STAFF REPORT For Meeting of June 27, 2016 MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL	Agenda Item # NO. 2016- **SUBJECT:** Taxi Ticket Policies & Rate

Subject

Establish a comprehensive policy document for the Senior & Disabled Taxi Ticket Program, and increase the ticket price by $0.25 per ticket.

Summary and Background

The Senior & Disabled Taxi Ticket Program has gone through some major changes over the past year. In October, 2015 the City's long-time taxi contractor committed a major violation of their agreement with the City by failing to carry commercial liability coverage, which resulted in the termination of their contract to offer subsidized rides. The company was allowed, however to continue to operate as a general taxi company. In an attempt to retain riders, the former contractor began to allow various things which were not allowed under the City's subsidized program. This has caused a lot of confusion among those who still ride the City's subsidized program through the current provider.

The City has had a short list of policies regarding the Subsidized Taxi Program for many years. These proposed changes largely provide much more detail based on existing policy, and should be viewed as a document which establishes what is expected of both the taxi company and the taxi riders. City staff has reviewed the proposed document with an ad-hoc group of taxi riders and stakeholders including:

- Sundi Marquez- Owner, Umatilla Cab Company
- Jill Rothfork- President, Lifeways Peer Support Network & Rider
- Kristi Avery- Personal Agent, Eastern Oregon Support Services Brokerage
- Dale Orem- Rider
- Rose Kautz- Rider

This group recommended approval of the updated policy document, including the proposed $0.25 per ticket price increase.

Financial Information

The proposed ticket price increase is expected to generate an additional $5,000 to $6,000 per year in revenue, which will be passed through directly to the current taxi contractor as an additional $0.25 per ride. This increase is necessary to ensure a continued high quality taxi service for the community's senior and disabled population. The need for the increase is almost entirely the result of Oregon's aggressive minimum wage requirements coupled with currently low unemployment rates which make it very difficult to find and retain quality drivers.

The last time Taxi Ticket prices were increased was 2010, when they were increased to $2 per ride. At that time, Oregon's minimum wage was $8.40 per hour. As a result of SB 1532 passed in the 2016 Legislative Session, the minimum wage in Umatilla County will rise to $9.50 per hour as of July 1st, and then rise another $0.50 per hour each year until July, 2022.

Alternatives and Recommendation

Alternatives

1. Motion to approve Hermiston Taxi Ticket Program Manual & Rate
2. Motion to deny Hermiston Taxi Ticket Program Manual & Rate
3. Motion to amend Hermiston Taxi Ticket Program Manual

Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the program manual and rate.

Requested Action/Motion

Motion to approve Hermiston Taxi Ticket Program Manual and Rate.

Department Head- Mark Morgan, Assistant City Manager

City Manager Approval- Byron Smith, City Manager

HERMISTON TAXI TICKET PROGRAM MANUAL

HERMISTON
OREGON

Where Life is Sweet

Updated: June 14, 2016

HERMISTON TAXI TICKET PROGRAM

Table of Contents

Section	Title	Page
1.	What is the Hermiston Taxi Ticket Program?	3
2.	Eligibility Process	3
3.	Operating Hours & Areas	3
4.	Cost of Service	4
5.	Ticket Usage & Fare Information	4
6.	Children	4
7.	Personal Care Attendants	5
8.	Guests	5
9.	Service Animals and Pets	5
10.	Inclement Weather	6
11.	Lost and Found	6
12.	Your Comments Are Welcome	6
13.	Requesting Rides	7
14.	Tips for Requesting Trips	7
15.	What the Taxi Drivers Can and Can't do	8
16.	No Shows	8
17.	Customer Responsibilities	9
18.	Suspension Policy	11

1. What is the Hermiston Taxi Ticket Program?

The Hermiston Taxi Ticket Program (HTTP) is a publicly subsidized ride service for people who are permanently disabled, and for all people 60 years of age or older.

The HTTP charges a fare ticket to ride. You must pay your fare each time you use the HTTP. You can only buy discounted fare tickets at Hermiston City Hall at 180 NE 2nd Street. Taxi drivers cannot accept cash for the HTTP. If you pay for your ride in cash, you will be charged for the full price of the ride.

HTTP provides door-to-door service, but the taxi may make several stops along the way before it arrives at your destination if there are other riders to pick up or drop off.

