

Append 1- Vehicles for Hire Bylaw- Taxi and TNC Parity Review- Engagement Summary.docx

January 11, 2021



Contents

Contents	2
Executive Summary	3
1 Background.....	4
1.1 City Project Team	4
2 Engagement Activities.....	4
2.1 Stakeholder Consultations (2020)	4
2.2 Intended Audience	5
2.3 Phase 1: What we heard from the industry.....	6
2.3.1 Riide	6
2.3.2 Captain Taxi	6
2.3.3 Hey Taxi	7
2.3.4 YXE City Cabs	7
2.3.5 Uber Canada	7
2.3.6 Rel8Well Travel	8
2.3.7 United Steelworkers (USW)	8
2.3.8 Taxi Plate Owners & Drivers	9
3 Phase 2	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.1 Questionnaire to Industry Stakeholders	10

Executive Summary

Engagement with the vehicles for hire industry was completed over two phases beginning in February 2020 and concluding in December 2020.

Beginning in February 2020, meetings were held with stakeholder groups to review the overall engagement plan and gather information on the concerns with the existing bylaw and which regulations should be considered for amendments.

In November 2020, a second phase of engagement was completed. Comments made by stakeholders in phase one were shared with all stakeholders to review and provide input on.

The engagement work undertaken with the vehicles for hire industry identified many possible bylaw amendments, the rationale for why those changes are needed, and the implications of implementing the proposed amendment. This information has assisted Administration in recommending Option 9, to increase vehicle age maximum for taxis to 10 years. The taxi industry stakeholders strongly supported this option and the TNC industry stakeholder felt that it would be consistent with other municipalities in Canada.

Consensus was also identified on one other option: a proposed change to remove the vulnerable sector check requirement for both Taxi's and TNC drivers, to align with the provincial standard. Administration is not recommending amendments to the vulnerable sector requirements at this time as it provides an additional check for past offences that would restrict a person from operating a vehicle for hire. Saskatoon Police Services has also advised they are not supportive of removing the vulnerable sector check from the licencing requirements. It may be appropriate to be re-examine this matter further, should a regional transportation or licensing framework be considered in the future.

1 Background

At its Regular Business Meeting on September 30, 2019, City Council adopted the Vehicles for Hire Bylaw, which repealed and consolidated the Taxi Bylaw and Transportation Network Company Bylaw into a comprehensive bylaw. At this meeting City Council also resolved:

“That the stakeholders of the taxi and TNC industry be invited to meet with the Administration to continue discussions regarding the Vehicles for Hire Bylaw to ensure that in the areas where both services should be treated similarly are reviewed, and that a report be brought back for City Council’s consideration with possible Bylaw amendments no later than the September, 2020 City Council meeting.”

1.1 City Project Team

Mark Wilson	Licensing and Permitting Manager
Wayne Sum	Taxi & Rideshare Manager
Ryan Newell	Public Engagement Manager

2 Engagement Activities

Engagement activities included separate meetings with each stakeholder group in the taxi industry. Results of each engagement were shared with all other stakeholders and circulated for comment in the form of a survey.

2.1 Stakeholder Consultations (2020)

Engagement with the vehicles for hire industry was completed over two phases beginning in February 2020 and concluding in December 2020.

Phase One

Beginning in February 2020, meetings were held with stakeholder groups to review the overall engagement plan and gather information on the concerns with the existing bylaw and which regulations should be considered for amendments. Stakeholders were advised items raised in the separate meetings, and within the project scope of reviewing areas where regulations between taxis and TNC are similar, would be documented and shared with other stakeholders for comment and input in future engagement phases. Out of scope comments not related to regulations for taxis and TNCs would be documented in the engagement summary, but not circulated within the industry for additional review. One stakeholder did not complete this phase prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. At the request of the stakeholder, engagement work was paused in order to allow them to focus on maintaining business continuity during the pandemic.

Phase Two

Industry engagement resumed in November 2020. Stakeholders were provided an opportunity to review the information they provided prior to the pandemic and to provide initial (phase one) comments if they had not already done so.

