



Safe streets  
Healthy city  
Vibrant voice

# GL6.31.16

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To: General Government and Licensing Committee – June 24, 2019

Re: [2019.GL6.31](#), Review of the City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 546, Licensing of Vehicles-for-Hire

From: Cycle Toronto

Cycle Toronto makes this submission in response to the Report from the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards dated June 14, 2019 that is being considered by this committee on June 24, 2019 as agenda item [2019.GL6.31](#).

While we welcome the recommendations made to this committee, we urge this committee to include as an amendment to the vehicles-for-hire bylaw Cycle Toronto's primary recommendation aimed at preventing PTCs from picking up and dropping off passengers on streets with bike lanes, as explained more fully below.

## Our Recommendation

We urge the City of Toronto to add a provision in the vehicles-for-hire bylaw to:

**prohibit private transportation companies from permitting, through their apps, the selection of pickup and dropoff locations directly on streets with painted bike lanes or signed cycling routes, excepting for explicit requests for accessible service.**

## Our April 30 submissions to the Review Team

In its [submission to the Vehicle-for-Hire Bylaw Review Team dated April 30, 2019](#)<sup>1</sup>, Cycle Toronto identified serious concerns about the safety of people who bike in Toronto as a result of low standards in regulating PTCs and their drivers. We outlined a number of improvements to the vehicles-for-hire bylaw that, together with protected bike lanes and intersections, would make cycling safer for people in Toronto, and improve safety for PTC passengers as well.

Our recommendations to the team arose from our concerns that it is dangerous for people on bikes when PTC drivers perform curbside drop-offs and pick-ups in cycling facilities. Protected bike lanes that do not permit vehicles to stop in them are always our favoured solution for cycling safety; however, standard painted bike lanes are still widespread across the City, and protected lanes are not applicable on every street. Our April 30 submissions proposed that the city take immediate steps to require PTCs through their apps to prevent pick-ups and drop-offs

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<sup>1</sup> <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0ByUrTXs8dc4eME9WcHB4Ull2bm1KRWpuZ3FQQk9BZTZKSEtn>



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in painted bike lanes and where there are no stopping regulations. A necessary counterpart to our recommendation is that the City and Toronto Police must enforce driver compliance.

Our April 30 submissions also expressed concerns about distracted and dangerous driving, which is important to PTCs who carry out their business on public streets through a smartphone app. We advocated for more widespread and visible enforcement of prohibitions against distracted driving. In addition, we recommended the introduction of new taxi and PTC driver training (with a focus on safety for vulnerable road users); improved driver accountability and reporting by making PTCs more visible and identifiable through the use of a sticker with a unique ID tag and doing more to ensure passengers are required to check for people on bikes before they open their door to exit a vehicle, by way of stickers and rear-mounted door mirrors.

#### Our recommendations are consistent with the city's objectives

The city supports safe cycling through creation of a cycling network and its commitments to the Vision Zero Safety Plan, and our recommendations are consistent with the city's stated objectives. We all want to make Toronto's streets safer for an increasingly diverse population of people who bike here.

Cycle Toronto's members represent every demographic group in Toronto including older residents, people with disabilities, new Canadians, and families with children. Evidence shows that more people will cycle when the city takes initiatives to make cycling safer. If the city is serious about its commitments to increasing ridership and safety, we urge it to adopt and implement our recommendations.

The city has recognized that in regulating the current vehicles-for-hire business and consumer environment, a more modernized approach to regulation is necessary, including digital solutions.

In reviewing the report, we were pleased to see that the review team has recommended training that incorporates instruction for PTC drivers about cycle tracks and bike lanes, including safe pick-ups and drop-offs. We were also pleased to see recommendations directed at reducing dooring (push notifications via ride-share apps to passengers exiting vehicles and highly-visible stickers reminding passengers to watch for bikes). We welcome these recommendations, as far as they go, because they help make Toronto streets safer for cyclists.

#### We urge this committee to take steps to prohibit pickups and drop-offs in bike lanes by PTCs

PTCs pick-ups and drop-offs in bike lanes are an important issue for Cycle Toronto and to our members, who often report that ride-sharing vehicles move in and out of bike lanes with impunity and, apparently, without regard to the safety of cyclists.

The experiences reported by our members are supported by data contained in a report by City of Toronto's Transportation Services/Big Data Innovation Team on the effects of vehicles for hire



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in Toronto (“The Transportation Impacts of Vehicle-for-Hire in the City of Toronto”, June 2019). The Transportation Services report, which we understand was considered by the review team, indicates that PTC trips have increased significantly (180%) in the 2.5 years since the city began to regulate them. Notably, the report reveals that PTCs (which depend on curbside access for pick-ups and drop-offs) are picking up and dropping off customers in no-stopping zones, especially in the business district and also in bike lanes. This dependence on curbside access necessarily puts PTCs in a position of conflict with people cycling in bike lanes.

The Transportation Services report identifies areas which could benefit from additional separation between bike lanes and vehicles and we welcome the opportunity to review the full report and further comment on that. In the meantime, more must be done to eliminate the conflict identified in the Transportation Services report between PTCs doing pick-ups and drop-offs, and people on bikes.

Our recommendation that the by law should mandate that apps digitally prohibit drop-offs and pick-ups in bike lanes (except where necessary for people with disabilities) falls squarely within the mandate of the team: it is a digital solution that improves the safety of people who bike. This is not a theoretical problem: it is reported by our members and it is confirmed in the Transportation Services report. A prohibition on pick-ups and drop-offs as recommended by Cycle Toronto, along with training and better enforcement, will go a long way to ensuring safety for vulnerable road users.

### Conclusion

We are pleased that the team’s recommendations move in the direction of creating safer streets for all of us. We urge this committee to adopt Cycle Toronto’s recommendations aimed at blocking pick-ups and drop-offs through ride-sharing applications.

Thank you for considering our submissions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jared Kolb".

Jared Kolb  
Executive Director  
Cycle Toronto