The Council met in Suite 2032, 2235 Shannon Place, S.E., Washington, D.C., at 10:00 a.m., Linwood Jolly, Chairperson, presiding.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

LINWOOD JOLLY, Chairperson
DAVID DO, Director
DOTTI LOVE WADE, Commissioner
JEFFERY SCHAEFFER, Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT:

CHAU TRAN, SECRETARY TO THE COUNCIL
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Good morning, the time is 10:03 a.m. and we're at 2235 Shannon Place Southeast in Suite 2032. I'd like to call this meeting to order.

We've got a few Members that are on their way but we're going to move ahead and try to stick to our schedule. So at this time I'll call for a moment of silence.

Thank you, there are no preliminary matters that we have to discuss so we're going to move ahead and abbreviate our schedule today. And we'll start with remarks by our Director, David Do.

Good morning, can you hear me? Eric, are they on? Hello, can you hear me? This one's not on. Hello? All right, good morning, everyone.

My name is David Do, I'm the Acting Director for the Department of For-Hire Vehicles. I want to welcome a couple of new Staff Members.
I don't know if we need all this.

All right, so if the new Staff Members could stand up in client services so I can recognize you.

One of the big things that we've been trying to do is set up the community outreach team and so if the community outreach team and the call center team could stand up, I'd appreciate that.

We have four new Members and I just want to give them all a big round of applause for joining our team recently. So thank you so much.

(Applause.)

Thank you so much. So one of the most important things that we wanted to do is be customer-focused and responsive to our customers.

And so two of our new Staff Members actually speak seven different languages, including not only English but Amharic and French. And that's directly correlated to what we want to do to serve our driving community. So thanks so much.
The other side, our call center team is an important part of being responsive and with new technologies we can look up the lost and found within 15 minutes. And so they're going to be at the helm of that so thank you so much for joining our team.

So, we recently had our first tranche of TNC data and we're working on looking at what the data tells us, and we're going through our infrastructure process and validating that data.

And by June, Eric Fiddler, our new CIO, will present that in a public-facing dashboard between June, July or August. But I'm setting a big goal for June.

So that's going to be exciting to see what data comes out of it and how we can make sure that our consumers are even more protected than they have been.

One of the big things that we're doing soon is the sunsetting of the DFHV Government-supported meter. That meter has been supported at our Agency for the last 18 months or so and
we're going into allowing the market to operate the meters.

And so we're hoping that we have about new DTS providers during the open enrollment season this summer.

And finally, one of the big things that we're very serious about at this agency is Vision Zero and the Mayor is also incredibly serious.

And so we have worked since my tenure here with a group, Mark Sussman and Daniel Schepp, with the How's My Driving D.C. app that really allows consumers and people, pedestrians, bikers, other drivers, to really report dangers on our roads like blocking a bike lane, making an illegal U-turn, or blocking a crosswalk.

All those things make it incredibly dangerous for those who use the roadways. And so we want to make sure that our roadways are safe for all users and so we'll continue making sure that we work with the How's My Driving app to expand the capabilities.
But more so, and I think Chau will pass out a new flyer that we have just completed last night, and that's the new budget for Mayor Bowser's fiscal year 2020. And she makes incredible investments in the transportation realm.

And I want to kind of just start off by saying that all these improvements surround Vision Zero. So, the first one is making transportation a lot more safe and that's with the K Street rapid bus lane.

So it's going to have a middle thoroughfare just for buses so that buses can travel across our city in a more efficient and fast manner. And also for the loading and unloading of passengers safely onto those buses.

The Mayor committed $122 million over the next six years for that. In Vision Zero she is standing up a team that is dedicated to making sure that bike lane infractions and those u-turns and crosswalk violations are few and far between.

So she's investing $4.7 million into
DPW for that. We're very excited. We're also
going to make an investment in our next-year
budget on the Vision Zero side and making sure
that we have overtime pay.

That's a commitment that I'm working
with the enforcement team and Eric Ampedu on.

