

The Four Proposals, Plus One: A Quick Critique
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Proposal A:

The heart of A is exactly what Prop. K says now. Section 2 of Prop. K opens up permits to anyone who can demonstrate public convenience and necessity, which, in my opinion trumps recent laws passed at the board restricting permits to experienced taxi drivers. Qualified driver? See Section 3.

As I read this proposal, all permits would be single operators: obviating the necessity for peak time permits; potentially flooding the streets with cabs; and—because every driver would have to purchase, maintain and insure his/her own vehicle—require substantial individual investment. Again, it's not new. It's already in Prop. K. The city just doesn't follow its own law.

Proposal B:

Would it work as proposed? It's hard to say. Some drivers might be tempted by the prospect of one big payday, but many, I think, would compare their current annual earning against \$250,000 (minus the city's cut and taxes) and opt to keep their medallions unless they knew they would die soon or after they had contracted a chronic disability. Also, has anybody figured out how not to cause an uprising among the drivers on the waiting list over this?

Proposal C:

Make all companies full-service according to one company's standards.

Proposal D:

This is a step away from proposing company franchises rather than individual permits, and, by the looks of it, rather complicated. I don't think I understand it well enough to comment.

Proposal E:

Mine. (I apologize if my suggestions recover old ground.) First, get taxi law out of the charter appendix and into municipal code, where it can be altered by a majority (or super-majority) of the board of supervisors. Second, solutions should favor incentives, whenever possible, over regulation. With that, how do you make value, currently tied to permits, a reward for service? Third, whatever proposition is put before the voters will have its opponents, who will claim that they are the little guys and that this is a selfish move by the big guys. The most obvious and vocal little guys are drivers on the waiting list. If a majority of them are satisfied with this committee's reforms, the prospect for passage is good. To the degree you alienate them, that's how much harder it will be to win at the ballot. This has proven constant: Voters will forego even their own interests when the perceived little guy, the driver or the small company, claims harm.