

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING COMMENTS

3.1 Vehicle for Hire By-law

- P. Moore – providing the attached submission.
- A. Baroudi, Baroudi Law – speaking about the submission appended to the Added Agenda.
- G. Gold, U Need A Cab – speaking about the submission appended to the Added Agenda.
- I. Turnbull – indicating that accessible cabs should be called wheelchair cabs, in his opinion, speaking about a past experience he had trying to order an accessible cab for his wife; noting that he has contacted his Member of Parliament and has spoken to Orest Katolyk; indicating that much of what he wanted to speak to was covered by P. Moore; stating that there is a demographic shift in the population and there is mandated compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) in 2025.
- R. Caranci – indicating that he does not want to be here; stating that the industry has not been listened to over the years; noting that he is not present to complain about Uber, they are a fact of life; stating that it is a disgrace the way the industry has been treated and that there it has been proposed to remove the cap on licences; indicating that a number of people in the industry are immigrants trying to make a living; outlining the struggle some have faced to get their businesses up and running; acknowledging that there may be a few people in attendance who do want the cap lifted; outlining his experience with this industry; pointing out the Class A and Class B licences; noting that many companies now have their own apps; noting that cabs are mandated to take cash, debit and credit cards; pointing out that the London Transit Commission is not mandated to operate as much as cabs are; stating that this term of Council has not listened to the industry; pointing out that cab drivers provide a valuable service to the City of London; noting that the industry is not against adding additional accessible plates but that removing the cap is wrong; asking the committee to consider what they will do to the cab industry in London if they make the wrong decision.
- J. Kukurudziak, London Taxi Association – indicating that the proposed by-law should have had a consultant hired to review and present an unbiased report on the industry; pointing out that Council created the transferrable plates, not the cab industry; stating that many people have lived within the framework of the by-law for many years; outlining solutions for the so-called “black market” for plates; describing the plight of some drivers he has worked with who came to Canada from other countries; stating that better service will not result from the proposed changes; indicating that if the proposed by-law is passed, the City will be taken to court.
- B. Howell, 62 Forward Avenue – stating that he believes that the onus of wheelchair accessible cabs should not be on the taxi industry; outlining the way accessible cabs operate throughout the day and how difficult it can be to make money driving them; suggesting that the City should subsidize the accessible cab industry as it and the regular cab industry do not mix; stating that a consultant should be brought in to review the whole industry; speaking about the new transit system being proposed as well as the possibility of more cabs on the road and the traffic problems that will cause; suggesting that people who cannot get a plate could drive for Uber; reiterating the need for a consultant report before a decision is made; outlining changes that need to be made to make the rules fair for cabs and for Uber.
- T. Akanpour, – indicating that he has driven an accessible taxi since 2009; pointing out that he had to pay \$15,000 for a ramp for his taxi and he also has to do more work than other drivers in order to make money; stating that he sometimes has to drive from one end of the City to the other for only \$5, which is his gas money for that trip; suggesting that Uber should be

considered separately from cabs; indicating that there should be a subsidy for installing ramps in accessible cabs.

- K. Mohammed – indicating that he has been self-employed as a driver for eighteen years; outlining issues with Uber drivers flooding the market at night time and nothing is being done; stating that many people in attendance are self-employed and pay taxes; indicating that in the summer there are four months with no business for the taxi industry because London is a college city; stating that most drivers wait for the winter to make money and now Uber is making that more difficult; expressing frustration that it is being suggested that the cap be removed, that it would hurt many self-employed people.
- Tony Ram – indicating that he has been a driver for 33 years; stating that not everyone in the taxi industry received a letter about this meeting, as was suggested earlier; outlining issues with Uber.
- Mr. Alihan – noting that he has been a driver for more than ten years; indicating that was hard to make a living before Uber came and now it is harder; outlining that if the cap is removed on plates, nobody will be able to make money; requesting that a consultant be hired before a decision is made on removing the cap on plates; stating that the city needs to control the fares for cabs in order to prevent unfairness.
- H. Savehilaghi, Yellow London Taxi – expressing sadness about the submission of I. Turnbull; referencing a joint submission from brokers in the City given to Members of Council; outlining his thoughts on accessible cabs; indicating that taxi brokers and drivers are part of the solution for this issue; stating that he would like to see both sides come together and find a solution; indicating that there is an anti-regulation approach taken by Council; expressing frustration that the taxi industry is targeted again and again with new rules and regulations that hurt the industry; stating that he believes the Council has been misled regarding how the taxi industry has been operating; indicating that Uber was allowed to operate for two years illegally and that there were charges against them that were all dropped by the legal department while no charges against taxi drivers have ever been dismissed; stating that this is a double standard.
- I. Omer, 2143 Collingham Drive – indicating that he has been a driver for 25 years and he is currently the president of U Need A Cab; pointing out that there is a misconception among Councillors with respect to the terms taxi drivers and taxi company; stating that brokerages in London are owned by taxi drivers that worked their way up to own; expressing that now these brokerages feel threatened by the proposed removal of caps on cabs which is the opposite direction of a number of other cities; outlining that the owners of the brokerages in London would like to work together to find a solution for the issues with accessible cabs; speaking about the ratio of regular and accessible cabs; requesting that the cap on cabs not be removed; stating that a consultant needs to be hired that is an expert on the taxi industry to write a report on why the industry is the way it is; stating that the industry is being held hostage.
- N. Abbassey, Your Taxi.London – referencing the joint submission from brokers in the City given to Members of Council; stating that he is only asking for a fair and transparent by-law; requesting that the concerns of everyone in attendance be taken seriously; indicating that they have put their trust in the Council when they elected them so they hope that Council makes the right decision which is beneficial for the consumers as well as those working in the industry; outlining that removing the cap on cabs will cause more traffic congestion in the city; requesting that the yearly fee for licences be reduced from \$750 due to the loss of income in the last couple of years; indicating that there should be an increase in the taxi fares; outlining that the taxi industry provides direct phone lines for those who do not have a smart phone; indicating that the industry wants to be part of the solution with respect to wheelchair accessible cabs; stating that, currently, public safety is being neglected.
- D. Abdellah, Checker – indicating that she has been in the industry for 25 years; stating that she is very shocked by the changes proposed; requesting

