

Vehicle-for-Hire Public and Stakeholder Consultation

In-Person Taxicab Consultation

June 20, 2024

Staff Attendance

Municipal Licensing and Standards, City of Toronto:

- Josh Cho, Policy Development Officer
- Tobiah Abramson, Policy and Planning Advisor
- Marcia Stoltz, Manager, Vehicle-for-Hire & Road Allowance
- Joanna Hazelden, Director, Policy and Strategic Support (Acting)
- Fiona Chapman, Director, Business Licensing and Regulatory Services
- Thurka Sinnathamby, Stakeholder Engagement Lead, Policy and Strategic Support

Gladki Planning Associates Inc.

- Lindsay Toth, Principal Planner and Engagement Specialist
- Natalie Barcellos, Planner and Engagement Specialist
- Weston Smith, Planning Intern

Background

The City of Toronto is holding public and industry stakeholder consultations as part of an ongoing review of the vehicle-for-hire framework and by-law, in response to multiple directives from City Council. Gladki Planning Associates Inc. (GPA) has been retained by the City of Toronto to facilitate a series of public and stakeholder engagement meetings that will inform a Staff Report from the Municipal Licensing and Standards (MLS) division on vehicle-for-hire services within the City of Toronto.

Vehicle-for-hire (VFH) services, which includes taxicabs, limousines and private transportation companies (PTC), are regulated by Chapter 546 of the Toronto Municipal Code. The By-law establishes regulations for:

- Licensing and regulatory requirements;
- Limits on the number of taxicabs;
- Fares for taxicabs;
- Eligibility criteria for the City's Accessibility Fund Program; and
- Vehicle safety and service standards.

The intent of the By-law is to provide public safety and consumer protection. The vehicle-for-hire industry has undergone a series of changes since 2016, when the current By-law was introduced, in order to regulate PTCs. The evolving social, political, and economic context has prompted the City to consider updates and additions to the By-law to ensure that the regulations remain responsive to the overall intent of the By-law.

Public and stakeholder consultation programmes were executed in both 2019 and 2023 to solicit feedback on public safety, driver and vehicle requirements, limousine regulations, cost of delivering accessible vehicle-for-hire service, and net-zero vehicle-for-hire initiatives, respectively. The feedback from these rounds of consultations informed the vehicle-for-hire licensing By-law update in 2019 and the 2023 zero-emissions vehicle-for-hire policy. This current phase of public consultation seeks to build upon the previous amendments to the vehicle-for-hire By-law and rounds of consultation.

Meeting Promotion

City of Toronto staff were responsible for promoting consultation activities. The consultation was advertised widely. Promotional content and communication materials were shared using a variety of communication channels including:

- A dedicated webpage;
- Social Media Advertisements;
- Advertisements on navigation and gas applications (e.g. Google Maps, Waze, Petro Canada, etc.);
- Advertisements on Taxi News;
- BusinessTO June 11th Newsletter;
- Monthly Newsletter to Council; and
- Vehicle-for-Hire By-law Mailing List.

The City also conducted targeted outreach with stakeholder groups, described below.

- **Taxicab Industry.** Details about the consultation meetings and the online survey were sent via email to over 6,000 drivers/owners/operators and 25 brokerages.
- **Accessibility Organizations & Community.** Details about the consultation meetings and online survey were sent via email to over 160 recipients, Mailers were sent to over 700 recipients. Information about the consultation meetings were also shared with the City of Toronto's Accessibility Unit in the People & Equity division.
- **Private Transportation Companies (PTCs).** Details about the consultation meetings and online survey were sent by email to over 70,000 currently licensed PTC drivers.

Meeting Overview

On June 20, 2024, the City of Toronto's Municipal Licensing and Standards division hosted an in-person town hall meeting at East York Civic Centre to present and receive feedback on emerging policy directions for the By-law amendment. Approximately **42** people attended the event, primarily self-identifying from the taxicab industry.

