



TAXI INDUSTRY FORUM of WESTERN AUSTRALIA Inc.
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Mayor John Carey
City of Vincent
244 Vincent Street
Leederville 6007

via email john.carey@vincent.wa.gov.au
cc Minister.Nalder@dpc.wa.gov.au
cc Lina.Valencia@transport.wa.gov.au

18th February 2016

Dear Mayor Carey

RE: motion to discuss the removal/relocation of the Leederville taxi rank

The Taxi Industry Forum of Western Australia (TIFWA) is deeply concerned with recent council developments to consider relocating/removing the current Leederville taxi rank found on Newcastle Street outside the Leederville Hotel.

The motion brought forward by Councillor Topelberg on the 9th February 2016 at an Ordinary Meeting of council, was based on his belief that the Leederville taxi rank was becoming increasingly less relevant in lieu of a combination of factors that included the diversification of businesses, closeness to rail infrastructure, public decrease in rank usage and the Uber effect.

TIFWA wishes to briefly address the four arguments used to justify this motion;

1. Councillor Topelberg refers to “the changing composition of Leederville town centre businesses” and correlates that with the decreased use of the Leederville taxi rank. TIFWA finds the link confusing and misleading given that fluctuations in the types of businesses found in particularly concentrated precincts, such as Leederville (where there are also vibrant night time economies), barely impact on transit service demands. In fact, precincts with various and dynamically shifting businesses comparable to those found in Subiaco, Claremont and Fremantle for example, continuously have the need to access immediate transit availability usually found at taxi ranks.
2. Councillor Topelberg mentions the close accessibility to rail as another reason to question the need for the Leederville taxi rank. TIFWA wishes to point out that access to other modes of transport such as bus and rail rarely impact on the taxi mode. In other words, derived demand for a particular mode of transport usually remains consistent. Some customers prefer the affordability of rail and bus options while others choose the more expensive point to point service only a taxi can provide. Also, TIFWA feels that a combination of all modes of transport should be readily available to thriving day and night time economy’s found in precincts such as Leederville.
3. Councillor Topelberg uses anecdotal evidence to support his view that rank use has decreased over the years, while implying that these are chronic contractions. TIFWA wishes to stridently point out that although rank use may have recently decreased, councillor Topelberg’s narrative belies the significant impact of the stalled Western Australian economy and the resultant changing nature of discretionary spending amongst the participants of the day/night time economy. Rank patronage throughout the Perth metropolitan area has decreased as a result of the downturn in the economy and ad hoc attempts to remove/relocate current taxi locations for these reasons alone would be seen to be nonsensical, especially where future upturns in the economy are imminent.

4. Councillor Topelberg's reference to uber (which is not a ride sharing service and continues to be an unlawful entity until legislation is ratified), is bewildering given that uber vehicles currently add significantly to traffic congestion found throughout the Leederville precinct. To imply that Uber is now providing an adequate alternative to the transit point to point demand found throughout Leederville disguises the reality that they only represent approximately 10-15 percent of transit use throughout Metropolitan Perth. Likewise, taxis continue to be the only available transit options to legally be able to perform rank and hail work, hence further highlighting the importance placed on taxi and rank viability. The repercussions of removing/relocating the Leederville taxi rank would dramatically also increase traffic congestion as taxis would continuously roam about searching for available hail work. Furthermore, some taxis would search for available parking spots as a means of creating kneejerk temporary ranks, perpetuating the lack of available parking spaces.

Taxi ranks remain an important infrastructural asset to the community, providing expedient transit options with the ability to engage with stationary vacant taxis. TIFWA believes that taxi rank infrastructure is a necessary component of the transport system in its capacity to meet customer demands for transit availability and accessibility. Its measurement of importance should not be calculated on patron usage, which vacillates at diverse periods, but rather the holistic value options it provides to the entire community.

TIFWA is supportive of the importance of the taxi rank and the need to keep in mind more than just market fluctuations when contemplating and discussing issues concerning shifting taxi rank locations. Conversely, the public need to understand the financial desperation many taxi drivers are facing and their need to patronise congested taxi ranks. As a recommendation TIFWA suggests, as an alternative to removing/relocating the current rank location, more planning be placed on traffic management, community awareness and the implementation of increased governance. Members of the TIFWA executive would be prepared to work in unison with the council to educate taxi drivers from contributing to traffic disruptions throughout the busy Leederville precinct.

The rank and hail market remains and will continue to remain the sole domain of the taxi despite the proliferation of alternative transit providers. Therefore, taxi ranks and their high profile and strategic locations must be given priority consideration and ultimately protected from threats of removal/relocation. TIFWA asks that you and your councillors consider these arguments when discussing future attempts to undermine the Leederville taxi rank and consider replacing it with counter intuitive parking bays.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Sangiorgio".

David Sangiorgio (Secretary)