And then finally, or a couple more
things, Circulator is now free for fiscal year
2020 and beyond and so I'm every excited about
that.

And finally, there is going to be
streetscape improvements all across our city
including Dave Thomas Circle, Maryland Avenue
Northeast, Alabama Avenue Southeast, and Florida
Avenue Northeast, including the surroundings of
the famous Dave Thomas Circle.

She's investing $240 million over the
next six years to not only acquire that land but
also make our roads and our thoroughfares safer
for all residents that use them.

And so that's one of the big things
and so I'm very excited by those improvements and
those investments that she has made. And I guess those are my remarks.

Anything else I need to do, Chairman?

CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: I think those are good for now. From our call yesterday, could you briefly talk about what you're doing in ANC?

DIRECTOR DO: 1A?

CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: 1A.

DIRECTOR DO: So one of the things is that we have investments in all eight wards and so we're looking at areas that we can improve on our enforcement capabilities.

So we're looking at areas that are high traffic, and one of those traffic areas is Dotti Wade's. It's ANC and that's ANC 1A.

MEMBER LOVE WADE: It's not working?

Well, I guess my voice carries.

Good morning, all. One of the major problems that we've been encountering throughout the city as a result of all of the road work and development, with development naturally comes road work because you have to, of course, improve
your infrastructures.

So that's making it very difficult to anyone to get around the city, especially those of you in the for-hire vehicles industry.

So, we're looking at that closely but another problem we are having is vehicles from the for-hire vehicles community, especially up at the Columbia Heights intersection of 14th and Irving, Columbia Road, Kenyon, that whole D.C. U.S.A. target area.

It has become so bad that as the Vice Chair of our Advisory Neighborhood Commission, I wear several hats for my city, and as Vice Chair of the Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1A, I was forced to call a meeting with my hat here as a Counselor for the Vehicles For Hire and also as an ANC Commissioner with the Metropolitan Police Department, the Department of Transportation, with of course our Vehicles For Hire, and with Members of the ANC and our transportation community activists to address this very difficult problem.
What happens is because of the major retail in that area, our vehicles are pulling up and idling, waiting for fares to come out of that mall.

What happens is it's a bike lane and a single traffic lane and a pull-over parking lane. Every time a vehicle pulls over in front of that establishment, the bikers are forced to pull out into the main traffic lane which is also shared by private vehicles and buses, ambulances, and fire trucks.

It's one of the most horrendous intersections in the city and our people unfortunately are the biggest offenders. And I've had to personally push people away.

I'm going into all of this detail because it's critical for you to understand the rippling effect that one car pulled over has on 14th and Parkview all the way down, especially Monroe.

If a car is stopped, that traffic backs up. It's a single lane with an island that
we're trying to desperately to get the City to remove. Emergency vehicles are up and down that street all the time.

One vehicle backs traffic up for ten minutes so we met with Metropolitan Police Department and demanded a zero tolerance for idling vehicles. So anyone idling in that area will be ticketed before they're even approached to move.

The police will just come up behind them, write them up, and then give them a ticket. So you have to be very aware. That's considered a hot spot.

They're also doing it in Adams Morgan and they're also doing it in the H Street corridor because of the problems created by the street car lanes. Pulling over blocks all that.

So it's incumbent upon us, as the people who are responsible for making sure that our vehicles move smoothly through the city and don't create an impediment, that we get this message out loud and clear, how detrimental it's
going to be to the drivers.

And we're going to ask for a doubling of the fines for idling for-hire vehicles. Even though I'm charged with supporting and helping to clear the area and make it easier for our for-hire vehicles, we're going to be pushed to make it more difficult and we don't want to make it more difficult.

But the City cannot afford to have the dangers of pedestrians who refuse to walk down to the corner to cross, so they're illegally crossing in the middle of the street to get over to the other side of the metro.

The bikes are flipping out into the main traffic lane because their lane is blocked, the buses are having to pull over into the oncoming traffic lane because there's not enough room for them to go around a car.

It's just horrendous so I would just ask all of you to do all you can to try to encourage consideration in not just this area but many areas. And the strangest thing about it is
there is a taxi pull-off zone.

CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Is that an official -- I think there's a 15-minute sign there. Are you talking about --

MEMBER LOVE WADE: No, no, that's for passenger vehicles. There is a taxi zone from Kenyon Street up to Midway block. It'll hold about five or six vehicles.

DIRECTOR DO: On the east side?

MEMBER LOVE WADE: On the same side as Target. The problem is it's before you get to Target so the drivers don't want people to have to walk up.

Now, one of the things I've suggested is that we maybe switch the zones for the pull-over parking for the taxis and the drop-off zones for passengers where the taxi zone is.

DIRECTOR DO: That's a conversation we have with DDOT.

MEMBER LOVE WADE: Yes, so that's one of the recommendations.

But if any of you have any other
suggestions or ideas, you want to ride through there and experience the joy of an hourglass in Columbia Heights, feel free.

DIRECTOR DO: Yes, so there's a three-step process in this.

We want to educate our drivers, we want to make sure that there are tools in place like the How's My Driving App so that folks can really take pictures and then provide that to our complaints team so that we can resolve it.

And finally, the enforcement team going on there and making sure that vehicles move through those areas.

MEMBER LOVE WADE: Our team absolutely jumped right on it. When they were involved in it, they did jump right on it.

DIRECTOR DO: And we'll continue to do that. One of the things, and this is a policy that we have put in place, is that we don't want to ticket but we want to them to move along.

Because ticketing will cause a lot more congestion, especially in areas where --
you've talked about that island -- where there's one lane. And if we pull someone over then it would block it.

So my main goal is to move those vehicles as quickly as possible out of the bike lanes, out of the travel lanes to make sure that we can all get on our way.

MEMBER LOVE WADE: That's ideal but that is not MPD's marching orders and I just want to make that clear, that MPD's marching order is a zero tolerance. But our marching order is to try to push you along.

DIRECTOR DO: Correct.

MEMBER LOVE WADE: With two different marching orders, you better go with the strongest one because it's going to cost more in the long run.

DIRECTOR DO: Okay, thank you so much, Counselor.

CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: So at this point on the agenda, we can now move to our action items. So Director Do, once again, we've got two
items there. Well, one item there.

DIRECTOR DO: Okay, great, so one of the concerns I heard loud and clear when I first started about 90 days or so ago at the Agency was the vehicle age limit.

And so I've worked with my team to come up with a solution that really is not only in the best interest of drivers and the for-hire community, but also for District residents.

And that's making sure that our vehicle fleet is more accessible and cleaner. And so today I'm announcing to all of you that we're increasing the vehicle age limit from eight to ten years for vehicles that are 100 percent electric or wheelchair-accessible.

And so that's I think a compromise that we hit and that is a good spot for all of us in the District of Columbia.

So thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: So Advisor Schaeffer, do you have any input on that?

MEMBER SCHAEFFER: No, I think it's
definitely a good idea. Some of my concerns as a fleet operator is the age limitation for rental vehicles.

So all along I thought maybe it should be a difference for rentals and own operators. Rental vehicles should be newer and the fleet should be more responsible to upgrade as they are with the wheelchair-accessible to have newer vehicles.

However, there are some drivers that have vehicles that pass the age limitation and it kind of knocks them out of business and they're forced to either rent or buy another vehicle.

So, in the past, the Commission years ago tried a one by one for fleet owners, I'm sorry, for individual owners.

They could bring their vehicle here and actually inspect it, do a walk-around, check it and see if it looked good. And they would give them maybe six months to purchase the vehicle.

So, I know that this year you're not
going to hear as much because the age that
they're going off.

I believe next year, if you look at
the list of vehicles going off, it could be about
triple of what it is this year.

DIRECTOR DO: We see the numbers.

MEMBER SCHAEFFER: But, no, I think
it's great to have the electric and the
wheelchairs extended two more years. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: So while we have
you, Advisor Schaeffer, we talked earlier about
the meter sunset and open enrollment season.
Could we have some of your input on that?