At that time one of the stakeholders advised they wanted out of scope items to be considered in phase two. This request could not be accommodated as the items related to aspects of the taxi regulations for which significant industry engagement had already been completed was contrary to the direction provided in the Council motion. Re-engaging on those issues would require additional time and resources from Administration, as well as from all other taxi industry stakeholders and could not be accommodated in the project timeline. The stakeholder chose to withdraw from further participation in the engagement.

A second taxi stakeholder chose to withdraw from the engagement at that time, citing a potential conflict of interest with an ongoing class action lawsuit. They requested the engagement be undertaken again once that matter had concluded.

Items raised by the remaining stakeholders in phase one were summarized and tabulated into a list of 14 items and circulated to the participating stakeholders for review and comment. The purpose of this phase was to provide each stakeholder an opportunity to provide input on the requests for bylaw amendments which had been made by all other stakeholders. This ensured all requests would be vetted within the industry.

2.2 Intended Audience

The stakeholder groups identified in the engagement process are outlined below. Through the course of the process a number of these companies closed, or chose not to participate in the second round of engagement as noted. included the following:

Industry Stakeholder group	Participating group	Status over course of engagement
Taxi Brokerage	Riide	Declined to participate beyond Phase 1
	Hey Taxi	New taxi brokerage established in 2020. Declined to participate.
	YXE City Cabs	New taxi taxi brokerage established in 2020. Participated in Phase 1. Declined to participate in Phase 2.
	Captain Taxi	Participated through to end of Phase 2
Transportation Network Companies	Uber	Participated through to end of Phase 2
	Rel8Well Travel	Participated in Phase 1. No longer in business
Union	United Steelworkers (taxi driver union)	Participated through to end of Phase 2
Taxi Plate Owners	Individual owners	Participated in Phase 1; no further comments provided in Phase 2
Taxi Drivers	Individual drivers	Participated in Phase 1; no further comments provided in Phase 2

2.3 Phase 1: What we heard from the industry

Below is a list of all comments received through Phase 1 of the engagement process.

2.3.1 Riide

On February 28, 2020, Administration met with members of Riide Holdings. An additional meeting was held on June 11, 2020, to continue further discussion. Additional feedback was received on November 20, 2020. On November 23, 2020, Riide Holdings elected not to participate further in the Engagement, citing concerns that the scope of the engagement was too narrow and ought to be expanded to include other aspects that apply only to taxis such as Enterprise Taxi Licenses.

- Overall feeling that there are no control mechanisms in place about driver standards and quality with TNCs
- Market entry system must be made the same – cap on TNC drivers
- Recommending mandatory in-car cameras for TNCs
- Would like to see a similar fare structure as TNCs
 - Drop rate can be identical
 - Would be happy to not have a regulated fare structure
 - Some smaller municipalities have no regulated fare structure
- Should have similar comparison to transit fare increases
- Would like City to explore alternative models for taxi licenses ie. Physical license plates, or top sign licensing.
- Would like to see a grandfathering clause regarding the ten-year window outlined in the *Vehicles for Hire Regulation* relating to offences.
- Would like to see the return of a taxi/vehicle-for-hire committee with the local police
- Feels that the taxi licenses fees could be reduced; not seeing or realizing the value in comparison to the cost. Regular business licenses are \$85.00 compared to \$525.00 for taxis.

Out of scope comments raised:

- Would like to see Enterprise Taxi Licenses restricted geographically to only the City of Saskatoon.

2.3.2 Captain Taxi

On February 18, 2020, Administration met with members of Captain Taxi to discuss points of disparity between taxis and TNCs (ridesharing). Additional feedback was received on May 5, 2020.

- More enforcement is required, not seeing enough enforcement between taxis and TNCs and that there are conflicts not being managed enough on the roadway.
- Many TNCs still not displaying their rideshare decals as required.

Out of scope comments raised:

- Would like only single device (taximeter) to be used in a vehicle. Does not endorse multi-device usage ie. Driver provided device.
- Would like to participate in a Taxi Cost Index review for 2020.

- Would like to see more temporary taxi stands or expansion of existing stands or creation of new ones.

2.3.3 Hey Taxi

On November 10, 2020, Administration contacted Hey Taxi to arrange a meeting to discuss points of disparity between taxis and TNCs (ridesharing). Hey Taxi was not in existence during the first round of engagement sessions. The taxi company submitted an e-mail statement.