The HTTP is not a free transportation service, but taxpayers currently cover 70% of the cost of the service. Due to limited public resources to help riders enjoy this service at a substantially discounted rate, there are restrictions and rules on utilizing the service. These restrictions and rules are in place to help maintain and provide this service to the greatest number of users.

2. Eligibility Process

Your eligibility is based on the information provided in your HTTP application and any information gathered through the eligibility process.

To qualify for HTTP service, a passenger must show proof that they are either eligible for Social Security Disability Income (SSDI), have a permanent disability which prevents the ability to operate a vehicle, or are 60 years of age or older.

You can begin requesting HTTP trips as soon as you are notified of your eligibility to ride the HTTP system.

Your safety and that of other passengers and the vehicle operator is our primary concern. We cannot provide service to individuals who are bedridden or who require care not available in a public transit system.

HTTP is not an ambulance service and will not provide emergency transportation services.

3. Operating Hours & Areas

The HTTP service is available when the taxi provider is operating.

The HTTP service is only available for rides within the city limits of Hermiston. The service is also only available to residents who live within the City. This is because Hermiston tax payers cover the large majority of program costs.

Be aware that there are many areas that have a Hermiston zip code and address that are outside of the Hermiston city limits. Those areas are not eligible for the HTTP program. A current map of the City Limits is available
here: http://hermiston.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Viewer/index.html?appid=beb8fabe0e024d24bff2ec19f2e7dfb6

4. Cost of Service

The cost to the rider of a one-way ride is $2.25. This is not the full cost to provide the service. Most of the cost of the ride is covered by the taxpayers. That is why taxi drivers cannot accept cash, or any form of payment other than a ticket, to provide an HTTP ride. If you pay in cash, you will be charged for the full cost of the ride.

5. Ticket Usage & Fare Information

You must pay with your ticket each time you enter an HTTP Taxi. Round trip fare payments are not accepted in advance.

BE PREPARED TO PAY WITH A TICKET before scheduling your trip. Operators DO NOT sell tickets. Operators are also not permitted to search purses, pockets, or backpacks for a passenger's tickets.

Each person riding in a taxi is required to pay in one form or another. If you are travelling with a friend who is also on the HTTP, you cannot share a ticket, you both must pay with a ticket.

If you are travelling with a friend who is not on the HTTP, then they must pay the current market rate for a taxi ride.

If you require a Personal Care Assistant (PCA) to travel with you, then you must pay with two tickets (one for you, and one for your PCA).

If you require a wheelchair accessible vehicle, then you must pay with two tickets.

A large amount of groceries may take up space that should be used for other passengers. If you have more groceries than can be picked up by yourself and the driver (up to 25lbs) at the same time, then you will be charged two tickets for the trip.

Tickets may be purchased at Hermiston City Hall, at 180 NE 2nd Street.

You cannot re-sell your tickets. This is fraud, and may result in suspension from the program for both you, and the person buying the tickets from you. If you would like a refund, you may bring your tickets back to City Hall. Unused tickets may be returned to City Hall for a full refund. No refunds can be made for lost tickets.

6. Children

Children are eligible for the HTTP if they have an eligible ADA disability or are traveling as a companion with an eligible adult passenger. If a child is going to and from school, the school district has primary responsibility to provide special transportation and will be expected to provide such. For student transportation, HTTP will only be the provider of last resort.

HTTP eligible children 5 years of age and under are required to be accompanied by an adult or an older child who is capable of acting as a Personal Care Attendant (PCA).

Children who are not eligible for the HTTP may accompany an HTTP eligible rider as a guest, however a single infant may accompany an HTTP eligible rider for free.

7. Personal Care Attendants

A personal care attendant (PCA) is someone who travels with you to provide any assistance you need. Your personal care attendant must board and de-board at the same location as you. Please note that HTTP does not provide personal care attendants and the taxi driver cannot serve as your personal attendant.

You must pay with two tickets for each one-way trip when you bring a PCA.

Because there may be other riders in the taxi, operators need to stay within sight of the taxi and cannot escort you to a place where they cannot see their vehicle. If you need assistance from the taxi to your destination, and your destination is not within sight of the taxi, or is more than 10 yards away from the taxi, you will need to be accompanied by a personal care attendant to assist you to your destination.

You will need to inform the customer service representative each time you make a reservation that you will be accompanied by a PCA. This ensures there will be room in the taxi for both of you.

