taxicab Driver, Cab Drivers United/AFSCME Council 31 Representative
- **Rupal Bapat**, Deputy Commissioner, BACP
- **Bill Burns**, Taxicab Driver
- **Karen Chamberlain**, Taxicab Driver, UTCC (United Taxidivers Community Council) Representative
- **Grace Czachor**, Medallion Owner-Operator Taxicab Driver
- **Peter Ali Enger**, Taxicab Driver, UTCC Representative
- **Rosa Escareno**, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, Mayor's Office
- **Tariq Kamill**, Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) Taxicab Driver, 2013 Taxicab Driver Excellence Award Winner
- **George Kasp**, Medallion Owner-Operator Taxicab Driver
- **Matthew Haynam**, Attorney, BACP
- **Maria Guerra Lapacek**, Commissioner, BACP
- **David Mangum**, Taxicab Driver
- **Imran Mirza**, Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) Taxicab Driver, 2012 Taxicab Driver Excellence Award Winner
- **Stefan Schaffer**, Policy Associate, Mayor's Office
- **Tariq Siddiqui**, Taxicab Driver
- **Karamjeet Singh**, Taxicab Driver

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ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

In arriving at its recommendations, the Task Force held a total of ten separate meetings to engage in dialogue with various City departments, including: Administrative Hearings, Aviation, Business Affairs and Consumer Protection, Finance, McCormick Place, Police and Transportation.

TAXICAB DRIVER FAIRNESS TASK FORCE MISSION STATEMENT AND GUIDING TENETS

The Task Force developed a mission statement and supplementary guiding tenets to inform the process of drafting of its final recommendations. These are listed below.

Mission Statement:

To review existing municipal code, rules and regulations, and the current administrative hearings process and to make recommendations for reform that would continue to uphold public safety, enhance convenience for drivers, and simplify the City's administrative hearings process for taxicab drivers.

Guiding Tenets:

1. *Uphold the Safety of the Public*: Ensure taxicab drivers are equipped with the knowledge and equipment required to properly and safely operate public passenger vehicles.
2. *Promote Taxicab Drivers Well-Being and Security*: Promote wellness and health among taxicab drivers. Develop strategies to ensure that taxicab drivers are safe, secure, and confident while operating their taxicabs.
3. *Incentivize and Support Taxicab Driver Licensees*: Develop and implement streamlined criteria for licensing and compliance to ensure rational and reasonable licensing and enforcement guidelines for taxicab licensees.
4. *Streamline MCC Chapter 9-104 and Rules and Regulations for Public Chauffeurs*: Public chauffeurs are subject to Municipal Code of Chicago Chapter 9-104 and Rules and Regulations for Public Chauffeurs. This Task Force will review the current laws and explore options for reform in order to reduce unnecessary burdens on drivers while maintaining safety standards. Potential goals include, but are not limited to:
 - a. *Update and Simplify the Language in the Laws that Govern Public Chauffeurs*: Eliminate vague terms and ambiguity, clarify which actions are in violation of the laws, and eliminate unnecessary burdens to public chauffeurs.
 - b. *Emphasize Public Safety and Consumer Protection*: Weigh violations regarding public chauffeur unsafe driving and fraudulent actions more heavily than actions that are not deceptive practices or a concern to public safety.
 - c. *Boost Professionalism of Public Chauffeur Licensees*: Promote customer service and courtesy to the public as the norm.
 - d. *Promote Benefits of Servicing a Diverse Passenger Pool*: Incentivize public chauffeurs to service all areas and residents, including those with disabilities, in Chicago.

5. *Update Uniform Taxicab Lease Agreement:* Incorporate new lease rate caps passed in the Taxi Driver Fairness Ordinance and simplify the use of agreement for taxicab drivers.

TAXICAB DRIVER FAIRNESS TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Over a five month period during which a series of meetings were held, the task force identified potential resolutions to issues taxicab drivers face and developed recommendations toward an equitable licensing and regulatory framework for licensed City of Chicago taxicab drivers. The scope of the recommendations includes potential changes to the Municipal Code of Chicago, applicable rules and regulations, and other policy ideas for consideration.

1. Establish an ongoing dialogue between the Task Force, the City of Chicago, and other entities.

- a. Conduct quarterly Task Force meetings moving forward to check in on progress toward existing recommendations, generate new recommendations, and engage appropriate representatives from City departments, the Mayor's Office, and other taxicab drivers, organizations, industries or entities as needed. BACP will schedule the quarterly Task Force meetings in January for that calendar year for dates in February, May, August, and November. Notice of the dates, times, and locations of the Task Force meetings will be disseminated to the taxicab drivers that participated in this Task Force and also by BACP Public Vehicle Industry Notice to engage other interested taxicab drivers.
- b. Establish a clear, sustainable process to prioritize Task Force recommendations, to ensure any recommendations pursued are appropriate, feasible, timely, and adhere to the Task Force's mission statement and guiding tenets.
- c. Explore new ways to ensure Task Force members have ample opportunity to engage with appropriate City departments, agencies, and other entities and have the concerns of the broader taxicab driver community heard.
- d. Create a succession plan to replenish Task Force members as needed and to maintain a core steering committee that is representative of the taxicab driver community.