- Believes stakeholders are car owners, franchise owners, and dispatch company owners / operators, not unions and drivers.
- Feels that review had not been done prior to or even during the process of writing the new ride share bylaw.
- Bylaw was simply cut and pasted together, renamed, and renumbered.

Out of scope comments raised:

- Feels that new enterprise temporary taxi plate program was not reviewed properly.
- Declining to participate further due to the class action lawsuit against the City of Saskatoon.
- Requesting further engagement after the conclusion of the lawsuit.

2.3.4 YXE City Cabs

On November 18, 2020, Administration met with YXE City Cabs to discuss points of disparity between taxis and TNCs (ridesharing). YXE City Cabs was not in existence during the first round of engagement sessions.

Out of scope comments raised:

- Enterprise Taxi Licenses: would like to see license holders being able to lease to a second driver.
- Would like to see Enterprise Taxi Licenses turn into permanent licenses.

2.3.5 Uber Canada

On February 18, 2020, Administration met with members of Uber Canada to discuss points of disparity between taxis and TNCs (ridesharing). Additional feedback was received on November 17, 2020 and December 7, 2020.

- No rideshare caps exist in any other Canadian municipality, would like the City to maintain this position.
- Would like the City to align background checks with the provincial regulations; this would reduce conflict between rules and remove a barrier to more regional transportation.
- This would align with the work Uber has been undertaking with Edenwold and a dozen other municipalities on the outskirts of Regina.
- If Saskatoon were to align its background check requirements in a manner similar to Regina, similar regional progress could be likely be made here.

2.3.6 Rel8Well Travel

On February 20, 2020, Administration met with Rel8Well Travel to discuss points of disparity between taxis and TNCs (ridesharing). The business ceased operations as of March 2020.

- Believes the tiered license system is marginalized and creates a barrier to new entrants to the industry.
- Requesting the bylaw be amended to permit pro-rating of tier levels for those who are moving through the tiers.
- We want the tiers, 1, 2 and 3 pro-rated in the following ways:
 - Number of drivers to enrol should not have limitation
 - If number of drivers driving is up to 10, tier 1 (minimum license requirement)
 - If number of drivers driving (completing trips) are 11, tier 2 (\$12,500. This option is what the City said could negatively impact our business.
 - If number of drivers driving (completing trips) is equal to “c” or more than, but within 11-50 (tier 2) above, “a” license fee of \$2,500 will not be lost as the current bylaw says. Tier 1 amount will be subtracted from tier 2 or the new tier and then we will pay the difference (challenge similar to “c” above).
 - If number of active drivers completing trips is equal to 11 (into tier 2 category), the license fee should be calculated as follows: $\$12,500/12(1\text{yr}) = 1,041.66$ per month (license fee). This means that we will only pay the difference of \$1,041.66 to the city as the difference between tier 1 and tier 2 for that month (this means that tier 2 has been pro-rated to per month fee). This also means that instead of “c” above, we will only pay \$1,041.66 to the city as license fee for moving into tier 2 category within that month. This option also purports that we will no longer be limited to the number of drivers we will activate to drive. We can channel our resources to advertisements”.

2.3.7 United Steelworkers (USW)

On February 19, 2020, Administration met with members of the United Steelworkers to discuss points of disparity between taxis and TNCs (ridesharing). Additional feedback was received on May 5, 2020 and December 1, 2020.

- Recommending mandatory in-car cameras for TNC Drivers
- In light of what we are seeing with COVID, the City, as the regulator, may want to examine protocols for keeping the public and drivers safe, similar to what has been adopted for in-car cameras. For example, PPE protocols, vehicle sanitization, etc.
- Recommending Class 4 licenses for TNC drivers

Out of scope comments raised:

- Enterprise Taxi Licenses: would like to see license holders being able to lease to a second driver

- Requesting for a stop to requiring broker affiliation letters for any taxi drivers renewing their license.
- Seeking change to operational procedure for the suspension process and the application to the License Appeal Board. Whereas time is normally served for a suspension before an appeal hearing is ever convened for the matter to be spoken to.
- Would like the City to review policy & procedure for the retrieval of in-car video and look at how Saskatoon Transit's policies or best practice could be applicable.
- Would like to see the Accessible Levy being distributed to accessible taxi drivers as well in addition to the accessible taxi owners.

