

Private for Hire Transportation

Supervisor's Report for October 2008

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The "Supervisor's Report" is now a newsletter...

There's a lot going on in Private for Hire Transportation, and this format seems a better fit for sharing this with you.

We see this as a place to not only share what's happening in Portland, but looking at trends around the country.

Included in this report is a recent survey completed by NYC's Taxi Commissioner looking at fleet aging, and how different jurisdictions are addressing this issue.

Frank Dufay, Regulatory Program Administrator

...And Regulatory is now a Division.



Thanks to the support of Sue Klobertanz, Revenue Bureau Director, and Ken Rust, Office of Management and Finance Chief Financial Officer, Regulatory is now a separate division in the Revenue Bureau. This reflects the increased attention to matters regulatory, and the increased efforts being made for enforcement in all the program areas, including Private for Hire Transportation.

I.A.T.R. Training Conference in L.A.

The I.A.T.R. is the International Association of Transportation Regulators. I was fortunate to attend their annual conference September 14-17 in Los Angeles. It was very much a learning experience.

There were 17 work sessions and I attended all of them. Included were: Clean-Air Vehicles; Alternative Fuel Vehicles; Mandates vs Voluntary Incentives; Driver Safety; Developing and Sustaining a Professional Driver Workforce; Service Excellence; and –a favorite of mine– Fending Off the Bandits. I'll report on what I've learned over the coming months.



"We have an interest in a fleet with a smaller carbon footprint and one that gets more mpgs..."

Mandatory Vehicle Retirement?

Portland doesn't have a mandatory retirement age for any of its taxis, towncars, shuttles or SATs. Seattle, on the other hand, limits its fleet of taxis to 7 years of age.

As we're developing our new City Code this is an issue worth considering. We have an interest in a fleet with a smaller carbon footprint, and one that gets more mpgs. We won't accomplish this with used Crown Vics!

We'll be looking for feedback from our private for hire industry—as well as direction from City Council—as we consider what if any rule changes we want to see in the future.

As reported:

No mandatory vehicle retirement: Amsterdam; Broward County, Fla; Dover, Del; Edmonton, Winnipeg, and Regina, Can; London; **Portland**; San Francisco.

5 years: Toronto, Can.

6 years: Fairfax, Va.

7 years: Mississauga, Can; Montgomery County, MD; Ottawa, Can; San Francisco (after 2010); Seattle; Vancouver, Can; West Hollywood, Ca; Windsor, Can;

8-10 years: Atlanta; Austin; Baltimore; Calgary, Can; Harrisburg, Pa; Little Rock, Ak; Montreal; Newark, Orange County; Miami, Fl; Phil, Pa; Tampa; Wash, DC; West Palm Brach.

Say Goodbye to Tongue-Depressor Plates

DMV license plates tend to take a beating. So do our City of Portland "tongue depressor" plates which are attached to them. They get ugly and bent and they were designed for a never-used scanning system. Annual update stickers have traditionally been placed over the City of Portland Logo. These depressors are also easily moved, which can be a problem in

keeping track of where they are. (Reminder: permits are assigned to specific vehicles and may not be moved without City permission.)

The City is looking at using annual decals that would be more easily identifiable and which can't be removed without being destroyed. They will also be cheaper to produce and more

environmental friendly.

We are also reviewing how we do the renewal process though it's not clear we can get something different up and running by December. As with Driver's Permits, we'd like to spread out the renewal process over the year to put an end to the year end "crunch" that comes at a very inconvenient time for all of us.

Fending Off the Bandits

In Los Angeles they call it "fending off the bandits." Here we just call it dealing with illegal operators.

The issue is taxis, shuttles and towncars either running unpermitted or operating outside the rules established by Portland

City Council and the Private for Hire Transportation Board of Review.

In this month's report there's a summary of our recent enforcement activities which continue methodically and

deliberately. In many areas we're breaking new ground and we want to get the process right.

Our "secret rider" enforcement efforts are continuing, while word is spreading on the street that we're taking enforcement very, very seriously.

Waiting for a spot in line?

Though this photo shows a Broadway Cab...this problem is one that ALL taxicab companies need to address. (And Broadway has already posted pictures in their break room warning there will be fines!)

