City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 10, 2025

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: JAMES F. PARAJON, CITY MANAGER

FROM: EMILY BAKER, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER AND INTERIM DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

DOCKET TITLE:
Public Hearing, Second Reading and Final Passage of an Ordinance to amend Article A (TAXICABS) of Chapter 12 (TAXICABS AND OTHER VEHICLES FOR HIRE) of Title 9 (LICENSING AND REGULATION) of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended.

ISSUE: Consideration of an ordinance to amend taxi requirements related to the minimum number of affiliated cabs and dispatch.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

1. Consider the proposed ordinance (Attachment 2) on first reading and;

2. Schedule it for second reading, public hearing and final passage on Saturday, November 15, 2025.

BACKGROUND: City staff have worked closely with Alexandria's taxicab companies over the past several years to support the industry and modernize local regulations. In February 2023, City Council approved an increase in the initial meter charge from $3 to $4 and extended the allowable vehicle age to 15 years for non-hybrid vehicles and 17 years for hybrid vehicles. Council also directed staff to review additional opportunities to streamline and reduce outdated or burdensome regulations.

A subcommittee on taxicab regulations was subsequently formed and recommended several regulatory changes. The Traffic and Parking Board expressed support for these recommendations; however, at its May 18, 2024 meeting, City Council approved only the fare adjustments and retained existing regulations.

As part of the Biennial Taxicab Review, accepted by the Traffic and Parking Board and City Manager in December 2024, compliance issues were identified among several companies. Staff have continued to work with these companies to address compliance concerns and discuss needed updates to the City Code. Based on these discussions, staff developed a set of proposed code amendments that reflect current market conditions and operational realities.

The Traffic and Parking Board reviewed the proposed amendments at its September 15 meeting and voted unanimously to recommend City Council approval. Since December 2024, staff have maintained regular communication with the taxicab companies to resolve compliance issues and refine the proposed code changes.

DISCUSSION: The proposed ordinance (Attachment 2) advances the City's ongoing efforts to support the taxicab industry by eliminating outdated or overly prescriptive regulations. These changes reflect current market conditions and allow for greater flexibility in how companies operate. The taxicab companies requested three amendments to the City Code; staff recommend approval of two.

1. Decreasing the Minimum Number of Affiliated Cabs

Section 9-12-32(e) of the City Code currently requires each cab company to maintain a minimum of 40 affiliated cabs. One of the four permitted companies is not meeting this requirement and requested that the minimum be reduced. This change would allow smaller companies to continue operating even as the overall fleet size declines.

As noted in the Biennial Taxicab Review, the industry has contracted significantly over the past decade. Reducing the minimum number of affiliated cabs will allow companies to right-size their operations while remaining in compliance. Staff recommend lowering the required minimum from 40 to 10 affiliated cabs. This change reduces the prescriptive nature of the Code, provides flexibility for smaller operators, and allows each company to determine the appropriate fleet size for its business model.

Two companies-Alexandria Union Taxicab Cooperative and Alexandria VIP Cab Company-submitted letters expressing support for the proposed change but recommending a minimum of 20 cabs rather than 10. The Traffic and Parking Board considered these comments and voted unanimously to endorse the staff recommendation to reduce the minimum to 10 affiliated cabs.

2. Revise Dispatch Service Requirements

City Code Sections 9-12-32(c) and 9-12-57(n) currently establish quantitative requirements for dispatch operations, including that dispatch call volume exceed two calls per driver per day and that at least 25 percent of those calls be city trips.

As detailed in the Biennial Taxicab Review, the volume of dispatched trips has declined sharply with the rise of Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) such as Uber and Lyft. Most trips now originate from the airport rather than through dispatch services.

Staff recommend retaining Section 9-12-32(b), which requires companies to provide dispatch service, but eliminating the specific call volume and trip percentage metrics in Sections 9-12-32(c) and 9-12-57(n). These provisions are no longer necessary to ensure public convenience and necessity, provided customers can still request a trip and receive service within a reasonable timeframe. This change was requested by the taxicab companies and aligns with current operating conditions.

3. ADA Compliance Requirement

The taxicab companies also requested removal of Section 9-12-32(f), which requires companies to provide ADA-compliant, accessible service. Staff believe this provision remains essential to meeting the public

convenience and necessity standard and do not recommend its removal.

If adopted, the recommended amendments would resolve several of the compliance issues identified over the past year. However, companies will still be required to demonstrate compliance with ADA accessibility requirements.

FISCAL IMPACT: There is no direct fiscal impact from these amendments on the City. Administration of the taxi requirements continues to be managed by the Hack Office within the Police Department.

ATTACHMENTS:
Attachment 1: Ordinance Cover Sheet
Attachment 2: Ordinance
Attachment 3: Presentation

STAFF:
Cheran Ivery, City Attorney
Lindsay Dubin, Assistant City Attorney
Hillary Orr, Deputy Director of Transportation, T&ES
Alicia Wright, Assistant Director, Administrative Services, T&ES
Katye North, Division Chief, Mobility Services, T&ES
Sheila McGraw, Curbside and Parking Program Manager, Mobility Services, T&ES
Captain Jerry Newcomb, Police Special Operations Division, APD