

# Memorandum



**Date:** August 11, 2022

**To:** Honorable Chairman Jose “Pepe” Diaz  
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

Agenda Item No. 2(B)(13)  
September 1, 2022

**From:** Daniella Levine Cava  
Mayor

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniella Levine Cava".

**Subject:** Report Regarding Taxicab E-Request Software Programs or Applications –  
Directive No. 220467

---

## **Executive Summary**

This report, prepared by the Department of Transportation and Public Works (DTPW), is being provided to the Board of County Commissioners (Board) in response to Resolution No. R-341-22 which was adopted on April 5, 2022. The resolution was sponsored by Commissioner Jean Monestime and directed the Administration to, in coordination with representatives of the taxicab industry as well as providers of any E-Request software program or application that has been approved by the County pursuant to Section 31-85(h) of the Code, develop a plan to: (i) improve the functionality of and user experience associated with the E-Request software or application; (ii) maximize public awareness and utilization of the E-Request software or application; (iii) and increase chauffeur training in the use of the application.

Two technology companies, Curb Mobility (Curb) and Arro, Inc. (Arro), have been approved by DTPW to provide E-Request service in Miami-Dade County. However, companies and drivers report a minimal utilization rate by the public due to lack of driver training and no upfront pricing in the mobile applications. On May 3, 2022, Ordinance No. 22-48 was adopted, which reinstated the taxicab chauffeur training program that had been eliminated by the Board in 2016. DTPW staff is currently preparing the training and testing materials that will be offered in English, Spanish and Creole for the program. The program is scheduled to relaunch in October 2022, and it will feature training in the operation of E-Request applications approved by the department. DTPW will also coordinate with the County's Communications and Customer Experience Department (CCED) to assist with promoting taxicab E-request service.

## **Background**

On May 3, 2016, concurrently with the approval of an ordinance legalizing transportation network companies in Miami-Dade County, the Board adopted Ordinance No. 16-43, which, among other things, required each taxicab operator to make available to customers and chauffeurs a software program or application that allows customers to E-Request taxicab service through a software program or application approved by DTPW. The County Code provides that these programs or applications should perform one or more of the following functions: (1) allows a passenger to identify the location(s) of available taxicabs in a given area and allows a taxicab to identify the location of a passenger who is ready to travel; (2) allows a passenger to request a taxicab via the electronic device; (3) allows a taxicab to receive a request from the passenger if the application provides for connecting a passenger to a taxicab; and (4) allows a passenger to pay for taxicab fares through the application.

Since 2016, two technology companies, Curb and Arro, have been approved by DTPW to deliver E-Request service throughout Miami-Dade County. Curb services 88% of the County’s taxi fleet and Arro 12%. However, the companies and drivers report a minimal utilization rate by the public. Data from the companies show that out of an average of 192,000 taxicab trips per month, only 1,430 trips are requested through the applications (0.75% of all requests). Another major issue is that only 4% of these requests are completed because driver acceptance rates are very low, and driver cancel rates very high. In October 2022, DTPW will relaunch its taxicab chauffeur training program which was eliminated by the Board in 2016. The program will feature training in the operation of E-Request applications approved by the department, which should contribute to increased use of such applications by taxi drivers.

A discussion regarding the current use of E-Request applications and drivers’ concerns took place at the DTPW Taxicab Advisory Group (TAG) meeting on March 16, 2022. Staff also met with representatives of the New Vision Taxi Association, the largest association of taxicab drivers in the County, to understand their concerns regarding the taxi applications. There was a consensus on the need for driver training to increase the usage of the applications by both TAG members and New Vision representatives. Both agreed that E-Request companies should engage in more targeted outreach via public relations and local media to become more visible and recognizable by the public.

On May 5, 2022 and May 23, 2022, DTPW staff met with representatives of Curb and Arro, respectively, to discuss ways to improve the functionality of the applications and increase usage by residents and visitors. Curb and Arro recognize that due to low utilization and high cancellation rates, they have not been able to build momentum as they have done in other markets like New York, Chicago and Washington, D.C. Both companies and drivers attributed the lack of driver training as one of the reasons for the low utilization of the applications. Drivers also complain that these applications do not have an estimated upfront pricing feature like what is utilized by transportation network companies (e.g., Uber and Lyft) which discourage them from accepting rides booked through the applications.

In addition, Curb, the largest provider of E-Request service nationwide, has indicated that it would include the upfront pricing feature for the Miami-Dade market in September 2022. This will bring an enhanced level of transparency to both drivers and passengers alike. Curb will use algorithms and historical meter data to generate an approximation of the expected meter rate for a trip based on time and distance estimates made at the time of booking. Drivers will be offered a fare for a trip that is no less than this estimate in order to gain driver trust and acceptance of the requests. In addition, upfront pricing will empower riders to compare the cost of taxis to other transportation options. In the markets where this new feature has been implemented, Curb has seen increased driver participation and earnings, as well as shorter wait times for e-hail passengers.

The increase in the utilization rate of taxi software programs or applications will make the taxi industry more competitive in the modern for-hire transportation world. Recently, Uber reached an agreement with Curb and Arro in New York City which will allow riders to hail taxicabs through

its rideshare applications. A similar deal took place last month between Uber and the taxicab application Flywheel in San Francisco. DTPW staff contacted Uber representatives to inquire if a comparable agreement was being planned for the Miami-Dade County market. Uber indicated that depending on the results of the programs in New York and San Francisco, it may be expanded to other large urban areas including Miami-Dade County.

Another benefit of the expansion in the usage of taxi software programs or applications will be the future integration of taxicabs with a County-sanctioned Mobility Data Specification (MDS) system. This is a cost-effective tool for the County to actively manage private mobility providers operating in the County’s public right-of-way. Through its use, DTPW can collect valuable insight and communicate directly with private mobility providers in real time which contributes to better planning and program management. The integration of taxicabs with MDS is currently being tested in the City of Los Angeles. DTPW will also coordinate with CCED to assist with promoting taxicab E-request service. This will increase awareness of the existence of the taxicab applications by the public.

Pursuant to Ordinance No. 14-65, this report will be placed on the next available Board meeting agenda. Should you require additional information, please contact Eulois Cleckley, DTPW Director and CEO at (786) 469-5406.

- c: Geri Bonzon-Keenan, County Attorney
- Gerald Sanchez, First Assistant County Attorney
- Jess McCarty, Executive Assistant County Attorney
- Office of the Mayor Senior Staff
- Yinka Majekodunmi, Commission Auditor
- Jennifer Moon, Chief, Office of Policy and Budgetary Affairs
- Basia Pruna, Director, Clerk of the Board
- Eugene Love, Agenda Coordinator