Gladki Planning Associates (GPA) convened the meeting and provided an overview of the meeting agenda and described their role as a third-party, independent facilitator. City of Toronto Staff delivered a presentation that included:

- an overview of the context and purpose for consultation;
- potential regulation and programmatic updates to improve wheelchair accessible service;
- potential options for a licensing limit;

- potential By-law updates to address inactive taxicab owner licences;
- the City's approach to studying and reporting on the mayoral directive to explore driver wages in Toronto.

Following the City's presentation there was a discussion period where attendees were invited to share feedback verbally at the front of the room using a microphone. Feedback Forms were available for those that preferred to share their ideas in writing or who did not have a chance to speak due to time constraints. Both the verbal and written feedback has been organized in a thematic summary in the following section. A complete record of *all* of the feedback received has been included in *Appendix A*. *Appendix B* includes a list of all organizations with a representative in attendance. This list only includes representative that identified themselves during the meeting.

The feedback captured in this report is a record of what was shared by meeting participants. The feedback does not represent the opinions of GPA.

Thematic Summary

This section organizes and summarizes all of the feedback received according to five main topic areas. These are:

- Licensing Limit
- Driver Wages
- Accessibility
- Inactive Taxicab Owner Licences
- Miscellaneous

71 pieces of feedback were received. Participants were invited to share a comment or a question verbally at the front of the room or write their comment or question on a feedback form. All **71** pieces of feedback are considered as part of the public record and have been organized, analysed, and summarized in the summary.

The thematic summary is not intended to be a verbatim account of what was said during the meeting. The summary provides an overview of the main themes and key pieces of feedback received by attendees during the meeting. *Appendix A* includes a complete record of comments/questions.

Licensing Limit

Meeting attendees made **24** comments regarding licensing limits. The following points summarize the key feedback attendees shared.

The City should impose a licensing limit on the number of PTC drivers. There was widespread agreement among members of the taxicab industry including drivers, brokerages and owners, that limiting the number of PTC vehicles would be positive for the city and for their businesses. Participants highlighted that having an unlimited number of PTCs on the road creates congestion and gridlock, creating challenges for everyone in Toronto. Some participants remembered asking the City to introduce a licensing limit at previous City-hosted consultations. Many industry members expressed frustration that the City of Toronto had not already imposed a licensing limit for PTCs.

The by-law should be amended so that the number of VFH licences (both taxicab and PTC) that the City permits is tied to the City's population and the number of vehicles required to serve that population. Meeting attendees consistently emphasized that there is not enough demand for rides to support the number of vehicles-for-hire licenced within Toronto. People suggested that the City assess how many vehicles-for-hire would be necessary to serve Toronto's population, and that this assessment should be the basis for determining how many licences to grant. Multiple attendees referenced the economic concept of supply and demand when discussing this idea. There was a general sense of exasperation expressed by meeting attendees because they felt the concept of supply and demand was not being seriously considered by the City. Many taxicab drivers passionately shared personal stories of how challenging it was to find work because there is not enough demand for rides.

There is a perception among the taxicab industry that PTCs have an unfair advantage because of the lack of a licensing limit for PTCs. Multiple taxicab drivers voiced frustration that taxicabs and PTCs did not have an equal number of licences under the by-law, a discrepancy which they viewed as doing harm to their business. In addition to the concerns around a lack of a licensing limit, one driver found it unfair that PTCs were allowed to charge different rates for different trips, whereas taxicabs have a fixed meter rate. Other industry members expressed irritation that it seemed like PTCs were not in compliance with the by-law when it came to accessible service requirements. Several members of the taxicab industry complained that PTCs do not have the same insurance requirements as taxicabs. The City clarified that the insurance requirements for all VFH classes are the same in the by-law.

Driver Wages

Meeting attendees made **11** comments regarding driver wages. The following points summarize the key feedback attendees shared.