Right in front of Regulatory's building, we watch cab drivers park in yellow zones, stop at green lights, park in the bus zone, and generally

create traffic hazards. This is all with the goal of grabbing one of the three taxi stand spots outside the Marriott when they become available.

This isn't "OK", it's dangerous, and having already issued several dozen

warnings, we WILL be issuing fines. This is a very unsafe situation and public safety is our number one priority.



Meeting with Parking Enforcement

At the I.A.T.R. Conference, I learned in Los Angeles that LA regulators have \$750,000 for overtime for their enforcement efforts. We in Portland don't have those kind of resources, but we do have a partnership with Parking Enforcement that we will be stepping up.

Parking Enforcement has an revenue sharing agreement with Regulatory that they will

conduct inspections of private for hire vehicles and send us daily reports of their findings. They also are looking for vehicles being used improperly, either towncars without reservations or taxis and other vehicles operating improperly.

We met with Parking Enforcement at the end of September and answered their questions and

promised them our support. We have committed to responding to their daily reports. This way they know we're following up on their efforts. They are an extension of our eyes and ears on the street.

We very much appreciate the support they are giving to our program!

Credit Cards

On my cab ride from my hotel to LAX to go home from the I.A.T.R. Conference, the cab driver told me he didn't take credit cards (though they're required to). After I convinced him it was the only way he'd get paid, he "found" his "knuckle buster" machine in the trunk, and took several minutes to do the transaction.

There's got to be a better way. And some of our Portland cabs have already automated all or some of the process.

VeriFone had a table at the convention and what they have to offer is quick, generates more tips (so they claim) and costs little to put in place. I'm sure there are competing vendors, but the concept

of "fast, reliable, and safe" with great graphics sure seems like something we should be looking for here. In NYC you even get GPS and a message from the Mayor!



"..he found his 'knuckle-buster' machine in the trunk, and took several minutes to complete the transaction"

Outstanding Enforcement Activities:
Paid to date:
\$ 4,500

Outstanding fines (companies and or drivers facing possible suspension/revocation):

AM/PM (\$3,600); Portland Executive (\$3,000); Around the Town (\$500)

Initial appeals denied (companies and drivers)

Rose City Touring (\$1,200); Avion Towncar (\$600)

Appealed to Private for Hire Board of Review (appeal date not set)

Sochi Transport (\$500)

Appealed to Code Hearings Officer (appeal dates not set)

Portland Exec (\$400); Sochi (\$100);

New Enforcement Actions

8/12/08	9/22/08	Green Transportation	Hassan Aden	GOOD INSPECTION		
8/12/08	9/22/08	Broadway Cab	Peter Damien	GOOD INSPECTION		
8/14/08	8/14/08	Around the Town	Ali Albakriy	GOOD INSPECTION		
9/05/08	9/25/08	Orange Cab	Unknown	Unpermitted Taxi	\$100.00	
9/05/08	9/25/08	Orange Cab	Yousef Aghai	Unpermitted Taxi	\$100.00	
9/12/08	9/25/08	Liberty Cab	Company	Unpermitted Taxi	\$500.00	
9/5,9/13	9/25/08	Orange Cab	Company	Unpermitted Taxi	\$1,000.00	
9/25/08	9/25/08	Roberta Frazier	Unknown	Unpermitted TownCar	Warning	

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In addition to the above, we have photographed a number of executive sedan vehicles, and interviewed the drivers about whether they did or didn't have legitimate reservations. Some of these are under review or in process. We have also continued our individual meetings with hotel staff, who are generally cooperating with our efforts.

We also have made two swings through the PDX (Portland Airport) backfield, looking especially for Driver Permits being properly displayed. We have issued many warnings for non-compliance which includes "displayed" permits that can't be read because they're covered by maps and other things. The next time out we WILL be issuing civil penalties.

We attended a meeting at PDX to discuss with them and the taxi company managers a situation in the backfield that took place several weeks ago, where a large number of drivers left the airport. While this is not within our jurisdiction, we are working with Port of Portland staff to monitor this and whatever response comes out of discussions between the individual companies and the Port.

We also had the first meeting of our Penalty Advisory Committee, which has been set up to review appeals to enforcement penalties. We are following the recommendations of this committee and are going forward with reinstating the penalties that had been referred to them.

We're on the Web!
<http://www.portlandonline.com/omf/index.cfm?&c=29980>