8. Guests

A guest or companion is someone you want to bring with you to share the trip, not someone you must bring to enable you to travel. Guests are charged to use the HTTP. If the guest is registered to use the HTTP, then they may pay with a ticket. If the guest is not registered to use the HTTP, then they must pay the current market rate charged by the taxi provider.

Be sure to tell the Reservationist you will be bringing a guest(s) with you when you call to schedule your ride. Drivers cannot take riders who are not pre-scheduled for a trip.

9. Service Animals and Pets

Service animals are welcome aboard HTTP vehicles. A service animal is any guide dog, or other animal trained to perform tasks for an individual with a disability. Service animals are not pets. They are working animals that are specially trained to provide assistance. To travel on a HTTP vehicle, a service animal must:

- Be on a leash or in a container, be under its person's control and behave appropriately
- Remain at its person's feet or on their lap, but may not sit on a vehicle seat
- Birds, reptiles, amphibians and rodents must be kept within an enclosed carrier or container
- Not show aggressive tendencies towards people or other animals

Under control and well behaved are the defining characteristics. The care and supervision of a service animal is solely the responsibility of its owner. In addition, customers traveling with animals are subject to the same general rules that apply to all passengers; i.e., any damage or soiling caused by the animal is the responsibility of the customer. If an animal is not under control or if its behavior is disruptive or menacing, the HTTP operator can refuse service or ask the person and animal to exit the vehicle. Service animals must be kept under physical restraint by the owner at all times. Service animals that are disruptive, threatening or intimidating will be handled on a case-by-case discipline process.

Other pets are not allowed in an HTTP taxi unless they are small and are transported in a suitable pet carrier. Your pet plus the kennel may weigh no more than 25 pounds. Please tell the customer service representative that you are bringing a pet to make sure there is room on the vehicle.

10. Inclement Weather

Service will be limited and possibly cancelled when adverse weather creates hazardous conditions for our passengers or when the taxi is unable to reach your residence or destination.

Non-essential trips may be cancelled, but every effort will be made to deliver life-sustaining and essential trips such as those for dialysis or chemotherapy and work trips for key personnel, as long as vehicles are able to reach your residence or destination.

If your trip is for a life-sustaining or essential service, call customer service to make sure you can get where you need to go.

Sidewalks, driveways, and ramps must be cleared so operators can safely assist passengers using wheelchairs or those who require door-to-door assistance.

Service will be limited wherever adverse weather creates conditions hazardous for passengers, employees and vehicles.

11. Lost and Found

You are responsible to keep track of all of your personal belongings while riding an HTTP taxi, and you must take all of your belongings with you every time that you leave the taxi. If a personal item is found in an HTTP taxi, it will be held until the end of the taxi driver's shift. Drivers will not make a special trip to return your items. The taxi company will hold your item for up to seven days from the time that it is found. If you have not retrieved your item within seven days, it may be disposed of. To find out if your item has been found in a taxi, call the taxi company.

12. Your Comments Are Welcome

Whenever you have comments about the HTTP service, we want to hear from you. All complaints, commendations and suggestions are welcome. Before filing a complaint, please thoroughly review this policy manual to understand the requirements expected of you, as well as the service provider.

To file a formal complaint about the HTTP service, you must submit a written complaint on a form provided at Hermiston City Hall. The following specific details help for a more thorough investigation of your complaints:

- Date and time of the incident
- Operator's name or description
- A detailed explanation of the incident or suggestion
- Rider's name and telephone number

13. Requesting Rides

You can begin requesting HTTP trips as soon as you are notified of your eligibility to ride.

You must call the taxi provider to request a ride. The dispatchers try to keep the phone lines open for other riders as much as possible, so please be prepared to quickly give your request to the dispatcher. If the phone line is busy, simply wait for a few minutes and try again.

Taxi drivers may arrive within 3 minutes of your scheduled pickup time, either early, or late. You must board within 3 minutes of the taxi arriving at your location, so be prepared in case the taxi arrives early.

There are many other users who use the HTTP, and often many of the riders want to get a ride at the same time. All requests are filled on a first-come-first-served basis. Sometimes multiple riders will request to go to the same location at the same time; therefore, the taxi may pick you both up at the same time. There is no guarantee of how quickly a taxi will arrive to pick you up. To expedite your call, please have available when you call:

- Pencil and paper
- Your name
- Your complete pick-up address, including apartment and/or building name or number
- Exact address of where you want to go
- Time(s) and date(s) you would like to travel
- The time(s) of any appointments you might have
- Whether an attendant or guest will be riding with you
- Whether a service animal or pet will accompany you
- Whether you will be using an aid (i.e., wheelchair, walker, oxygen)
- All the above information for your return trip

14. Tips for Requesting Trips

HTTP provides 60-80 trips each day. Although we make every effort to accommodate your request, it may not always be possible to travel at the times you want. These tips will help us provide you the best possible service.