The taxicab industry is facing unprecedented financial struggles. Many members of the taxicab industry expressed that they were in dire financial circumstances. Brokerage owners shared how difficult it was to keep their businesses operational in the face of rising costs. Several drivers shared that they are working longer hours and/or making less money than they had in previous years, putting them in precarious financial situations. There was a sense of desperation that was expressed by drivers. Many drivers shared that they are now unable to make enough money to sustain themselves and their families.

Although wages are directly regulated by the Province, there are interventions within the City's jurisdiction that could positively affect driver wages. Multiple members of the taxicab industry shared that one way that the City could impact driver wages is by introducing a licensing limit. Participants argued that a licensing limit would address the oversupply of VFH within in Toronto, in turn improving how much a driver earns. This sentiment was reiterated by many meeting participants.

The high cost of insurance is negatively impacting take-home driver earnings. Drivers complained that high insurance rates were affecting their ability to earn a living wage. Some drivers shared that insurance payments were so high that it no longer makes financial sense operate a taxicab. Several participants asked that the City seriously consider ways to reduce the cost of insurance. City staff reiterated a point from their presentation that insurance rates are not part of the City's jurisdiction. The City does not set the rate for various insurance products offered for VFH; it is insurance companies that do this and that is what the City cannot control.

The City should increase taxicab meter rates. Many taxicab drivers argued that the City should increase the meter rate for taxicabs to reflect the rising cost of living. Additionally, several drivers expressed a desire for the City to set a universal meter rate for both taxicabs and PTCs, arguing that this would allow for more fair competition between the taxicab and PTC industries.

Accessibility

Meeting attendees made **15** comments regarding accessibility. The following points summarize the key feedback attendees shared.

Operating an accessible taxicab is currently cost-prohibitive. Multiple members of the industry said that providing accessible service was too costly to be financially viable for drivers. Drivers cited the following reasons why providing wheelchair accessible service is not profitable:

- wheelchair accessible vehicles are more expensive to purchase (or retrofit);
- it takes additional time to complete a wheelchair accessible trip vs. a standard trip; and
- customers without accessibility needs will often prefer and will wait for regular sedan service instead of taking a taxi that has been converted for wheelchair accessibility.

Two brokerage owners shared that getting drivers to drive wheelchair accessible vehicles even when such vehicles were available is difficult because drivers who are trained to provide wheelchair accessible service have left the industry altogether due to mounting financial pressures. There was consensus among both drivers and brokerage owners that the incentives the City proposed in their presentation were insufficient and would not adequately subsidize drivers who are providing wheelchair accessible service. Multiple industry members requested that the City take inflation into consideration when deciding on grant and subsidy amounts.

There were varied recommendations on how to improve wheelchair accessible service within the city. Several members of the taxicab industry connected the lack of wheelchair accessible vehicles-for-hire on the road to the economic hardships the industry is facing. Some people suggested that wheelchair accessible VFH service will improve once the industry as a whole becomes financially stable. One person provided specific actions the City could take to improve wheelchair accessible service. These include:

- Create kiosk centres at hospitals that would be able to direct people into wheelchair accessible taxicabs, as opposed to PTCs who often cut the taxicab line at the taxi stand. Additionally, having a centralized dispatch service could help nurses book a taxicab for patients.
- Ensure that the interface for the proposed centralized dispatch service be accessible to those with difficulties accessing and using technology. The interface should also allow for a caregiver to make a request on someone's behalf.
- Introduce a different metered rate for wheelchair accessible service. The City should subsidize this rate so that those with accessibility needs are paying less, and drivers are making a profit.

Another meeting participant said that the City should consider the City of Ottawa's approach to a central dispatch service and per-trip incentive for drivers. The City asked if there were specific things that worked in Ottawa and the participant indicated that they would be happy to set up a time to talk further with the City about the specifics of how the programs were set-up.