You weren't here for the discussion.

MEMBER SCHAEFFER: Yes, I think that
is good as well, with Easy Meter now having to
stand on their own and I've already been
contacted by other vendors that I'm sure have
approached DFHV.

So there will be a choice for drivers
and fleet owners when it comes to finding a
digital meter. So I know that at least two other
vendors are coming to town to try to present to
DFHV their option and then you have the Easy
Meter iCabby and CUR meter that's presently
approved.

So I welcome that as well.

DIRECTOR DO: So just to add, we're
hoping for a lot more entrants into the market,
the meter market.

So we're working on making sure that
people know wide and far that we're looking for
new additional meters to increase the competition
within our market.

MEMBER LOVE WADE: So have we sent out
a request for a proposal, request for a
statement?

DIRECTOR DO: It starts in July so
everybody will know by then the open enrollment
season for that.

There's going to be various
specifications that we're finalizing and we're
working with our Chief Information Officer on it
and we'll make sure by the next quarterly Council
Meeting that we'll have those specifications for everybody.

CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Let me follow up with you, Advisor Schaeffer. Just on the meters, I've probably gotten maybe 15 emails from drivers who experience problems with them shutting off.

Now, I'm not going to get into which company they are but have you experienced that? And in looking at new vendors, is that something that you're concerned with alleviating?

MEMBER SCHAEFFER: Certainly, you're going to have that. What's happened is to cut expenses they go by a GPS meter so it's called a soft meter which operates off the GPS, which in D.C. you're going to have tunnels and spots where GPS is not working.

So, you're going to see a pause and then all of the sudden it picks back up. You may go under the whole tunnel and it just freezes.

Currently, some meters out there on the market are hooked up directly to the OBD of
the vehicle. So, when you do that, there's never
a break in the signal. It's continuous.

So, that is going to be something to
weigh versus, okay, is the meter going to cut off
some?

But that's what the entire country's
dealing with now and most jurisdictions are just
overriding it and saying, hey, well, the benefits
outweigh the detriments.

Yes, it cuts off a little bit but it
kind of speculates where you are and how far
you've traveled, the time that's gone by, and
just other ways to catch it back up.

Well, it's been down for 30 seconds
and you've been traveling at this rate so it adds
the number.

It could be a few cents over or under
but it's just something that if you as a driver
are concerned about that, there are options that
you can get something that's hooked directly to
your OBD and it would not be based solely off
GPS.
CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: All right, we're at the point now for public comment and I don't believe we have anyone signed up. Is there anybody here that would like to make a public comment?

Sir, if you would, yes, come to the microphone and just give us your name and you may spell it for the record? And then let us know the organization you're with.

MR. WOODBURY: Good morning, I appreciate you letting me speak. I am a District cabdriver, Freeman Woodbury is my name, Royal Cab 102, and I have -- W-O-O-D-B-U-R-Y. That's my last name.

And this pertains to the age limit on the cabs because I'm one of the people that is directly affected by this rule.

I've had a license in the District as a cabdriver for 53 years and when they made the original ruling, I got a Honda Odyssey which is a seven-passenger vehicle which I've put on the street, which now four years later is part of the
fleet that's supposed to be phased out.

And the problem that I see as opposed to when you were talking about, when Jeff was talking about, fleet vehicles or vehicles that are driven, shifted, double shifted, whatever, a lot of -- and I have no idea what the numbers are, you probably would better than I, I have no idea how many cabs are being taken off the street because of the eight-year limit this year.

But my vehicle has 117,000 miles on it, which really you could almost say is just broken in. And if you look at the 300,000 mile limit that you are allowed, it's really to me -- to replace my vehicle with everything that I've put into it would cost over $40,000.

And as a part-time driver who definitely needs the income from this to stay alive, it now -- as everybody knows, our income's been cut in half easily in the last two or three years.

And it's not just the rideshare things either, you have all of the bicycles that people
are using now, scooters. You can rent just about
anything, you can get cars by the hour.

