

Licensing and Standards Committee
City Clerk's Office
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
10th Floor, West Tower
Toronto ON M5H 2N2
Telephone: 416-338-5089
Fax: 416-392-1879
Email: lsc@toronto.ca

Members of the City of Toronto Licensing and Standards Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on draft regulations to regulate Toronto's ground transportation industry. Lyft is a peer-to-peer mobile based ridesharing platform that provides a safe, reliable, and affordable transportation option. Founded in 2012, Lyft's mission is to reconnect communities through better transportation, and we've now spread that vision to nearly 200 cities across the United States.

While we have no immediate plans to launch in Toronto, we see tremendous opportunity for ridesharing in your city, and look forward to collaborating with City Councillors and policy makers on a smart set of regulations that would allow Lyft and the ridesharing industry to thrive in Toronto.

For the past few years, we have been engaging with regulators across the U.S., and we have learned that through creative collaboration it is possible to craft a set of regulations that balances consumer safety with competition in the market. Over 30 states in the U.S. have recognized that ridesharing is now a critical component of their transportation ecosystems, and have passed regulations that codify standards around background checks, insurance, and vehicle safety. Regulators in these states have recognized that Lyft is not a taxi or for-hire vehicle, but rather a platform that allows for carpooling in a safe, on-demand, and seamless manner. They've understood that our drivers are not professional full-time drivers, but rather doing this on a casual basis, to supplement their income. And by creating these smart regulations, they are seeing first-hand the benefits that ridesharing brings to their communities.

By filling empty seats in existing passenger vehicles, Lyft is providing a mobility option that takes cars off the road and thus reduces traffic and congestion - something we know is a very real issue in Toronto. In San Francisco, a product called Lyft Line (which allows drivers to pick up multiple passengers along the same route), now accounts for nearly 70% of rides in the city. Imagine what that could do for all of those people who are sitting in a car by themselves commuting on King Street.

In addition, 20% of all Lyft rides in San Francisco are first or last mile rides between peoples' homes and public transit stops. This shows how ridesharing complements other transportation options, and has the ability to connect those who are living in areas traditionally underserved by the existing transportation infrastructure.

Further, Lyft has had a profound impact on reducing drinking and driving in cities across the U.S., and has had a transformative effect on communities such as seniors and those with disabilities who are now using Lyft to move around cities in ways we never imagined.

We are very excited for the future potential ridesharing has in Toronto. Visionary leaders like Kathleen Wynne and John Tory agree that the solution is to find the right balance that protects consumers without stifling growth and innovation.

Toronto is a world class city, and one we are very interested in coming to. It is our hope that through this process we will start to build a long-term relationship with city leaders and come to a resolution that will pave the way for us and others in the ridesharing industry to bring those benefits to Toronto.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MM', followed by a long, sweeping horizontal flourish that extends to the right.

Mike Masserman
Senior Director, Federal & International Government Relations, Lyft