Inactive Taxicab Owner Licences

Meeting attendees made 17 comments regarding inactive taxicab owner licences. The following points summarize the key feedback attendees shared.

Many taxicab owner licences remain inactive because of the costs associated with operating a vehicle (e.g. the insurance cost, licensing fees, and vehicle maintenance, etc.), and low wages. Several members of the industry indicated that the reason taxicab owner licences remain inactive is due to the financial viability of working in the industry; it is too expensive for people to be actively working. Participants shared that the City's proposal to allow plates to remain inactive for one additional year would not address the root of the problem, which is that earnings are not enough to offset the cost of actively operating a vehicle. On the topic of taxicab plates, a couple of participants added that their plates had significantly depreciated in value. One driver shared how he had bought his plate with the expectation that owning a taxicab plate would help him be able to retire, however the plate has lost almost all of its value in recent years.

The City should consider updating the by-law to reduce fees for inactive taxicab owner licences. Many meeting participants suggested a reduction in fees associated with taxicab plates would help alleviate some of the financial burden that they are experiencing. Drivers said that it felt unfair for the City to be charging fees on plates that were not currently in use, and encouraged the City to consider either further reducing or eliminating fees for plates that are inactive.

Miscellaneous

There was a general sense of disheartenment that the City has not done more to support the taxicab industry. Several members of the taxicab industry shared that, in their opinion, the City's regulatory framework is directly contributing to the decline of the taxicab industry and they feel abandoned. They questioned whether City staff and elected officials were acting in good faith on this issue. Regulations, or lack thereof, that were cited as contributing to this decline included licensing limits, meter rates, and insurance requirements. A few meeting attendees also referenced the introduction of a licensing class and regulations for PTCs in 2016 as being one of the primary reasons that the taxicab industry is struggling. Some people asked about the City's reasoning for the regulations that were enacted in 2016. City Staff indicated that this was a decision made by City Council and they are unable to provide the reasoning or justification behind Council's decision. People expressed a desire for significant action to address the current state of the taxicab industry. A few people specifically asked for reparations.

There are other suggestions that the City should consider to improve the VFH industry. Four comments were received that were not directly linked to the topics the City was consulting on. Comments included a complaint from a driver about the need to have a camera in his car, a request to increase the maximum taxicab vehicle age, and a suggestion to create a centralized dispatch application for all VFH rides (both taxicabs and PTCs).

Next Steps

Public feedback is vital to the by-law review process. Feedback from this meeting, other meetings in this series of consultation, and the online survey will be included in an engagement report to be prepared by GPA. This report will be submitted to City Staff and will be publicly

available in Fall 2024. City Staff will consider this report along with other inputs as they prepare a staff report with recommendations for Council. The staff report is expected to go to City Council by the end of 2024. For more information and updates on this review process, please visit the City's website.

Additional questions and comments can be submitted to vehicleforhirereview@toronto.ca.

Appendix A: Participant Questions and Comments

All of the questions and comments that were said aloud during the meeting and all of the comments and questions that were received through written feedback forms have been included below. The questions and comments included have been edited for brevity and clarity and have organized by the same themes used in the thematic summary for consistency. They are documented here as part of the public record.

The feedback captured below is a record of what was shared during the meeting. The feedback does not represent the opinions of GPA.