2. Enhance taxicab driver security and welfare.

- a. Foster a stronger relationship with the Chicago Police Department and taxicab drivers so that taxicab drivers can communicate and seek guidance on safety concerns. Work with the Office of Emergency Management and Communications to potentially include trainings for 911 operators on how to best respond to calls made by taxicab drivers on duty seeking police protection.
- b. Explore new technologies and other innovative approaches to keep drivers safe.
- c. Educate taxicab drivers on available free or low-cost health care services, e.g. health screenings administered by the City of Chicago.
- d. Educate taxicab drivers on Illinois Worker's Compensation coverage and laws.

3. Streamline the processes surrounding public chauffeur license issuance, renewal, surrender, suspension, and revocation.

- a. Establish clear definitions for the taxicab driver public chauffeur and restricted public chauffeur license types to provide for ease in distinguishability.
- b. Facilitate a process for taxicab drivers who are indebted to the City and unable to renew their license, e.g. by issuing temporary licenses and/or instituting payment plans, in conjunction with the Department of Finance.
- c. Reduce the time frame an applicant for a public chauffeur license must wait to submit a new application after having received an earlier denial – from 18 months to 12 months.
- d. Amend the public chauffeur license renewal process so that an application for renewal may be denied if the licensee has received three or more traffic and or administrative hearing convictions – as opposed to complaints – within the 12 months preceding the application date.
- e. Revisit the parameters that require taxicab driver chauffeur license renewal applicants to undertake and complete incremental driving courses.
- f. Explore ways to use complaints received against an existing public chauffeur licensee for more appropriate corrective action, e.g. attitudinal, sensitivity, or safe or defensive driving training requirements in lieu of a denial of an application.
- g. Explore ways to reduce or eliminate existing continuing education requirements as a prerequisite to public chauffeur license renewal.
- h. Clarify appropriate instances in which a police officer or field investigator may confiscate a public chauffeur license card, e.g. if the license is not in good status, was obtained fraudulently, issued erroneously, or as part of an ongoing investigation.
- i. Revisit and clarify the violations that may result in a public chauffeur license being suspended, denied, or revoked.

4. Reduce disproportionately burdensome penalties imposed upon taxicab drivers found in violation of Chicago Municipal Code or public chauffeur rules and regulations.

- a. Revisit the sanctions imposed on taxicab drivers found in violation of certain sections of Chicago Municipal Code or public chauffer rules and regulations, e.g. abusive behavior or unsafe driving. Establish new sanctions that are more appropriate given the nature of these violations.
- b. Delineate specific prohibited acts by taxicab drivers, e.g. use of profane language, display of obscene gestures, battery and assault. The current affirmative duty for taxicab drivers to be “courteous” is subjective to interpretation and is vague.
- c. Reduce the amount of time a “repeated offense” may be counted against a taxicab driver’s record to one (1) year from the existing five (5) years.

- d. Develop a process to allow taxicab drivers to be issued notices to correct in lieu of citations for certain violations not directly related to public safety.

5. Revamp onerous or outdated responsibilities of taxicab drivers.

- a. Amend the requirement that a taxicab driver must search the vehicle for lost items after each individual fare to one that: (i) is more easily adhered to by the taxicab driver and (ii) still provides a mechanism to ensure lost items are found and properly returned to their owner.
- b. Remove the requirement that a taxicab driver be responsive to radio dispatch calls, due to recent advancements in dispatch technology.
- c. Delete the existing requirement that a taxicab driver must respond to a minimum one radio dispatch call per day, as the relevant program was eliminated in 2012.
- d. Amend the existing requirement that a taxicab driver cannot leave a license card in an unattended taxicab such that it is less onerous while ensuring public safety is upheld.