There's everything out there except
flying carpets, I swear, that's the only thing
you don't have to compete with in the city right
now.

So, while I understand the rationale
behind the regulation that no vehicle should be
more than eight model years old and should have
less than 300,000 miles on it, whichever comes
first, I believe that I and my vehicle qualify
for a waiver of this rule.

And as I just stated, currently my car
only has 119,000 miles. Now, not only is it in
excellent condition but since November, as just
part of regular maintenance I've put over $3000
into it to keep it in perfect condition.

I just went through D.C. inspection
last month, which again, was superficial
cosmetics but it was another $400. So, if we
added this onto having to replace everything, the
figure gets up somewhere around $45,000.
Now, with all the cabs that are coming off the street and with everybody buying essentially what is a three-passenger vehicle today, mine is probably one of the last six-passenger adult comfortable vehicles on the street.

There's two captain chairs in the second row, a third-row full-sized bench seat, and I'm talking for adults my size.

With the tourist industry in this city, there is still a big demand for this and candidly, they're all disappearing. I haven't seen another one like my own for some time.

The only vans you see only have the one bench and the two front seats so it's still essentially a four-passenger vehicle.

With the tourist and convention season just starting, it's really just starting in full bore right now, simply put, I cannot afford to purchase a new vehicle which would cost well over $30,000 to $40,000 with everything I have to put in it, the transformation of all the electronics
and everything to make it a cab.

The second largest thing I have is I do have a physical back condition that requires me to have a special seat in a large car with suspension that only exists in a full-size vehicle. So, I couldn't, even if I wanted to, put on one of the smaller cars available.

And there are other arguments I have but since I am out of time, hopefully if you get a chance, they're all in the letter and I would appreciate any assistance I could get on the matter.

Thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON JOLLY: Mr. Woodbury, thank you for coming and talking today about your situation.

There are elements of your situation that are probably best dealt with offline directly with personnel from the Department of For-Hire Vehicles.

However, in general about the age limit, I think we can have a discussion about
that and we can do some dialog because that's what we do here.

So I'll start with Advisor Schaeffer, if you want to have some input first? And then we'll come on down the row.

MEMBER SCHAEFFER: Well, certainly, I just touched on this, the difference between fleet vehicles and individual owner/operators, and there are going to be some operators that are affected by this.

In the past a couple years I've seen this is the time when they come up, it's either vehicle change or face renewal.

And at that point, a lot of them that had been working many years ago, my grandfather started in the '50s and there's a lot of drivers that have been with us for 50 years and more, they're starting to retire and that's the time that they choose to retire.

But as this gentleman just pointed out, he needs the additional subsidy to go out and work that vehicle part time.
So he'd be in a position where he'd have to rent a vehicle to stay on there or come up with an investment and put in another four years to recoup that investment if he has it for four years.

So I think it is something that maybe we can discuss the possibility that we'll waiver for certain exemptions, but again, I strongly feel that it's only on individual owner-operators and there needs to be something on there that that vehicle cannot be rented out.

Because in the past, I've seen fleets get individual owner/operators to renew their vehicles and leave them on the lot, and they'll rent them out for them.

And the guy may travel and may rent them out, and all of the sudden you have, as Mr. Woodbury put it, all the competition we already have and now we have more competition with vehicles that are not even truly supposed to be rented out.

So, those are just some of my concerns
talking out loud through it but I think like you said, it needs further discussion to see where everyone is with it.

But it’s difficult.

DIRECTOR DO: For me, I think there’s an opportunity to look at the mileage and see on that, especially for part-time drivers who don’t drive their vehicles all the time.

MR. WOODBURY: Could I just make one point?

DIRECTOR DO: Sure.

MR. WOODBURY: It has really almost become for all of us, the drivers. And I have no idea if you have exact figures of how many cabs there are.

When I started, Washington D.C. had the highest per capita ratio of cabs to the population in the United States. And it did for decades. I’m going to guess now that it’s under 4000.

DIRECTOR DO: It’s about 6000.