Licensing Limit

1. The big tech companies are operating as taxis without a cap. In order for you to properly offer accessible service and to fix driver wages there has to be a limit on the number of drivers.
2. There is not enough work for drivers to make a living. The reason plates are on the shelf is because of this question of supply and demand.
3. Meter rates used to be set according to the ratio of cars to people in the city. It was the City of Toronto who was one of the first in the world to have one taxi for 500 people, which was already too many. Toronto consulted on this in the past. Research showed that 5,000 taxis was sufficient to ensure that there was successful service for the whole city. You heard from the only two drivers who have come up here that they are crushed. They are decimated. How much have these individuals invested just for the City to invite a multi-billion-dollar company to decimate their lives?
4. People are doing this as a second and third job. The City needs to be using data to determine the proper number of drivers on the road. Talk with Uber and tell them we only need 5,000 drivers. Control their licences. Why are we not already doing this?
5. It is very clear in the months and years of speaking with your teams – I say this in the kindest way I can – nobody on your team understands the business principle of supply and demand. To tell accessible drivers that they can pick up anyone they want totally ignores the fact that there's no one to pick up. My question is this: will Toronto consider, as part of this process, retaining a business consultant from one of the colleges that can explain the basic principles of supply and demand to the staff who are going to be making this decision?
 - o *City Staff Response:* Both of the academic studies that will be influencing our report to Council are explicitly looking at supply and demand.
6. The question on screen regarding drivers I feel is a little misleading. I think the question has to be repurposed regarding the language around “driver” because multiple drivers can use the same plate for taxis. The City study from Dr. Cooper in 2013 can help City staff understand how many licences are needed on the road. If you release too many licences at once, then you might have an issue of dumping licences. Maybe limit PTCs for the time of days that they can operate. This will also benefit the environment. We can help distinguish between the number of trips that the PTC industry has versus the number the taxicab industry has.

7. So, the city puts a cap on Uber to 50,000 and then after two months lifts it, and now there's thousands and thousands more drivers. The taxi industry cannot even touch what Uber is doing. They are 10-15x bigger in Toronto than our industry. What are they giving to Toronto's future? Congestion and pollution. If everyone here is being honest with themselves, then it should be clear that the taxi industry did not have shortage at any time with 6,000 vehicles on the road.
8. Instant gratification is the name of the game nowadays. We've all fallen into that trap by allowing too many vehicles on the road. When it comes to traffic and limiting the licensing demand, you will get pushback from people who want that instant gratification of being able to get a ride instantly. You have to power through that pushback.
9. When we had the last meeting in 2016, it was 4,000 taxi plates and 4,000 Uber. Why does the City allow for so many Uber?
 - o *City Staff Response:* I was not part of that debate in 2016. I think what happened is that a politician said that there should be an even amount. But that's not what Council passed and what is currently part of the by-law.
10. Studies said that capping the industry would be good but then the City allowed over 65k drivers on the road.
11. I think in order for the taxi industry to survive you need to reduce the number of Uber vehicles, the cost of insurance, and the plates sitting in the Metro licensing commission should not pay for the renewal because they are not making any money. There are so many other issues. Thank you very much.
12. We need licensing limits and to consider eliminating PTCs. We need to figure out what is the right number of licences for our city and build that base and licence accordingly.
13. There are too many new drivers driving for Uber making the roads unsafe.
14. We heard a number of times that PTCs are not following the by-laws. There are no ramifications for them not providing accessible service besides consulting with them more.
15. We don't have the same set of rules for all three sectors. The taxi industry is overregulated, but Uber can get away with anything. The last mayor has made this industry one of total unfairness. If you want this industry back, you need to make the regulations the same across the board.
16. Why does the taxi industry have so many rules and Uber doesn't? It's unfair, it's very unfair. If you can do something to fix it, then do it.
17. Level playing field. Level playing field. Level playing field. Level playing field. Drivers can't make money.
18. Please do something with the "cab price". Make sure there is a level playing field for every driver.

19. We need a level playing field for all drivers.
20. I know insurance is under provincial jurisdiction, but Council has to do something. 90,000 Uber workers, and they put TLC (Toronto Licensing Commission) plates on Uber. They do not have commercial insurance. If you want a plate with the City then you should have to prove commercial insurance.
- *City Staff Response:* The insurance is regulated the same for the PTC and taxicab industries. The requirements for both are the same. The problem that you're running into is that the insurance companies have different binders for different classes of drivers.

