

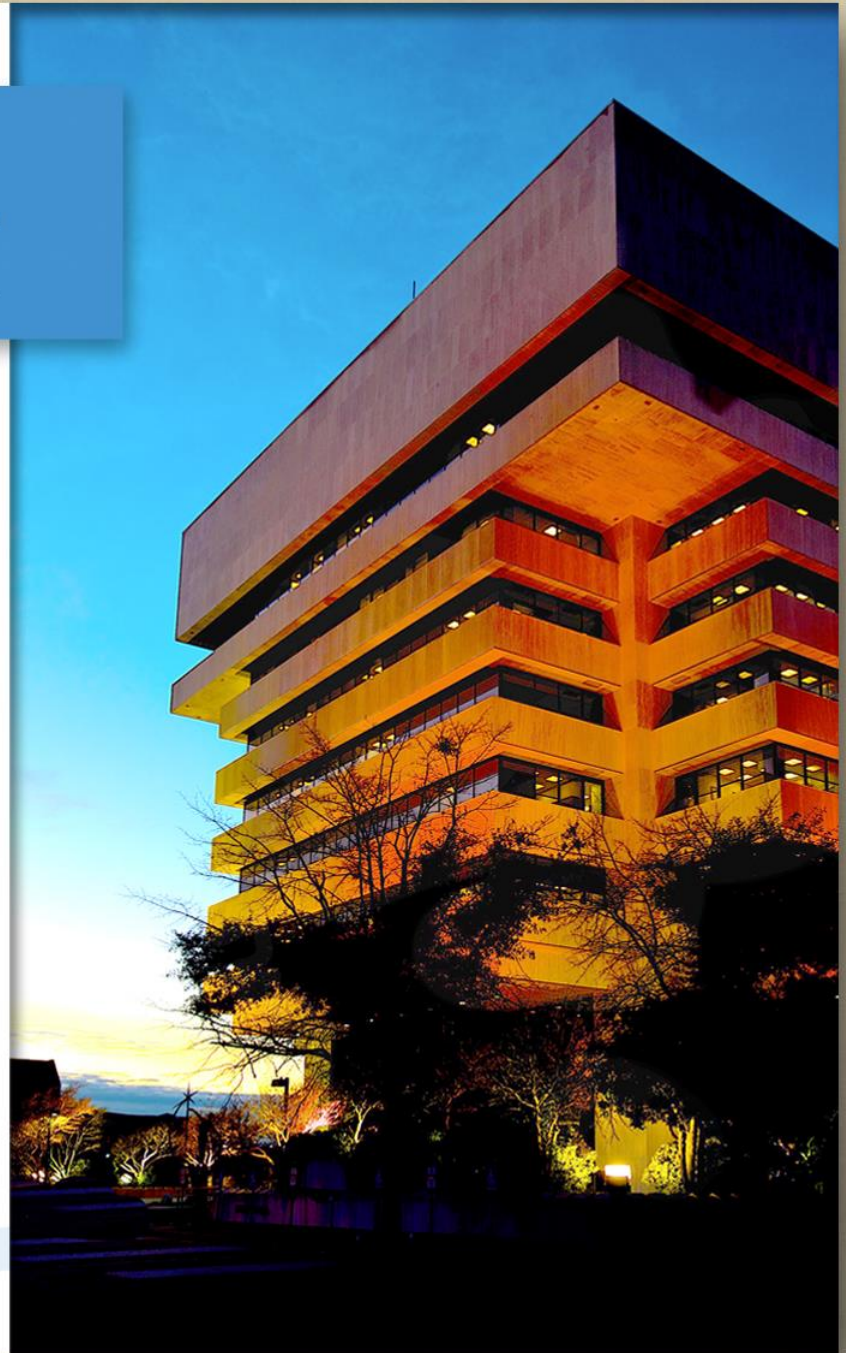
**HAMPTON VA**

# **Taxicab Ordinance**

**City Council  
Work Session**

**July 12, 2023**

**Brandi Law  
Senior Deputy City Attorney**



# 2022 Changes

On June 8, 2022, City Council adopted the following changes to the taxicab ordinance:

- Raised age limit of vehicles from seven to 10 model years.
- Removed requirement for vehicles to have a specific color scheme.
- Raised rate for first 1/7 of a mile from \$2.75 to “no more than \$5.00.”
- Raised rate for each additional 1/7 of a mile from \$.30 to \$.35.
- Provided an exception to the rates for written contracts.

# 2022 Considerations

In addition, Council considered, but decided against the following changes:

- Reciprocity: Allow reciprocity for companies to drop off passengers in Hampton if they picked them up in another locality.
- Dispatch Location: Allow a dispatch location within five miles of the City limits.

# 2023 Questions: Identification Light

- “Whenever any public vehicle is engaged, there shall be conspicuously displayed an identification light connected to the taximeter, which shall show light when the taximeter is in operation.”
- Purpose of light is generally so that customers know whether taxicab is available/unavailable.
- Hampton doesn't permit cruising or solicitation of service except at a taxi stand.
- Staff Recommendation: Remove requirement.

## 2023 Questions: Minimum number of cabs.

- City Code currently requires companies to have at least five cabs within 12 months of obtaining a certificate of occupancy.
- Staff recommendation: No change.

# 2023 Questions: Legal Name on Cab

- “Every public vehicle shall bear, on the outside and on at least two (2) sides thereof, the name of the owner, in painted characters not less than two (2) inches high and plainly visible at a distance of one hundred (100) feet.”
- Language is not specific as to whether corporate name is required or whether a trade name would be acceptable.
- Staff recommendation: Amend ordinance to specially allow trade name.

# 2023 Questions: Taximeters

- Manual v. Electronic taximeters
  - Manual taximeter (also known as “hard” taximeters).
    - Uses electric pulses to measure distance traveled (via tire rotation) and time to determine fare.
    - Dependent on tire size and pressure.
    - Requires invasive installation.
  - Electronic meter (also known as software-based or “soft” meters).
    - Run on standard mobile devices like smartphones or tablets.
    - Incorporate a mix of signals including GPS readings from the On-Board Diagnostic system.

# 2023 Questions: Taximeters

- National Institute of Standards and Technology (“NIST”) has adopted soft meter regulations to ensure correct calibration.
- Soft meters are widely used.
- Staff Recommendation: Adopt language similar to Norfolk:
  - *Taximeter* means any mechanical instrument or device, or any electronic instrument or device approved by the chief of police and which meets all applicable specifications of the NIST, by which the charge for hire of a taxicab is mechanically or electronically calculated and on which such charge is plainly indicated.



# Possible Next Steps

- City Attorney's Office can prepare an ordinance reflecting recommendations for Council's further consideration.
- City could explore hiring a consultant to review City's ordinance comprehensively and make recommendations based on industry standards and best practices.
- City Council could choose to deregulate taxicabs – like ridesharing services.
- None of the above.

# Conclusion / Questions