- that a professional consultant be hired to come in and listen to those working in the industry; expressing that those in the industry do not feel that they are being heard and that they need to be involved in the decisions being made; stating that when Checker Limousine started a number of years ago, the taxi industry was very upset but it was done legally, unlike some other companies; expressing a willingness to have meetings with Council and with a consultant to ensure that everyone is heard.
- Z. Hammed - indicating that he has been a taxi driver for more than 10 years, stating that he is a driver, he does not own a plate, outlining that insurance is increasing and that the lease of plates is expensive, expressing that City Hall needs to help out with compensation.
 - F. Sagar, 4 Poplar Crescent – requesting that the Committee be fair when deciding on their vote for this issue and think about the families that will be affected; indicating that the industry has been struggling since Uber came to London; outlining how many cars are on the road now and how that affects traffic and pollution; indicating that the demand is not there for more cabs on the road; requesting that those that work in the industry be consulted on this matter.
 - Badir, 838 Wildrose Lane - indicating that he has been a taxi driver for ten years; enquiring as to why the taxi licence is \$750 per year but it is not the same for Uber; stating that he understands that the licence fee for taxis helps the City, but it would also help the City if Uber paid for a licence as well; indicating that he feels that the City should continue to control the fares for taxis; stating that he agrees that there are not enough accessible cabs but that should be addressed separately from the cap on regular cabs to avoid hurting business; stating that it is not safe for the community to have more taxis on the road as there are a lot of them already; indicating that the industry has already been hurt by Uber coming and it needs help; reiterating that Uber drivers should also be required to buy a licence and pay \$100 or \$200 per year.
 - Martin, 600 Grenfell Drive – stating that all the people present are citizens of Canada and everyone has chosen different ways to make a living, taxi drivers serve the community and so do the Councillors; outlining the ways that technology has changed the industry; indicating that it will be unfortunate if the value of taxi plates decreases, but that is the way of the world; comparing it to the housing market values; expressing frustration that owners of plates pay \$750 a year and then charge drivers \$450 a week to lease the plate; stating that it is very difficult for drivers to make money and they need to be able to have their own plates; noting that owners of plates tell drivers they can drive for Uber if they do not wish to lease plates but owners of plates could also drive for Uber if they are unhappy that their plate has lost value; requesting that the City regulate the lease of taxi plates.
 - A. Hammoud – see attached submission.
 - H. Woldemicael, Green Taxi – see attached submission; outlining the challenges that face accessible taxi drivers and suggestions to improve this.
 - F. Bander – indicating that he is the owner of a plate and an owner and operator of a brokerage; submitting the attached petition, signed by 123 individuals; outlining the challenges faces taxi plate owners; noting that it is difficult to find a solution that works for everyone, drivers and owners; indicating that he runs half of the accessible taxis in the city; stating that he has met with Councillor Cassidy to discuss the challenges facing accessible taxi drivers; outlining incentives for accessible taxi drivers that would help the industry; stating that the taxi model needs to be changed to be more similar to Uber.
 - Ali, Yellow London Taxi – indicating that he has worked for Yellow London Taxi for just over two years; outlining that complaints that stem from exceptional circumstances happen because this is not a perfect world; stating that he pays rent to the owner of a plate to drive his taxi; indicating that he has been able to work an acceptable amount of hours and make an acceptable amount of money while still being able to see his family;

stating that when Uber came and was allowed to operate with a different standard than taxis it caused problems; indicating that he now has to put in more hours to reach an acceptable level of living and has less time to spend with his family.