Driver Wages

21. Inflation is making things harder. The meter rate is always the same. Every 149 meters is a quarter for me. They don't increase the time on the meter. Costs are so much higher now that we should be able to increase the meter rate.
22. I did read somewhere in the slides that the wages are beyond the City's control, but I find that to be absolutely disingenuous. The licensing has always been the way that you control the wage.
- *City Staff Response:* The City does not have jurisdiction regarding wages. We do not, under the *City of Toronto Act*, have the ability to legislate wages.
23. The City's response to this super emotional topic is not okay. It's just nodding heads. You have men up here crying because their businesses have been destroyed, their livelihoods ruined. Do you even care about them at all? You guys probably came here in an Uber today. What are you actually going to do about this?
- *City Staff Response:* I get that it's super hard to not get specific answers. Council has given us specific questions that we need to answer for them. Similarly, they want us to find out more about driver wages. We are very concerned, along with many in the room, about the accessibility fund program. It's not working. I appreciate the comments that have been made about supply and demand. We need to hear from the other groups [PTCs, accessibility users and stakeholders, members of the public], where we will look at all of the feedback together. You want this coming through an independent lens, and then we present it to our democratically elected leaders who will see if they can fix it. I wish I could snap my fingers and fix it. That's the beauty of consultations, of our democratic process – everyone gets a say first.
24. Driver wages have to be fair and regulated. Please increase the driver wage for Uber, Lyft, and etc. We are getting very low earning. Please increase the wage.
25. Uber is offering a cheaper rate, so customers go to them. It makes sense. Meanwhile, our industry is obligated to charge a fixed rate. You put a tariff on the meter rate, whereas Uber can increase it and decrease it whenever they want. Can we have the same meter rate so that these two industries can find a way to compete?

26. Don't you think that the City has failed in its duty? Ever since Uber has come in, not only has it obliterated taxicab income, but it has obliterated TTC income. The TTC is in debt however many millions per year because of Uber. Uber can turn on, turn off, and watch Netflix. It's an unfair system when you have someone working 12 hours for taxis, but only select times during the day for Uber. You move the goalposts for Uber, but you don't move the goalposts for taxicab owners. How come Montreal is compensating taxicab owners but Toronto is not?
27. The City has to increase the proposed AFP fund and the City has to regulate all the industry meter fares, including Uber and Lyft, in order to make compensation fair.
28. The driver wages and Uber earning algorithm have remained unchanged since 2015. Despite drivers working extremely hard, especially during snowy days, the maximum earning typically is \$30 per hour average a week. Many earn average of \$17 to \$24 per hour which is without vehicle expenses, i.e. maintenance, insurance, licences.
29. Uber drivers don't receive any paid breaks, health insurance coverage or vacation benefits which further reduce the value of their earning, which comes down below minimum wage of Ontario.
30. The current algorithm of Uber pays Uber Eats bikes and Uber Eats vehicles the same, which is unfair to vehicle owners as a car has higher maintenance cost. Uber Eats bikers should be paid well -- they work under extreme weather delivering food and helping businesses, and the economy. But in the end Uber drivers are not earning what they are eligible for. It's Uber and the government who earn the money, while the people who are working get mistreated.
31. Insurance on vehicles is too high (\$5000), "by-law enforcement"
32. We are talking about how to improve service, but not talking about the amount of business. Increasing the amount of business each driver gets will solve all these issues, including incentivizing the cost of vehicles and earnings. There needs to be business balance.
33. 1. Inflation is too high. 2. Car is too expensive. 3. Increase meter rate. 4. Change by-law so that the City buys the wheelchair accessible car and covers insurance, and then gives the driver minimum \$17.25 per hour.
34. Most TTL (Toronto Taxicab Licence) owners due to cost of the vehicles could not afford to replace cars. System for most drivers is sitting without any fares for longer times.

Accessibility

35. Accessible service is a question of supply. In order to operate a wheelchair-accessible vehicle, the cost is about \$80,000. In order to earn enough of a living a person has to be able to serve able-bodied people as well in order to make enough per day. There are so many drivers that no taxis are able to make a living. It's supply and demand -- basic economics.