- Whenever possible, be flexible about the times you travel. We might ask that you move your time earlier or later than the time you request in order to combine trips to the same location.
- Carry needed medication with you in case we are delayed for any length of time
- If you are diabetic or hypoglycemic, please bring a small snack with you in case you travel longer than expected
- If you schedule your return trip in advance, you will be held to that time the same as any other scheduled pickup time, regardless of if there is a long line at the grocery store, or if your doctor is running late. So allow yourself plenty of time, because missing your scheduled pickup time will count as a “no-show” and can lead to suspension from the program.
- If you move or use a temporary address, you should notify HTTP immediately. To ensure your timely pick-up, please make sure that the address on your residence can be clearly seen from the street, especially during hours of darkness.
- Make sure you have at least two Taxi Tickets (one each for the outbound, and return trip). Operators cannot accept any payment other than Taxi Tickets, unless you pay the full cost of a regular taxi ride. Operators also cannot give rides “on credit.”

- Plan ahead for your shopping. Taxi Drivers can only assist you with as many packages or groceries as they can carry in one trip, up to 25 pounds total. Large amounts of groceries may result in an additional charge.
- Dress appropriately for the weather in case you need to wait outside.

15. What the Taxi Drivers Can and Can't do

HTTP does not move personal belongings or business items from one residence or facility to another. If you need someone to help you move, please contact your family, friends, or a volunteer agency for assistance.

Operators can assist you with only as many packages or groceries as they can carry in one trip with a total weight not exceeding 25 pounds.

Operators are not permitted to lift or carry objects weighing more than 25 pounds. If you have purchased a heavy or bulky item, please arrange with the store to have it delivered to your home rather than trying to carry it aboard the mini- bus. Operators reserve the right to refuse to transport heavy or bulky items.

Operators cannot accept cash, check, or any payment other than a ticket for an HTTP ride. If you don't have a ticket, you will have to pay for the full cost of the taxi ride.

Operators need to provide as many rides as possible to as many people as possible, therefore they can't spend too much time out of their taxi.

Operators will only go to a building's (nursing home, hospital, medical clinics, grocery stores, etc.) common lobby area or main entrance for buildings that do not have a waiting area established. Operators are not permitted to go through facilities, up elevators, stairs, or individual offices to assist or locate passengers.

Operators will not page passengers at facilities with common lobbies or main entrances. Passengers, personal care attendants, or facility personnel will assume responsibility for getting passengers to and from common lobby areas or main entrances of buildings. Operators cannot serve as your personal care attendant.

Operators cannot leave sight of their taxi, or go more than 10 yards from their taxi.

Operators may arrive up to 5 minutes early or late. Once operators arrive at your destination, they cannot wait longer than 1 minute.

16. No Shows

A "No-Show" is when a vehicle arrives at a pick-up location within five (5) minutes of the scheduled pickup time, and the passenger has not boarded after one (1) minute. A No-Show is a waste of a trip that another person could have used had the trip been cancelled with sufficient notice. The taxi may leave after waiting for one minute.

In order to cancel a trip without a No-show penalty, you must cancel the trip at least 15 minutes before you were scheduled to be picked up.

A customer will receive a verbal warning the next time that they call for a trip that they caused a No-Show. A customer who receives three (3) No-Shows in any 12 month period will be given a hand-written warning upon their next ride. Four (4) No-Shows in any 12-month period will receive a second written warning. Five (5) No-Shows in a 12-month period will result in a one-week suspension of service. Six (6) No-Shows in a 12-month

period may result in a two-week suspension of service. Seven (7) No-Shows in a 12- month period may result in another two-week suspension of service. And eight (8) No-Shows in a 12-month period may result in a one-month suspension of service.

17. Customer Responsibilities

It is HTTP's policy and responsibility to ensure safe and timely transportation for all HTTP customers. You have a responsibility to use the system appropriately for the benefit of your fellow customers. When one customer disrupts service due to inappropriate use or unrealistic expectations, service to others is affected. You are expected to follow the guidelines to ensure that everyone, including yourself, has the safest and most convenient ride possible. The following is a partial list of the more significant customer responsibilities. HTTP reserves the right to deny service to customers who do not comply with their responsibilities.