6. Enhance the day-to-day operations at Chicago airports and McCormick Place.

- a. Request the Chicago Department of Aviation establish and publish regularly scheduled meetings that taxicab drivers may attend to establish an ongoing dialogue regarding operations and conditions at the airports relevant to taxicab drivers.
- b. Increase the airport short trip time to one hour to allow taxicab drivers additional time to return to the airport line after completing a fare.
- c. Streamline or revisit the airport shared ride program and associated signage in conjunction with the Department of Aviation.
- d. Revisit the name of the “shared ride” program to remove any ambiguity and confusion with the Transportation Network Provider (TNP) a.k.a. “rideshare” industry, with input from the Department of Aviation.
- e. Explore ways to improve airport staging locations by providing access to higher quality restrooms, more dining options, information on airport arrivals and designated areas for resting or interfaith use, with input from the Department of Aviation.
- f. Explore ways to enhance the existing working relationship between taxicab drivers and airport staging location starters, with input from the Department of Aviation.
- g. Explore ways to streamline the management of taxicab lines at Chicago airports, with input from the Department of Aviation.
- h. Explore ways to clarify and streamline airport loading, unloading and standing procedures, with input from the Department of Aviation.
- i. Explore the possibility of establishing designated taxicab lanes at airports, with input from the Departments of Aviation and Transportation.

- j. Explore ways to streamline the complaint system at Chicago's airports such that it is easily accessible and usable by taxicab drivers, with input from the Department of Aviation.
- k. Explore ways to ensure appropriate enforcement is taken against entities that are illegally soliciting fares at airports, e.g. unlicensed vehicles, suburban taxis or transportation network providers, with input from the Police Department and Department of Aviation.
- l. Explore ways to replace paper MPEA tax stamps with a new technology, e.g. an electronic application, for use by taxicab drivers, in conjunction with the Department of Finance.
- m. Explore ways to streamline the pickup and drop-off process for taxicab drivers at McCormick Place, with input from the Department of Transportation.
- n. Initiate a dialogue with McCormick Place to potentially review the effect of the 2012 elimination of the shared ride program at McCormick Place and explore the feasibility of reinstating the previous program or establishing a new program.

7. Improve the processes surrounding passenger discharge, loading zones, taxicab stands, and taxicab lines.

- a. Explore ways to streamline the discharge of passengers and revisit the practice of issuing citations surrounding passenger discharge, with input from the Police Department and Department of Transportation.
- b. Explore ways to improve clarity and/or increase signage at loading zones and taxicab stands, with input from the Department of Transportation.
- c. Explore ways to revisit enforcement protocol and streamline traffic flow at taxicab stands and taxicab lines, with input from the Police Department and Department of Transportation.
- d. Review suggestions for the establishment of specific taxicab stands, with input from the Department of Transportation.
- e. Initiate a dialogue with the Chicago Police Department and the Office of Emergency Management and Communications regarding the practice of serving tickets by mail only. Taxicab drivers do not receive the tickets until days or weeks later and, as a result, are often unaware of the details surrounding the violation when there is a need to contest.

8. Improve City programs and strengthen awareness of City processes.

- a. Request the Department of Administrative Hearings create a training video educating the public, including taxicab drivers, on administrative hearing terminology and procedures and disseminate a handout with glossary of terms and flowchart of procedures
- b. Increase awareness of free or low-cost legal assistance available to taxicab drivers.
- c. Work with the Chicago Police Department to incorporate materials regarding taxicab drivers and the industry into its training curriculum.

9. Explore ways to make public restrooms and parking available to taxicab drivers.

- a. Explore ways to improve taxicab driver ease of access to public restrooms and to facilitate restroom breaks while on duty, with input from the Department of Transportation, the Chicago Transit Authority, the Chicago Park District, and the Chicago Public Library.
- b. Explore ways to reduce the parking burden on taxicabs in residential and commercial zones, with input from applicable Aldermen and the Department of Transportation.

10. Ensure that lease agreements and other requirements are properly communicated and duly enforced.

- a. Update the uniform taxicab lease agreement to include sections for ease of readability.
- b. Implement processes to ensure taxicab drivers are properly informed about different lease rates, the corresponding documents that must accompany any lease documents, insurance requirements, and any bond or security deposit requirements.
- c. Educate taxicab drivers on terms and basics of optional insurance coverage available to taxicab drivers, e.g. collateral damage waiver and supplemental insurance.
- d. Explore ways to encourage taxicab drivers to report lease overcharge and other fraudulent acts committed against them. Simplify the complaint process for taxicab drivers to report violations to BACP.
- e. Explore the feasibility of creating additional lease structures to allow for the more flexible leasing of taxicabs, beyond the current twelve-hour, twenty-four hour and weekly lease structures.
- f. Examine available systems that would ensure quick and efficient payouts, cash or electronic, to taxicab drivers for credit card fare payments.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The City of Chicago appreciates the volunteer time and commitment the taxicab drivers on the Taxicab Driver Fairness Task Force made to Mayor Emanuel's groundbreaking initiative towards a fair marketplace for taxicab drivers in the City of Chicago. Their combined experience and viewpoints enhanced the Task Force meetings and dialogue and help shape the outlined recommendations.