2.3.8 Taxi Plate Owners & Drivers

A come-and-go meeting was held on March 3, 2020 for taxi plate owners and on March 4 for taxi drivers. The meeting consisted of presentations every hour followed by a discussion. A total of 12 people attended and provided comments. No further comments were received from drivers or plate owners during phase two.

Taxi Plate Owners

- Unfair advantage for TNC drivers. Easier to get approval to become a TNC driver
- TNC costs are less, no overhead, cherry picked hours, no responsibilities
- Cost of taxi license compared to TNCs
- More licensing costs should be borne directly by the TNC driver and not the TNC
- TNC drivers should be licensed by the City of Saskatoon
- Full training program for taxi and TNC drivers, service focused training
- Many TNC drivers idling at night – environmental issues
- TNCs not providing the same services
 - Cash only, accessible trips
- Age of vehicle is not the same
 - Some want shorter, some want longer but should be the same
- Surge pricing should not be allowed
- Cameras should be provided in both taxis and TNCs
 - Safety of the passenger and driver
 - Control of the passenger (rowdy passenger)
- Must be local broker to operate a taxi company
- The number of TNC vehicles permitted to operate should be capped.

Taxi Drivers

- More enforcement required – Uber not policed enough
- “Ghost Ubers” – unlicensed drivers
- Can we get drunk driving data for Saskatoon post and pre TNCs?
 - What is the long-term trend 10 years?
- Data on number of vehicles per household
- TNC reckless driving at night
- Camera in TNCs

- TNCs do not need to accept every trip the way taxis need to. It should be equal. This is not fair for wheelchair accessible taxi operators.

Out of scope comments raised:

- Need for more nighttime taxi stands: Hudson, Outlaws, Congress, just for taxi – 11pm – 3am Fridays and Saturdays.
- Bylaw amendment that requires taxi brokerages and taxi dispatch to be operated independently
- Taxi brokerage must have phone number and local office
- Enterprise licenses should be permitted to have 2 drivers
- New brokers need the drivers
- Insurance costs are higher for taxis than TNCs
- Proof of broker affiliation should not be required to renew taxi driver license
- More consultation on when broker can access footage (speaking to taxi cameras)
- Would like wheelchair incentive to be distributed to drivers too
- Taxi plates are sitting, cannot get a night driver to cover the overhead
- Level playing field was not achieved due to years of too few taxi licences, flex proposal would have addressed this

3 Phase 2

3.1 Questionnaire to Industry Stakeholders

The second phase of engagement was structured to identify areas of consensus among the participating stakeholders on the input received from the first round of engagement. Three industry groups chose to participate in the second Phase of the engagement process: Captain Taxi (Brokerage), United Steel Workers Union, and Uber (TNC). All other stakeholders were invited to participate and declined.

A series of targeted questions, summarizing the input received in phase 1 process, were asked of participating industry stakeholders during Phase 2 of the Engagement.

1. There should be a cap on the number of TNC vehicles permitted to operate.

Stakeholder	Agree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree
Captain Taxi	✓		
United Steel Workers	✓		
Uber Canada		✓	

Comments:

Taxi Industry : “To protect the stakeholders whose cost of running the service is very high to go out of service. Now during the Covid-19 all those stakeholders are paying of same without the same income. That’s why this is the time to stop the Uber service to protect the stakeholder should be protected, been in the field providing service from many years including the accessible service.

Uber should be suspended to protect the traditional taxi service in the benefits of customers.”

TNC Industry: “No other city or province in Canada limits the number of TNC vehicles. Nor is there a compelling public policy reason for Saskatoon to do so now.

Based on Saskatoon’s comparatively stable industry growth to date, high levels of customer satisfaction, and no significant concerns with safety or vehicle congestion, there is a lack of rationale for the City to regulate the number of TNCs vehicles.

