



Legislation Text

File #: 0604-2020, Version: 1

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this ordinance is to amend various sections of the City's Licensing code pertaining to vehicles for hire. Several updates have been made to this code over the past decade, including revisions to include new modes of transportation such as micro-transit vehicles and pedal wagons. Currently, the City is proposing new changes to further modernize the code. These changes include removing sections involving transportation network companies, over which the State of Ohio has sole regulatory authority, and staggering the terms of vehicle-for-hire drivers' licenses to offer drivers increased flexibility.

Historically, vehicle-for-hire owners' and drivers' licenses expired on a set date each year. While maintaining a single, standardized expiration date for vehicle-for-hire owners' licenses promotes efficiency by facilitating inspections of all vehicles for hire on the same dates, the License Section desires to stagger the expiration dates of vehicle-for-hire drivers' licenses, as there is no efficiency justification for requiring all renewals on the same date, and staggering the terms will provide drivers with more flexibility.

This ordinance will make the following changes:

- Modify the code sections setting forth the makeup and authority of the Vehicle-for-Hire Board to bring the code into conformity with practice. The Vehicle-for-Hire Board has had difficulty maintaining a quorum, which has had a significant impact on its effectiveness as an advisory body. In order to address this concern, the amendments will modernize the Board, removing positions that have sat idle for years and ensuring the Board makeup reflects the current state of the industry. In addition, while the Board has functioned as an advisory body for some time, the City Code is not consistent with respect to the Board's authority.
- Remove all fees from the code and allow the Director of the Department of Public Safety to issue rules and regulations setting forth the applicable fees. Fees set by the Director will be subject to City Council review every five (5) years.
- Remove all references to transportation network companies and transportation network company drivers, which are subject to regulation by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio.
- Amend the sections relating to vehicle-for-hire drivers' licenses, such that they will now expire on the final day of the month occurring one year or twelve months from the date of issuance, rather than on March 31st of each year. This will help to stagger the License Section's workload, and to give drivers increased flexibility.
- Implement a transition policy to ensure that vehicle-for-hire drivers submitting renewal applications have staggered license terms. This transition policy is necessary because, historically, all vehicle-for-hire drivers' licenses have expired on March 31st of each year. Pursuant to this transition policy, the License Section will allow each vehicle-for-hire driver that submits a renewal application during the remainder of the 2020 calendar year to elect, at his or her discretion, the expiration month of the license, provided that the month must be at least twelve months from the date of issuance and may be no more than 23 months from the date of issuance. The license fee will be based on the duration of the license period and will be determined by the Director.
- All vehicle for hire owners and drivers will also now be allowed to submit renewal applications up to 60 days prior to the expiration of the license. This increase from the previous 30 day allowance will better accommodate background check wait periods.
- Finally, this ordinance corrects miscellaneous typographical errors.

Overall, these changes will further the City administration's and Council's efforts to update and streamline the Licensing

Code and modernize regulations for the City's businesses and residents.

EMERGENCY DESIGNATION: Emergency action is requested to allow for the License Section to have the time necessary to implement the changes for those owners and drivers renewing licenses in 2020.

To amend chapters 585, 586, 587, 589, 592, 593, and 594 of the Columbus City Codes to clarify the composition and authority of the Vehicle for Hire Board, to remove fees relating to vehicle-for-hire licenses and to give the Director of the Department of Public Safety authority to set fees, to stagger the terms of vehicle-for-hire drivers' licenses, to remove references to transportation network companies, and to authorize licensees to initiate license renewal sixty (60) days prior to license expiration; and to declare an emergency.

WHEREAS, Title 5 of the Columbus City Codes pertains to business regulation and licensing, and Chapters 586 through 594 pertain to the licensing and regulation of vehicles for hire; and

WHEREAS, several updates have been made to this code over the past decade, including revisions to include new modes of transportation such as micro-transit vehicles and pedal wagons; and

WHEREAS, the City is now proposing changes to the code to update the composition and authority of the Vehicle-for-Hire Board, to remove license fees and grant the Director of the Department of Public Safety the authority to set such fees, to stagger the terms of vehicle-for-hire drivers' licenses, and to allow renewal applicants to submit their renewal applications up to sixty (60) days prior to license expiration; and

WHEREAS, the City is also proposing to repeal chapters of the code pertaining to transportation network companies and transportation network company drivers, which are regulated solely by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio; and

WHEREAS, these changes will further the City administration's and Council's efforts to update and streamline the Licensing Code and modernize regulations for the City's businesses and residents; and

WHEREAS, an emergency exists in the usual daily operation of Columbus City Council, in that it is necessary to enact these changes in order to keep vehicle-for-hire owners and drivers licensed in a timely manner for the immediate preservation of the public health, peace, property, safety, and welfare; **NOW, THEREFORE:**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

SECTION 1. That sections 501.06, 501.17, 585.01, 585.03, 585.07, 585.08, 585.11, 585.13, 586.02, 586.03, 586.07, 586.99, 587.01, 587.02, 587.03, 587.04, 587.05, 587.06, 587.07, 587.08, 587.09, 587.10, 587.11, 587.12, 587.18, 587.21, 587.99, 589.01, 589.02, 589.03, 598.04, 598.05, 589.06, 589.09, 589.10, 589.11, 589.14, 589.99, 592.02, 592.03, 592.99, 593.01, 593.02, 593.04, 593.99, 594.02, 594.03, 594.04, 594.06, 594.13, 594.99 of the Columbus City Codes are hereby amended as set forth in the attachment hereto.

SEE ATTACHMENT

SECTION 2. That existing sections 501.06, 501.17, 585.01, 585.03, 585.07, 585.08, 585.11, 585.13, 586.02, 586.03, 586.07, 586.99, 587.01, 587.02, 587.03, 587.04, 587.05, 587.06, 587.07, 587.08, 587.09, 587.10, 587.11, 587.12, 587.18, 587.21, 587.99, 589.01, 589.02, 589.03, 598.04, 598.05, 589.06, 589.09, 589.10, 589.11, 589.14, 589.99, 592.02, 592.03, 592.99, 593.01, 593.02, 593.04, 593.99, 594.02, 594.03, 594.04, 594.06, 594.13, 594.99 of the Columbus City Codes are hereby repealed and replaced as provided herein.

SECTION 3. That existing sections 585.04, 585.05, 585.051, 585.06, and existing chapters 588 and 590 of the Columbus City Codes are hereby repealed.

SECTION 4. That for reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part hereof, this ordinance is declared to be an emergency measure and shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and approval by the Mayor, or ten days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.