

September 21, 2023

London City council
Mayor Josh Morgan & members of City Council
Re: Vehicles for Hire By-law-Amendments/Information report

Dear Mayor and members of the council

The above-mentioned subject was part of CPSC's public participation meeting held on September 12, 2023. I was one of the participants and the last speaker at that meeting.

In summary the primary concerns reflected in the staff report and expressed by industry representatives were:

- A) Significant increase on cost of business operation
- B) Challenges of accessible cab services in London
- C) Demand to extend age of abs above 10 years.

All the issues listed above are significant and require close and dedicated attention from our municipal Government. The damaging impact of the global economic instability, inflation, rise of minimum wage and lack of a level playing field within our industry are challenges that our industry is facing.

Please be reminded that Taxi service is not just an essential service, but also a component of the local economy. Therefore, challenges this industry is facing should be on the radar of the municipal government and like any other local business sector, the city should take a proactive approach dealing with major problems taxi industry is dealing with.

Based on 25 years of my involvement as an active leader within the taxi industry and deep involvement with every By-law review since 2005, I encourage City Staff and members of council not to rush amending the By-law. There should be a complete and effective analysis about all current major issues pertaining to taxi industry before amending the By-law. Especially for benefit of many of new members of council it will be fair and helpful to them to know enough so they can say **'Yes'** or **'No'** to any recommended changes.

Below is a list of recommendations I would like to bring forward for your consideration. I hope they can provide more clarity and a better understanding of the matters.

- 1- Putting together a taskforce combined of all parties representing our industry and relevant authorities from city staff and members from CPSC with mandates to analyze and provide recommendations to council within a timely manner.
- 2- There is a significant shortage of accessible wheelchair cabs in London. The city is obligated to address this issue before it is too late. This serious concern can be tackled with a balance of fairness in mind not with satisfying one party only. ***Without identifying root causes of this issue from all angles, there will be no reliable solution.***

- 3- Annual Business Licence renewal is currently **\$750 per cab**. Unlike any other small and big businesses, there is no justification, why the business licence fee of a single taxi plate has been and still is that high. It would be fair and reasonable to reduce this annual business licence fee down to \$250 per cab.
- 4- City's weekly inspection availability is far from being sufficient and it needs immediate improvement. I respectfully communicated with licensing office in this regard. They acknowledged and agree with recommended improvement.
- 5- Extending age of cabs beyond 10 years is going to put safety of cabs on the road and safety of passenger at risk.
Extending age of vehicles is not a moving forward approach. This approach is going to take taxi companies backward to 20 years ago. Rusty cabs, body damages, wholes on the floor of cabs and serious mechanical problems would bet the consequences. It is not a modernizing approach; it will decrease public safety and it would be damaging to the image of the taxi industry.
- 6- Providing a 24/7 taxi service in an English-speaking Society, means ***every taxi driver must be able to communicate in English***. Currently there is no such requirement for new applicants who want to become a taxi driver. Individuals can obtain taxi licence without speaking even two sentences of English; we had some examples in our fleet. This is causing serious communication problems between customers, dispatchers and the drivers who are not able to speak. This is affecting the level of services we strive to maintain and enhance. Reinstating this requirement is crucial for the benefit of all parties involved particularly for passengers.

Should you have any questions, I will be happy to answer and provide further clarifications you may need.

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