Limiting the number of TNC vehicles would deprive many Saskatonians of a flexible earning opportunity. It would increase reliance on privately-owned vehicles and increase the incentive to drive home while intoxicated. In addition, limiting the number of TNC vehicles would lead to the economic and social harms that have been well-documented in many cities in relation to the taxi industry: grossly inflated grey-market prices for licences, exploitation of non-owning drivers by taxi owners, and an overall degradation in the availability and quality of urban transportation services. A major benefit of the TNC model is that the market naturally increases and decreases transportation supply in accordance with fluctuations in rider demand for transportation. Artificially and arbitrarily limiting the number of TNC vehicles upsets this dynamic balance.”

2. To remove barriers for regional transport, the City of Saskatoon’s requirements for criminal record checks for taxi and TNC drivers should be identical to the requirements set by the Province of Saskatchewan.

Stakeholder	Agree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree
Captain Taxi	✓		
United Steel Workers	✓		
Uber Canada	✓		

Comments:

Taxi Industry: “Agree, Decals and can’t be serviced by ghost cars [everyone providing transportation service should at least have a license and criminal record check]”

TNC Industry: “Ensuring safety is a top priority for Uber. Drivers in Canada undergo a number of screening processes before being able to drive via the Uber app which include: Identity verification, driving history check, and then a criminal background check for convictions and pending charges. All checks completed in accordance with Saskatchewan’s provincial regulations would still be completed by Canadian police services accessing relevant databases. This harmonization would allow for electronic verifications and transmission of results for those checks to conform with the current provincial standards and those found in Regina.

Uber takes no position on the background check rules that should be applicable to taxi,

The City should align background checks with the provincial regulations; this would reduce conflict between rules and remove a barrier to more regional transportation. The policy choices made by the Legislative Assembly are more than sufficient to protect public safety.

This would align with the work Uber has been undertaking with Edenwold and a dozen other municipalities on the outskirts of Regina.

If Saskatoon were to align its background check requirements in a manner similar to Regina, similar regional progress could likely be made in Saskatoon.”

3. In-car video cameras should be required in all TNC vehicles.

Stakeholder	Agree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree
Captain Taxi	✓		
United Steel Workers	✓		
Uber Canada		✓	

Comments:

TNC Industry: “No Canadian city currently requires cameras in ridesharing vehicles. Calgary and Ottawa have both completed reviews on the matter and determined that cameras are not necessary for TNC business models that only conduct pre-arranged trips and retain rider and driver information to maintain accountability. Additional reasons include:

- TNCs (Uber) and Limos only accept prearranged rides. Limos have historically not required a camera. Uber and Limos are more alike in this regard because trips are pre-arranged, not resulting from random street hails.
- Taxis are granted special permission to operate via street hails and accept cash, which has led to a requirement for cameras. Ridesharing drivers are not permitted to accept street hails or accept cash.
- Pre-arranged trips through an app (with driver and vehicle information and ratings provided to the customer, and customer identification provided to the driver) creates an environment of mutual trust and safety.
- Uber maintains detailed records of every single trip. This includes the time and geo-location of every trip, plus any written communication between the driver and rider using the app. The data also includes the identity of the driver (including the documents the driver uploads to start driving with Uber, such as driver’s licence) and the identity of the rider (which includes the rider’s phone number and electronic payment method). For the benefit of public safety, Uber maintains the Law Enforcement Response Team (LERT) portal <<https://lert.uber.com/>> for law enforcement to quickly request and receive critical information. The target response time for law enforcement inquiries through the LERT portal is 20 minutes for emergency situations, and 48 hours for all other situations.
- To work effectively, cameras installed must be tamper proof, always on and only accessible to police. Even then it raises significant privacy concerns as the same ridesharing vehicles used commercially are also used privately to take family to and from activities and appointments. It

would be a significant privacy violation to be recording a family's private activities and legally questionable. Finally, as we enter a phase of economic recovery, imposing an additional cost on drivers, particularly when there is no evidence that it increases the safety of the platform, is misguided and will only hurt drivers."

4. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the bylaw should set out requirements for minimum taxi and TNC sanitation and protective equipment use.

Stakeholder	Agree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree
Captain Taxi	✓		
United Steel Workers	✓		
Uber Canada		✓	

Comments:

Taxi Industry: "Brokers to supply PPE and sanitation equipment or supplies"

Taxi Industry: "Agree, Flexi glass partition, masks, sanitizers, wet wipes all shave cost to the Taxi company's for the safety of drivers and customer. TNC and Uber should have same requirement for equal playing field."

