



ARLINGTON COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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October 11, 2011

Mr. Christopher Zimmerman, Chairman  
Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Boulevard  
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: Request to advertise a taxicab rate adjustment

Dear Chairman Zimmerman:

I am writing to express the views of the Transportation Commission with regard to the County Manager's recommendation with respect to a request to advertise a taxi rate adjustment.

**The Transportation Commission, by a vote of 8-2, approved a motion to recommend that the County Board advertise an ordinance to replace the current \$2.75 initial drop charge on taxi trips with a \$3.00 initial drop charge and to change the extra passenger charge from \$1.00 per additional passenger over 6 years of age to \$1.50 per passenger age 12 years or older.**

The Commission heard this item at its meeting on September 29, 2011. The Commission received a presentation from staff. There were two public speakers: John Massoud, from Blue Top Cab, and Charlie King, from Red Top Cab; both spoke in favor of the proposed advertising. Present and voting at the meeting were Commissioners Gearhart, Areizaga-Soto, Armbruster, Everline, Grant, Hubbard, Lynott, Ortiz, Serie, and Slatt.

In discussion Commissioners focused on the data in the County Manager's report offered in support of the proposed increases. Commissioners noted that the supporting data was a combination of Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data on costs of automobile operation at the national level and certain data collected by County staff. Commissioners questioned whether the BLS data necessarily reflected the cost of operating a taxicab in Arlington and also questioned whether the data adequately reflected declining fuel prices and the increased use of hybrid vehicles in the Arlington fleet. Commissioners also questioned why the rate increases focused on the drop charge and passenger charge, as opposed to mileage and other charges, and expressed concern about the absence of data supporting increases in these charges as opposed to other charges. Several Commissioners expressed concern that the proposed increases could have a disproportionate impact on local customers who depend on taxicabs for short trips. Staff explained that higher mileage rates might adversely affect the competitiveness of Arlington taxicabs on longer runs, such as to Dulles Airport.

Several Commissioners supporting advertising expressed the hope that additional information would be forthcoming once the increases were advertised. The two Commissioners opposing advertising at this time expressed the view that the information in the staff report was insufficient to support the proposed advertising.

I would be glad to answer any questions (703-522-2276).

Sincerely,

Bill Gearhart  
Chairman

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