

MOTION

TRANSPORTATION

JAN 20 2006

The City of Los Angeles, by ordinance, through the Department of Transportation (LADOT), regulates the operation of taxicabs within its borders. The City awards franchises to taxicab companies via a competitive bidding process, and closely monitors each company's performance to assure that passengers throughout the City are provided honest, safe, and reliable taxicab service.

Citizens of and visitors to the City of Los Angeles are entitled to expect that the backgrounds of taxicab drivers have been investigated to assure that no persons with histories of criminal activity or drug use are allowed to drive taxicabs. They are also entitled to expect that taxicab vehicles have been inspected for mechanical reliability, cleanliness and safety, and are properly insured. All franchised taxicab companies and permitted drivers and vehicle owners pay the City fees which support the regulatory activities of the LADOT Taxicab Regulation Division and the Board of Taxicab Commissioners, assuring that operators of franchised taxicabs in Los Angeles are held accountable to meet the City's standards.

Regrettably, there are numerous taxicab operators within the City who intentionally operate unlawful and non-regulated taxicab businesses. There are many illegal ("bandit") taxicab companies using hundreds of unlicensed drivers and hundreds of non-permitted, uninspected and under-insured vehicles in the City on an ongoing basis. Lack of compliance with the City's laws, particularly insurance requirements, allow bandit taxis to operate at a lower cost than legal taxicabs. There is no question that such illegal operators pose a significant threat to public safety, while undermining the economic viability of franchised operators as well as the City's intent to establish and maintain high standards for taxicab service.

To combat illegal taxicab operators, in the 1990's LADOT formed a unit of Transportation Investigators to enforce the City's laws requiring that all taxicabs and drivers be permitted. The Transportation Investigators have peace officer status for the purpose of effecting arrests and impounding vehicles. They do not, however, have the authority to carry firearms or conduct traffic stops. The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) has assisted LADOT investigators in numerous bandit sting operations for many years, going back at least as far as the 1970's. In the years 2001 through 2004, approximately one third of all bandit taxi arrests in the City occurred during joint operations of LAPD and LADOT.

Due to limited resources, LAPD and LADOT are able to work together on bandit taxi enforcement only two or three times a month. The limited resources that LADOT and LAPD have available for bandit taxi enforcement are inadequate to significantly curtail the problem. In recognition of the need for greater participation in bandit taxi enforcement by LAPD, the Board of Taxicab Commissioners, in June of 2004, approved draft ordinances to increase the taximeter flag drop rate by a modest \$0.20 and to assess a special monthly fee of \$30 per taxicab. The assessment will create a fund to pay for a program of substantially greater participation in bandit taxi enforcement by LAPD on an overtime basis, in addition to providing increased overtime funding to LADOT investigators. LADOT estimates that approximately \$810,000 will be raised annually through this funding mechanism, which is independent of the City's General Fund. A memorandum of agreement outlining the mutual commitment of LADOT and LAPD to combat bandit taxis via this independently funded program has been signed by the General Manager of LADOT and the Chief of Police and was approved by the Board of Police Commissioners on April 6, 2004. The memorandum of agreement was revised and resigned by the General Manager of the Department of Transportation on April 6, 2005 and the Chief of Police on June 3, 2005.

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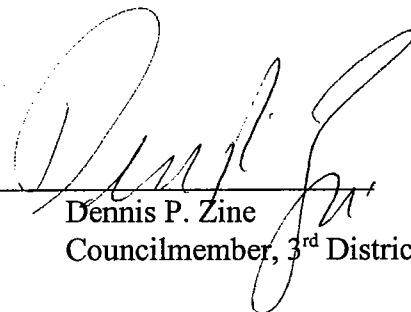
Due to the continued proliferation of illegal taxi operators, it is essential that the City Council enact the ordinances to fund increased bandit taxi enforcement as soon as possible.

**I THEREFORE MOVE**, that the City Council request the office of the City Administrative Officer to present its report on the recommendations of the Board of Taxicab Commissioners for an improved bandit taxi enforcement program in the City of Los Angeles to the City Council, through its Transportation and Public Safety Committees; and

**I FURTHER MOVE** that the City Attorney prepare ordinances encompassing the measures recommended by the Board of Taxicab Commissioners, including:

- \* An ordinance to increase the taxicab meter flag drop rate by \$0.20 per trip for all taxicab trips originating in the City of Los Angeles that are not flat rate trips; and
- \* An ordinance assessing a monthly fee of \$30 per active taxicab to be placed in a fund to be administered by LADOT to field additional LAPD and LADOT resources on the streets of the City for the sole purpose of increasing bandit taxicab enforcement capabilities and effectiveness.

PRESENTED BY: \_\_\_\_\_



Dennis P. Zine  
Councilmember, 3<sup>rd</sup> District

SECONDED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