TNC Industry: "COVID-19 is a reminder that work on safety is never done, and during these unsettled times, Uber has had to make adjustments. Before taking a ride, riders have to confirm that they do not have any COVID symptoms, have not been in contact in the past 14 days with someone with COVID, and are wearing a face covering. In addition to cleaning the vehicle between rides, drivers have to make the same commitments and also take a selfie of themselves proving they are wearing a face covering or else they cannot go online to take trips.

These are proactive steps that Uber has taken to keep users on its platform safe including additional requirements, especially considering COVID should hopefully not be a long-term occurrence, would be adding additional red tape where policies and procedures are already in place. Instead, the city should continue to work collaboratively with industry as various public health situations evolve. Should additional temporary orders be required to be mandated for the short-term, public health officials are typically best positioned to make such directives."

5. TNC drivers should be required to obtain a City driver's licence like taxi drivers are.

Stakeholder	Agree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree
Captain Taxi	✓		
United Steel Workers			✓
Uber Canada			✓

Comments:

Taxi Industry: “Agree then City knows who is [in compliance with the bylaw] who [is not,] and how many [TNC drivers] are working for pre-booked trips[. Currently the City does] not [have this information and relies on] flags [from the TNC industry to know] what goes on[.] and [without this change] traditional taxi’s are the losers”

TNC Industry: “Adding new costs directly onto drivers and taxpayers, via duplicative processes to make it more challenging for ridesharing drivers to participate in earning money, is inadvisable. TNC drivers should not be required to obtain a City driver’s licence. Data to date has shown that in person licencing is unnecessary for compliance, and it is unnecessary for safety.

Taxi and TNCs (ridesharing) offer different types of transportation services and as such there are differences in their regulatory structure. For example, TNCs shoulder significant compliance costs in terms of driver documentation and data recording; taxi companies do not bear this burden. It is worth noting that a shift to licencing ridesharing drivers directly would likely require the city to augment existing capacity to allow for many hundreds of additional drivers to be licenced. Given the lack of compliance or safety benefits this would be an unnecessary cost for the city.

To reduce barriers that are preventing intra-municipal transportation Saskatoon should instead harmonize its bylaw with provincial regulations. Adding a requirement for a driver who may live in Warman or Biggar to get a licence from Saskatoon for inter-city transportation would make little sense when there are so many efforts to better connect surrounding communities to the city.

The existing approach is efficient and consistent with the most successful jurisdictions across Canada and around the world. Requiring individualized licensing by the City would only create a needless regulatory barrier and would do nothing to advance the public interest.”

6. The license fees for TNCs should be restructured so that more cost is borne by the TNC driver and less by the TNC. (Note that currently all licensing costs are borne by the transportation network company).

Stakeholder	Agree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree
Captain Taxi	✓		
United Steel Workers			✓
Uber Canada		✓	

Comments:

Taxi Industry: “The cost should be paid by the TNC as Taxi Service.”

TNC Industry: “Licencing all affiliated vehicles under a unified licence, purchased by TNC, reduces red tape and cost for drivers and cities by limiting processing to only a handful of companies instead of thousands of individuals. As such, individual vehicle or driver fees should be avoided. If equity between taxi and ridesharing is the intent, taxi brokerages could have the ability to structure fees to pay for any affiliated drivers or vehicles if they so choose.

To shunt costs onto hard-working drivers would create artificial barriers to entry that would only serve to reduce the diversity of urban transportation options available to Saskatonians.”

7. A mandatory training program for all taxi and TNC drivers with a focus on service should be provided by the City.

Stakeholder	Agree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree
Captain Taxi	✓		
United Steel Workers		✓	
Uber Canada		✓	

Comments:

Taxi Industry: “Training should be on the company this should be the bylaw for enforcement”

Taxi Industry: “Agree The training should be same provided by the City or Stakeholders/ Brokerages etc.”

TNC Industry: “Training is typically only mandated to meet a specific marketplace shortcoming in either safety & compliance or customer service. The data does not show a need for a mandatory training program provided by the city. To the contrary, our experience in Saskatoon is that riders have been consistently satisfied with the quality of ridesharing services they have received.