36. I believe the City is going in the right direction to provide an upfront grant as well as the \$10 subsidy. However, there should be more research done into those exact numbers to account for inflation and the increasing cost of living.
37. Have kiosk centres at hospitals that are able to direct people into accessible taxis. The taxicab stands are for discharged patients. PTCs cut the line at the taxicab stand. When a patient is discharged, it would be great to have a way for nurses to book a taxi that connects to a centralized dispatch service.
38. Wheel-Trans represents 20-30% of taxis, so there could be joint conversations with them about how to provide the services. I think a central dispatch service is a step in the right direction, but a lot of people who are asking for these services might not have dexterity to operate an app. There should be a fully accessible webpage that family members and helpers can use to call a taxi for them.
39. Customers don't want to take accessible cabs. When we line up, we don't get a single penny because people pass by.
40. The accessible car costs \$120,000 because interest rate is 7%.
41. We invested \$1,000,000 of our brokerage's money to make sure that we were offering accessible service. We [the city at large] have sabotaged taxis so badly by adding all of these PTC vehicles. But here's the current situation: there are 578 total TTL licences. 301 are to be replaced. That leaves 58 stable accessible vehicles in Toronto, and most of those will be doing wheel-trans. Only 2 of the cars of our 100 fleet don't have to be replaced in the next two years. It's sabotage what the City has done.
42. I just want to echo that the \$20,000 grant being given up front would be a mistake because people would turn around and sell their vehicle. They're not looking for a handout, they're looking for a hand up.
43. There should be conversations with the TTC (Toronto Transit Commission) to see if it's possible to provide a subsidy to the metered rate through Wheel-Trans for those with disabilities. The metered rate would be subsidized by a certain amount, or a certain renewal rate in the future. There are multiple ways of doing it.
44. I believe a lower rate for people who require accessible service would increase demand and get more money into the hands of drivers. A lot of those with accessible needs cannot afford the higher rate for service.
45. Would the TTC Wheel Trans be rolled into the centralized dispatching service?
 - *City Staff Response:* It's something we're considering.
46. Accessible vehicles are not a good idea because in the places that cab drivers go to wait for jobs nobody wants to take accessible cabs. They want regular sedans. Thanks.
47. The fund should be at least 30% of the total cost of a vehicle and extend to 10 years from 7 years.

48. If the expectation is that an accessible car should be at your disposal within five minutes, it's unreasonable. You would have to have an accessible car on every street corner in Toronto.
49. We have access to 193 plates in Ottawa that are accessible. Out of those, 100 are on the shelf. The program started 3 months ago. The drivers earn an extra 15 dollars per trip. We run the central dispatch service – if you want more information on that we're happy to share. We would have expected that those who put their licence on the shelf would want to come back to work. The reason it hasn't happened is because they cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel because they see 2-3 fares a day instead of 8. I think the centralized dispatching service is a good idea, as is the per trip incentives, but you have to look farther than that if you want that to work, otherwise we're going to be right back here in a year looking at what's going on. And what we're looking at right now is that there are way too many vehicles.