- Mustafa – indicating that he has driven a cab for twenty years; stating that he objects to the unlimited cab licences; indicating that for many years, taxi drivers have worked hard to ensure compliance with the taxi by-law; outlining the challenge to compete against the Uber model and the drastic impacts to their livelihood; stating that the introduction of Uber has reduced the clientele for taxis; stating that while trying to remain competitive with Uber, the proposed by-law introduces new changes that threaten their livelihood again; requesting that the committee reject the proposed by-law.
- S. Malfuadi, 450 Highland Avenue – stating that the Mayor made a statement in the past that this Council will make evidence-based decisions and there is not enough evidence for Council to make that kind of decision on this issue; indicating that the subject of removing the cap on cabs should be sent back to staff to do more consultation with the industry; enquiring as to why the taxi industry is being targeted; requesting that the Committee reconsider this and try to help the taxi industry.
- J. Hassan, 600 Sarnia Road – indicating that he has been driving for 25 years; stating that he does not support the price change; stating that everyone seems to be talking about money in their pockets and as a driver, trying to support his family, he needs a taxi plate; requesting that the Committee think of the drivers, who cannot afford to hire a lawyer to represent them, when making their decision on this matter.
- Driver, U Need A Cab – indicating that he has been a taxi driver for 25 years; stating that he did not receive a letter about the changes to the by-law and the meeting tonight; indicating that the by-law allows plates to be transferred from one person to another and it is not breaking any laws and if that is changed it will be a problem; stating that drivers who have bought plates were thinking long-term to their retirement; noting that taxi drivers have been playing by the rules and just want the industry to be regulated fairly; stating that Uber started operating illegally in the city and now they are recognized and allowed to operate; stating that he has lost his confidence in this Council.
- M. Osmon – stating that most of his talking points have been addressed by other speakers; pointing out that he does have sympathy with the plight of some of the drivers regarding the cost of operation; stating that drivers have lost some revenue but brokers have not; indicating that he hopes that will be addressed; stating that the issue of a plate sitting at City Hall with no driver for three months needs to be addressed; requesting that the plate leasing issue be addressed; stating that for drivers, the cost of \$450 per week is only a fraction of their cost of operation so changing that will not solve the whole problem; stating that he is against removing the cap on cabs but drivers are suffering more than brokers and the by-law needs to be adjusted so it is fair for both groups.
- Ahkmed, 42 Hammond Crescent – stating that he is an owner/operator and started with nothing and worked his way up to buying his own plate; indicating that it costs him \$450 per week to operate his cab and nothing comes free in life.
- Driver – indicating that he has been a driver for thirteen years; stating that the cab industry is dying slowly but the draft by-law will kill it faster; outlining challenges facing drivers.
- C. Shay, Uber Canada, 1209 King Street West, Toronto – speaking about proposed amendments to the ridesharing portion of the proposed by-law; stating that there are a number of registered Uber drivers in London but only a few of them are online at the same time; indicating that Uber is an income supplement for drivers; outlining the proposed changes in the by-law for registration; stating that he is supportive of the tweaks to the application process; indicating that the changes proposed are already in effect in other cities and it has been reported that it is working well; stating

that he agrees with the proposed change to the age of vehicles; noting that he is in favour of the City recouping the administrative costs of issuing licences; stating that the proposed by-law eliminates some fees but increases the per trip fee and he is concerned that the increase is a little high.

- Mahoumza, Driver – requesting that the Committee think about what the purpose is of deregulating plates; stating that deregulating the plates would have a substantial effect on the financial reality of a number of people, which would have an effect on quality of life; suggesting that if there is evidence to prove that deregulating the plates would benefit the industry, that is fine, but there is no evidence to that effect so he is not in favour of deregulation.
- J. Shales – indicating that deregulation of the industry is going to lead to a glut of cars on the road and problems for London; stating that a micro experience that people have when they are considering moving to London is riding in a taxi and if there are too many taxis on the road they will be more run down and it will paint a negative picture of London for visitors; suggesting that we think about promoting London's brand; noting that with online retail, the City is losing a large amount of money in retail taxation so we need to focus on bringing people and industry into the city.
- M. Saline – enquiring as to what happens to a taxi plate if it is off of a vehicle for more than three months; expressing frustration that he needs to find a plate owner and work out an agreement with them to use the plate, but the plates actually belong to the City; suggesting that instead of removing the cap on plates, the City should control the lease of plates so everyone can benefit; outlining the differences between owners of plates and those that lease them and how difficult it is for those that lease to make ends meet.
- Asafat – indicating that he has been in the taxi industry for 25 years but he had to transfer his plate and now he is on a waiting list for one again; stating that he is not in favour of removing the cap on plates; indicating that it is hard to compete with Uber; suggesting that a member of Council should be from the taxi industry so they could represent the industry.
- Ahzedine – stating that he has been a driver for 22 years; indicating that he had to borrow money to buy a plate but if he had known it would be free in the future, he would not have done so; suggesting that it is not fair to those who have invested in plates to have the cap removed; outlining the issues on Richmond Street, at night, with respect to taxi drivers fighting with each other over fares; noting that putting more cars on the road will only make that worse.