Uber currently has a robust system of compliance policies focused on effectively onboarding new drivers to the platform which includes content on safety, harassment, discrimination, disability, impairment and vehicle maintenance.

Uber also has a robust star rating and feedback system that enables drivers to receive continuous feedback on how to enhance their service delivery and professionalism. Drivers who do not meet safety and service thresholds, based on the feedback provided by other users in the Uber community, lose access to the app.

Uber maintains a set of Community Guidelines, which sets the expectations of behaviour for all users of the Uber platform—including both drivers or riders. These Guidelines contain standards for appropriate behaviour, courtesy, respect, and other factors that support a positive, safe, and reliable experience for our users. Failure to follow the Guidelines can result in a driver or rider losing access to the Uber platform.

Studies from other cities such as Ottawa and Calgary clearly lay out that customers prefer Uber’s systems and approach to service and safety, versus models used by traditional transportation providers. These studies can be provided upon request.”

8. TNCs should be required to provide wheelchair accessible service.

Stakeholder	Agree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree
Captain Taxi	✓		
United Steel Workers		✓	
Uber Canada			✓

Comments:

Taxi Industry: “Yes because they will find out the cost of running the service.”

TNC Industry: “TNCs currently pay a per-trip fee to the City to support wheelchair-accessible transportation. This fee should be sufficient. Because ridesharing involves individuals’ personal vehicles, requiring them to purchase accessible vehicles would impose a prohibitively high cost.”
 “An Accessibility Fund Program was created to support the availability of accessible service and to offset the higher cost of providing wheelchair accessible service.

The program is being funded by a regulatory charge to Transportation Network Companies with no accessible vehicles and taxi companies with less than 5% accessible vehicles in their fleet.

Funds are disbursed to wheelchair accessible taxi owners based on service standards and eligibility criteria.”

- 9. The maximum vehicle age should be the same for taxis as it is for TNC vehicles. (Note, currently a taxi may be up to seven years old, while a TNC vehicle may be up to ten years old).**

Stakeholder	Agree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree
Captain Taxi	✓		
United Steel Workers	✓		
Uber Canada			✓

Comments:

Taxi Industry: “Should be 10 years as everyone at the same level which balance the (City) to Traditional taxi’s.”

TNC Industry: “Uber does not oppose the taxi vehicle age limit being extended to 10 years old.

In terms of TNC vehicles, 10 years is an appropriate maximum vehicle age and is consistent with most jurisdictions across Canada. This limit should not be adjusted.

Vehicles on the Uber platform are subject to minimum standards to ensure road safety is upheld. In Saskatoon, this includes vehicles that are in good condition with no cosmetic damage, not salvaged or rebuilt, and that have passed a vehicle inspection by a licenced mechanic.”

10. TNCs should not be permitted to “surge price”, ie. Increase fare prices when demand for service is high.

Stakeholder	Agree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree
Captain Taxi	✓		
United Steel Workers	✓		
Uber Canada		✓	

Comments:

Taxi Industry: “Same playing field on prices”

Taxi Industry: “Agree, there shouldn’t be no surge, traditional taxi’s don’t have that.”

TNC Industry: “Surge pricing, also known as dynamic pricing, is a market-based approach to increase driver availability during peak-use times. It matches supply with demand. During these peak times, it increases pricing – boosting drivers’ earnings – to offer incentive for drivers to be on the road and provide services. Surge pricing in Saskatoon has enabled drivers on the Uber platform to average customer wait times of less than 4 minutes since launch.

Restricting surge price have been linked to adverse effects:

- A decrease in availability for riders, including essential workers trying to get to local hospitals.
- A decrease in earnings for drivers at a time when many are using Ubers as a way to supplement or replace lost wages.

There is no consumer protection rationale for limiting dynamic pricing. When requesting a ride, the rider has the opportunity to see and agree to the price before sending the ride request. This price transparency empowers riders to make a fully informed decision before requesting a ride.

Lastly, there are numerous short- and long-term policy implications. One long-term problem is that if people still feel uncomfortable riding public transportation (linked to COVID-19), and also cannot rely on Uber, they might be pushed to buy a personal vehicle and will not return to public transportation again.

No city in Canada regulates ridesharing’s ability to dynamically adjust pricing to match supply and demand.”