- If you make several trip requests for the same day, they must be scheduled individually. Operators are not permitted to wait while you run in and do a quick errand.

- It is your responsibility to bring along a personal care attendant (PCA) if you need one. See Section 7 for additional information about PCA's. Attendants who ride with you must be picked up and dropped off with you at the same location. You will need an attendant if:
    - You are using a wheelchair and must travel up or down more than one step.
    - You are traveling on rough terrain, uneven surfaces, steep slopes or any other conditions that, in the operator's judgment, present a safety hazard
    - You are unable to travel independently or need more than the door-to-door assistance provided by HTTP vehicle operators (e.g., you are unable to be left alone or fully operate your own equipment)

- If you are boarding or de-boarding at a large building or shopping mall, a designated outside entrance will be used. You will be dropped off and picked up at the same entrance. Please watch for the HTTP taxi and try to make it easy for the operator to find you.

- You are responsible for all personal belongings brought onto the taxi. You must also take everything each time you leave. Anything left behind will be turned in to Lost and Found.

- Operators will not engage in unnecessary conversation with you. If you have questions while you are in the taxi, the operator will gladly help. However, distractions must be kept to a minimum for safety reasons.

- Dispatchers will not engage in unnecessary conversation with you. If you have questions about your taxi trip, the dispatcher will gladly help. However, additional conversation must be kept to a minimum so that dispatchers can help other customers.

- Operators will not approach a house where there is a risk of encountering an unfriendly animal. When the operator arrives, make sure your pet is contained or on a leash.

- All customers are expected to use appropriate social behavior while riding on HTTP, and when interacting with other customers or HTTP employees. Fighting, throwing objects, pushing, shouting, spitting, rough behavior, and vulgar language are all prohibited. HTTP reserves the right to suspend or terminate riding privileges of passengers who threaten the health and/or safety of our customers or the operator. If a passenger engages in such improper conduct, the operator will stop the vehicle and a supervisor and/or police will be called.

- For the comfort and health of all customers, personal hygiene should be maintained within acceptable standards.

- All customers must comply with safety rules, which include not smoking, eating or drinking in HTTP taxis, and not playing radios or other noise generating equipment. Firearms or weapons of any type, hazardous chemicals, flammable liquids, explosives, acid, or any other articles or materials likely to cause harm to others are also prohibited. Any article that could spill or has an offensive odor must be effectively sealed to prevent odor from escaping, or the contents from spilling.

- HTTP operators are responsible for the safety of their passengers. If you use a mobility aid or wheelchair, it is your responsibility to keep it in good working condition. If an operator believes that you cannot be safely assisted to or from the vehicle, you will be refused transportation and a supervisor will be sent to investigate the problem.

- Your wheelchair may be considered unsafe if the wheels or other parts are loose, if any parts of the wheelchair are broken, or if an electric wheelchair has a dead battery and cannot be moved without unsafe effort by the operator. HTTP staff will work with you to try to resolve any problem, but if no solution can be found, service may be denied until you have taken care of the equipment problem.

18. Suspension Policy

HTTP providers will make every reasonable effort to accommodate various needs. There are situations, however, that jeopardize the quality of HTTP transportation. Repeated abuse of the service may result in denial of service under the following circumstances:

- Physical or verbal abuse toward HTTP employees, customers or equipment
- Excessive Late Cancellations or No-Shows as outlined in our Cancellation & No-Show Policy
- Continued violation of any HTTP policies contained in this manual

Before service is suspended or denied, we will take the following steps:

1. Incidents will be fully documented
2. HTTP staff will communicate with the individual and his/her representative, explaining the infractions and requesting corrective action. The individual will have the opportunity to respond.
3. The HTTP operator's staff will mail written confirmation of any conversation and the agreed-upon points. Depending upon the severity of the issue, this may include immediate suspension. This confirmation will be sent via registered mail, with a copy sent to the City of Hermiston.
4. Suspension for violation of the No-Show policy will follow the steps outlined in Section 16.
5. All suspensions of service may be appealed by filing a written request at Hermiston City Hall.

You may appeal suspensions of service. To formally appeal your suspension, you must fill out an appeal form that is available at Hermiston City Hall, 180 NE 2nd St., Hermiston, OR 97838.