Inactive Taxicab Owner Licences

50. The reason a lot of these plates are now inactive is because they could not maintain the insurance and vehicle costs. On top of that, there's no business for these people. If there's no business, and there's a lot of cost, then what are you going to do? You have to close up shop.
51. It's clear that taxi plates are inactive because there is nothing left to operate. It's all being taken by PTCs and other companies.
52. We came to Canada to work very hard to buy plates. Now we lost the plates, have no income, and we pay to renew the licence. You think it's fair when we work so hard?
53. I am a taxicab driver for the last 20 years. When the City gave me the plate to operate as a taxi driver I was younger, but now I am approaching my 60s. I cannot explain to my children what the previous magistrate of the City did. I cannot afford to buy a car. I cannot afford insurance. I pay the City using my credit card to maintain my annual plate, but still I cannot live by driving.
54. Day by day [the City] is crushing our business. Why are these companies working freely everywhere without commercial insurance? What we are paying for insurance and for the taxicab plate is way too high.
55. If we aren't able to earn money, then why should we work? That's why plates are on the shelf.
56. How does the City plan to compensate taxi drivers who bought a plate? John Tory was colluding with Uber and Lyft, and the only way to make this right is to compensate the drivers who were affected.
57. For a lot of the older drivers, we expected that the plate would help us in retirement. Did you say that if the plate stays on the shelf, it will be given to someone else? I don't understand. That's our plate. We are losing so many things. Plus, now you are giving the plate up to somebody else? I don't understand.
- *City Staff Response:* It would only be cancelled plates that we would give to other people.

58. Plates on the shelf are penalized. Take that policy away.
59. \$700 fee for taxi owners yearly is unfair.
60. The City of Toronto has a double standard when it comes to regulation of the taxi industry. It surrendered to Uber Canada, according to Judge Smith of Ottawa decision of May 13, 2024. The City of Toronto is supposed to be the guardian for everybody in the industry. Instead, the previous Council of 2015 totally turned its back on the Toronto taxi industry. The City didn't act in good faith from the get-go when it comes to regulating PTCs. The City violated its own principles of fairness. Now the only solution for the City is to pay financial compensation for the plate owners' financial suffering of the past 10 years.
61. I own 3 plates and have 2 on the shelf. Why do we have pay for a licence that is sitting on the shelf for 4 years? Why do we have to pay if it sits inactive? Please do something about it [the financial circumstances] if licences are sitting on the shelf. It's harder for older people who survive on their pension to pay for the fees.
62. It costs \$700 for a plated licence, but I can't drive because there's no business. Why should I pay this fee when it is not being used? I have 3 taxicab plates and they all cost too much money. And that's not even accounting for the licence plate cost. It's hard as an older adult to do licence removal.
63. The City of Toronto needs to compensate taxi plate owners for plates sitting on the shelf. This problem all began when Uber used paid lobbyists to bypass Toronto taxi laws.
64. We hurting very badly. All of our hard work has gone up in flames and our hard-earned property [taxicab plate] has become valueless because of the City's negligence. The City of Toronto did not act in good faith to deal with the issue of taxi and Ubers. We need financial compensation for our suffering from the past 10 years.
65. Allow plates on the shelf to pay \$100 renewal fee. Almost 2500 plates are in the shelf. Allow only 5000 PTC vehicles. This is the same as taxicabs. There are only 5,000 cabs allowed. The public has a choice.
66. In 2024, there is no insurance that gives favourable rates for the taxi industry. Those that exist now charge an exorbitant amount. The majority of the plates are sitting in shelf because the costs of owning and maintaining a vehicle is out of reach for most. The only solution is for this Council of 2024 to pay monetary compensation to Toronto taxi owners, officially close up shop for taxicabs, and then sell the rest of the VFH industry to whatever PTC the City chooses. The taxi industry is hurt, yet the majority of the [taxi] owners are law-abiding citizen and still believe in the "just society" where the affected politician should see everybody equally without prejudice.

Miscellaneous

67. My car has two cameras. One is for insurance, one is for the City. We do not need these safety by-laws that increase cost. People just look at TikTok in my car anyways.

68. The owner-operators should be able to keep their cars in service longer than the garage cars – an additional ten years.
69. Hybrid cars need to be allowed to operate for longer than non-hybrid cars.
70. Develop a centralized app to book rides for all vehicles-for-hire.

Appendix B: Organizations in Attendance

The following organizations had representatives identify themselves over the course of the meeting:

- Checkers Taxi
- Beck Taxi
- Canadian Taxi Association
- Toronto One Taxi
- Taxi News