11. TNCs should be required to accept cash fares.

Stakeholder	Agree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree
Captain Taxi		✓	
United Steel Workers		✓	
Uber Canada		✓	

Comments:

TNC Industry: “Uber is designed to be an entirely cashless experience in all Canadian cities. This provides a seamless, secure, and traceable payment method. When a trip ends, the payment method selected for their trip is immediately charged. A receipt is emailed to the rider, and their account's trip history is updated with details about the route and fare. Through this cashless method disputes related to fare adjustments can be easily made and addressed without direct altercations between drivers and riders. Cashless payment also reduces the risk of rideshare drivers being robbed.

Riders who are unbanked and rely upon cash can still utilize ridesharing by purchasing Uber gift cards which are available at many retailers.

The ability to accept cash is a competitive advantage exclusively enjoyed by taxis, and an important distinguishing factor between the TNC business model and the taxi business model.”

12. TNCs should be required to have a local office like taxi brokerages are.

Stakeholder	Agree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree
Captain Taxi	✓		
United Steel Workers	✓		
Uber Canada		✓	

Comments:

Taxi Industry: “Agree to provide the back up service to the customer for the safety and fairness.”

TNC Industry: “The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that a physical office location does not restrict governments and industry from being able to do the work that is required to keep programs running. While there is no local office located in Saskatoon, Uber remains accessible to users active on the platform through various Uber Help Pages, 24 hour safety hotlines, customer service support, and in-app support. We’ve developed our expertise with being able to provide online support to riders and drivers without the need of a physical location.”

13. More bylaw enforcement targeted towards TNC vehicles is needed, especially related to decals not being displayed and traffic violations.

Stakeholder	Agree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree
Captain Taxi	✓		
United Steel Workers	✓		
Uber Canada		✓	

Comments:

Taxi Industry: “Agree TNC/Uber should have stringent rules, requirement and inspections.”

TNC Industry: “Under local regulations for Saskatoon, all drivers on the Uber platform must display an Uber decal on their vehicle while active on the platform. We provide this information to active drivers as they become registered on the platform and this information is also publicly available on our website. We also provide the decals to the drivers upon their activation and if at any time they require a replacement. Uber also shares best practices on where the decal should be placed (front windshield on the passenger side and rear windshield on the driver side facing outward). Given the multitude of actions taken to enforce this requirement, and given there is only anecdotal evidence of non-compliance, enhanced bylaw enforcement is not required.”

14. More enforcement of unlicensed vehicle for hire service is needed.

Stakeholder	Agree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree
Captain Taxi	✓		
United Steel Workers	✓		
Uber Canada			✓

Comments:

“Need fairness on pricing of fares”

“All these are providing service and they should have same safety aspects of the customers. There should be a balance”

“At present, we are unaware of whether this is a material enough issue to warrant additional resources and staff attention.”

Additional Comments Received:

In addition to the comments noted above, the City also received the below general comments from stakeholders.

“We believe that TNC/Uber should have a tight cap to protect the Traditional taxi service to keep providing safe service to the customers.

TNC/Uber wasn't running when cabs were needed on the 9th/10/11 of November 2020, when customers needed service. Traditional taxi Like Captain Taxi kept going to keep our commitment to provide the service to the residents, business and visitors to fulfill, safety and integrity of the Traditional Taxi service.

TNC and Uber wasn't working to provide the needed survive by the customers.

Captain Taxi Management even beyond the service provided service to help out drivers who got stuck in the snow including anyone needed help on the road as courteous way of care."

"Ridesharing has provided income opportunities to more than 400 Saskatoon residents over the past year. These drivers have provided service to locals and visitors from over 67 countries with an average wait time under 4 minutes.

Drivers come to Uber for the opportunity to earn on their terms. Many of them have different goals; some hope to just earn a little extra to cover the bills, others are using ridesharing as a launchpad to realize greater aspirations for themselves and their families, and some do it simply because they enjoy the social interactions and uncovering new parts of their community. As we continue to navigate the effects that COVID-19 is raging on communities, small businesses, and the people who support them, now is the time for us to make incremental improvements to ridesharing's regulatory regime to streamline regulatory processes, reduce red tape, and focus on rebuilding the economy for the people of Saskatoon."