

To: City of Saskatoon

Attn: His Worship Charlie Clark
Saskatoon City Councillors
Jo-Anne Richter, Director, Community Standards
Mark Wilson, Licensing and Permitting Manager, Community Standards

Re: 9.7.1 Consultation with Flex Services and Sask Plates Proposal Proponents [File No. CK. 7000-1 x 307-4] and;
9.7.2 Levy to Support Accessible Taxi Services [File No. CK. 7000-1]

Date: September 22, 2018

We write today to provide Council with the current status of consultations within the taxi industry, further to the meeting moderated by the Fast Consulting Group on August 8, 2018.

As you will see from the meeting notes as circulated in your September 24th meeting agenda, there was very strong opposition from nearly all industry participants towards the idea of licensing an unlimited number of TNCs in our city.

The impact of an unlimited number of TNCs operating in the city was not contemplated, nor fully appreciated, in part because throughout this entire TNC policy development process, there has been absolutely no data presented by the city - or the proponents - on what will be the expected impacts of this policy change.

Since the August 8th meeting, taxi industry representatives have met numerous times to attempt to find a solution that would accommodate all interests, including TNCs, while staying true to the principle of "an equal and level playing field," - a unanimous position that councillors have heard from virtually every industry participant – STCA, USW, driver, broker, franchisee. It is also a principle that has been voiced by many, if not all councillors.

In an attempt to find common ground, the STCA is now requesting the city either conduct Saskatoon-specific industry data research or join with the STCA in analysing the taxi data that has been supplied to the city every month for the past decade. Hiring an outside consulting firm, or at the very least, conducting an internal examination of real and predicted vehicle for hire data, has been undertaken in virtually every other Canadian market prior to the introduction of TNCs. (Winnipeg retained MNP - <https://bit.ly/2OG2QZ6>, and Ottawa used KPMG - <https://bit.ly/2OIZip9>.)

We believe that it would be only prudent to allow data to answer some basic questions such as:

1. What is the optimum number of vehicles for hire required to service the city, while addressing two important policy objectives: better meeting the obvious unmet public demand while promoting and sustaining incomes across all vehicles for hire, including TNCs?
2. How many accessible vehicles does the city need to address the serious and long-standing issues faced by those who rely on these services?
3. What is the significant market demand that is unmet by the taxi industry, mostly as a result of the current capped number of taxis?
4. What is the latent market demand for TNCs? What percentage of the 350,000 TNC rides (representing 25% of annual taxi trips) will be incremental as opposed to decremental to the taxi business.
5. If 600 TNCs were licensed in Saskatoon and provided 350,000 trips per year, what could an average TNC driver reasonably expect in income? And what will the impact be on the income of an average taxi driver?
6. When the city does adopt new TNC or taxi bylaws, how will you judge their success? How will you measure their impact without a baseline of data?

The STCA believes that an analysis of current taxi data, local population and demographic trends all hold an answer to these important questions and should form the foundation of any new TNC, taxi or comprehensive vehicle for hire by-law. The city already has much of this data but from our viewpoint, little has been done with it.

We appreciate the efforts that council has made to address these issues but we feel there is still time to ensure the city achieves a strong, sustainable policy framework for the future. We understand council's desire to see TNCs operational in the city as soon as *The Vehicle for Hire Act* is implemented but we would encourage you to contact SGI to learn about their latest timeline.

A report on "the current levels of service to people requiring accessible service, and the potential impacts of the incorporation of ridesharing on Accessibility services" was requested by council, by way of a motion, last December. By June, administration reported to council that it planned to respond at a later date. As of today, more than nine months later, no report has been made public, nor to the best of our knowledge, even started. Yet administration is recommending a 0.07 cent levy on TNCs. Based on administration's "best guess" of 350,000 TNC trips in a year, this would total \$24,500. As a grant, this amount would barely cover half the cost of one accessible, retrofitted van. Again, on this issue, there is a critical lack of data and we urge caution in approaching accessible transportation needs in such a piecemeal way.

We can imagine some thinking this is "late in the game" to advocate for this this data driven approach but we would remind you that the city had from at least December, 2017 – June, 2018 to conduct this data research but to no avail. This we are sure is due, in part, to the turnover in the staff we have witnessed. However, there is still more than adequate time to get

this right. Please be assured that we will make every staff resource available to assist city administration in this data analysis.

Allowing an unlimited number of TNCs while capping taxi licenses is not a level playing field and will result in a race to the bottom. A bottom where being a TNC driver is cheaper and more convenient. And a bottom where many of our city's most vulnerable, and most in need of a ride, may not be able to get service.

We understand there may be some who believe the STCA is opposed to the introduction of TNCs under any circumstance. Let us again say that is not the case. We fully expect and accept there will be TNCs in Saskatoon. We remain, however, committed to finding solutions that will allow for fair competition for all in the vehicle for hire industry.

Sincerely,



Kelly Frie, STCA – Executive Member
306.220.2750
info@stca.ca



Carlo Triolo – STCA, Executive Member
306.341.4103
info@stca.ca