MR. WOODBURY: Really, that many?
DIRECTOR DO: Yes.

MR. WOODBURY: Well, then a lot of them must really be working part time.

But anyway, the only point is that from right now, the beginning of April, through about the week after the 4th of July, I'll work six, seven days a week.

Now, it's not necessarily eight hours a day but this is really the only time of the year when you know you can make some money. But the rest of the year, the competition with all these other things is minimal.

And by the way, this is not meant as a bribe but I would love to give any of you a ride just to show you the car and if anybody could tell me one reason why it's not going to make a great cab for another 100,000 or whatever, 50,000, I don't care.

DIRECTOR DO: Thank you, Mr. Woodbury.

One of the things is that you seem to be one of the more special cases where you don't drive full time.
But when a driver does drive full time, these cars get a lot less efficient over time.

MR. WOODBURY: I understand.

DIRECTOR DO: Put a lot more CO2 into the -- all the things that are negative to our environment.

And so we need to look at the data and the statistics and what exactly -- at what point does a vehicle release too much to not have the same benefit?

And so we need to look at the marginal benefit to the marginal cost to society.

MR. WOODBURY: Right, but they did just go through an inspection where they have the emissions check and it's not even remotely close. 117,000 miles on a car is nothing.

DIRECTOR DO: Right, so this is something that I'm willing to go back and look at, and look at the mileage side but for the vehicle age limit, I'm very stuck on that eight-year mark for ICE vehicles, internal combustion
engines.

And then for WAVs and for electric
vehicles, I'm more lenient on it.

MEMBER SCHAEFFER: And it's a good
point.

I'm sorry, just to follow up on that,
there are initiatives and goals set higher up in
the city where they want to make D.C. really
green and there are Federal studies out that
vehicles of older age produce much more
emissions.

So we have a clear chart of, okay,
here's the cut-off and I think that was one of
the big factors in the age limitation.

DIRECTOR DO: So let me go back and
look at the mileage concern and see where my team
and I lie.

MR. WOODBURY: And then just the last
thing, because of what I can carry, though, it's
still the equivalent of two cars.

Because I get folks all the time that
come to me, families, because they have to get
two cabs to get seven people.

   Anyway, thank you very much for your time.

   DIRECTOR DO:  Thank you so much Mr. Woodbury.

   CHAIRPERSON JOLLY:  Are there any other people here who would like to comment? Oh, go ahead. I'm sorry, by the way, there's one more comment for you from Member Wade.

   MEMBER LOVE WADE:  Yes, I just wanted to let you know that I'm very much concerned about those drivers who are in your particular situation where you are part-time drivers, more so than the fleet drivers where the cars are in constant use on a rotating basis.

       I think we need to really look at exceptions for a different category for part-time drivers because that doesn't seem applicable, that age, for example.

       I think I'm a fairly well seasoned aged person and I wouldn't want to be put out to pasture because I reached 62.
DIRECTOR DO:  Point taken.

MEMBER LOVE WADE:  So this is something I think we really need to look at as a permanent option as opposed to a case-by-case option.

DIRECTOR DO:  I don't like special exceptions and I don't like waivers, but I want to do a prescription where it looks at the mileage and not increase the vehicle age limit.

MEMBER LOVE WADE:  Right, because I think with less use of these vehicles, even if they're older the emissions wouldn't be as great as a vehicle that's in constant use.

DIRECTOR DO:  Correct, right. So I think there's an opportunity to look at the miles and we'll revisit that with my team.

CHAIRPERSON JOLLY:  Mr. Woodbury, thank you very much. And the element of your case that I didn't want to discuss in public was about the information about your medical condition.

I didn't want to bring that up in public here, but it sounds like there is a
possibility for your case to be looked at through
the lens of mileage.

That being the case, if there are no
other witnesses here today, the time is 10:40
a.m. and we are adjourned.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
went off the record at 10:43 a.m.)
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In the matter of: Council Meeting

Before: DC DFHV

Date: 03-26-19

Place: Washington, DC

was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under my direction; further, that said transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

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