I am Jaspal Bedi and I'm speaking today on behalf of Duffy's Taxi.

Today you will hear from our company, our industry and our community. You will hear our personal stories. You will hear our experience.

The key question we are asking is will you listen?

We are frustrated. The province pushed through Bill 30 with no consultation whatsoever. None. It even shut down the legislative committee with more than 100 people wanting to present.

We were hoping it would be a better process at the city. What we got was Uber having access months before we did. Focus groups with randomly selected participants and a working group that still has not finished it's consultations.

On top of all that on Friday we received the bylaws that are being considered today. We have had five days to go through those bylaws and you are now trying to push them through in a week.

These should be called the Uber bylaws. Mayor Bowman we know you have been promoting Uber for a number of years. In your state of the city speech you talked about bringing in Uber. In September you were pushing the provincial government to pass bill 30 and bring it in. I think the expression is be careful what you ask for you might get it. You have now put us in a position where we are going to have the most significant changes to the Taxi industry since 1935 dealt with in less than two weeks.

At Duffys just like at Unicity Taxi our business is taking care of our customers needs 24 hours a day, seven days a week 365 days a year. We're not used to being in meetings like this. But we took seriously the importance of participating. That's why we supported the Winnipeg Community Taxi Coalition. Why we have worked around the clock with little time on research and proposals. We fully support the 23 recommendations that the Coalition put forward to the working group.

But we're beginning to question what was the point? You have ignored virtually all of the recommendations we have put forward.

Let's understand what this by law is all about. You are expecting the existing community based taxi service to continue to serve it's regulatory mandate. To serve the whole city. To have regulations in terms of driver and passenger safety. To be subject to maximum fares and other restrictions.

At the same time you are pushing through regulations to pave the way for Uber and

similar companies. In doing so you are giving Uber some of the most limited regulatory requirements they will face anywhere.

On top of that you want to add 120 new licenses at a time when there is no doubt that the existing community based taxi service faces the loss of riders. Then you bring in a 20 year limit on the transferability of licenses. So you compromise the existing licensing system in doing so.

I want to point to a few examples of how unfair these bylaws are

Look at what it takes to be a taxi driver. A Class 4 commercial drivers license, criminal background checks, training and an English-language proficiency requirement.

What are you asking in terms of Uber drivers? That they have a non commercial drivers license and go through the screening process done by Uber. That's it.

You haven't even required them to have a commercial drivers license like cities like Calgary and Edmonton are doing. And not to have an English-language proficiency requirement? 99% of the people in our taxi industry are new Canadians.. For many English is not their first language. But we have taken those proficiency tests. We take customer service seriously. We know that in this city we have to be able to communicate with our customers. I cannot believe that you would allow Uber to do anything other than that.

Look at what you're proposing in terms of vehicles. For taxis you continue to have in place the kind of measures we fully support for safety such as shields, cameras, panic buttons and more.

So what do you require for an Uber vehicle. No safety measures at all. Not even any vehicle standards. I am sure the used car dealers in the city will thank you.

Mayor Bowman we put forward 23 recommendations. We are more than prepared to go through this unfair, unsafe by law to make it safer and fairer.

I want to focus on a number of key issues

First of all you must act to maintain the integrity of the Licensing System. .

It starts with dropping the 20 year limitation on license transferability. We have invested in the industry and unless you are prepared to buy us out we are asking for you to maintain the transferability that we deserve, to allow us to get some benefit from our investments and our hard work.

ON NEW LICENSES

Don't issue new licenses until there has been an assessment of the demand after the introduction of the new bylaw.
Any future licenses should reflect the priority of increased accessibility and also if you're replacing the seasonal licenses those that have had seasonal licenses in the past.
Drop the taxi tax. That's what we call the amount per trip you were setting for taxis. It will hurt our customers, it will hurt our industry and it is unfair because primarily it goes to pay for the administrative and enforcement burden from Uber.

The experience around the world shows when Uber enters the market there are huge challenges with enforcement. You will have to find additional money in your budget for enforcement of offences by Uber drivers. You will probably also have to budget increased legal costs when Uber goes to court to challenge the enforcement. If you don't believe me just phone Edmonton where they had to spend $1.5 million on enforcement and then had to fight Uber in court where Uber lawyers boasted of the few convictions that were achieved.

MAKE UBER AND OTHER INTERNET BASED TAXIS PAY FOR THEIR IMPACTS ON CITY SERVICES.

It's not just the community taxi service that will be impacted. It will be transit. It will be transportation for the disabled. This is the pattern throughout the world.

Right now the existing Taxi system balances service with the disabled and regular taxi service. You can't allow Uber to enter the market without a real commitment to the disabled. . Around the world the only thing you get from Uber in terms of the disabled is talk and lawsuits. Do not be naïve. Make sure you require them to pay for the costs to your services and our community upfront. Under the current system 95 accessible taxis provide service to the disabled and non-disabled taxi customers. They make up 20% of the combined total of taxi licenses. Uber should be held to the same standard or pay a real levy on for accessibility and an impact on transit.

And while we're at it - a word of advice. Give Edmonton a call about fines. You need to assess higher fines to recover the costs of enforcing Uber.

The basic principle should be clear. There must be a level playing field especially in terms of drivers and vehicles.

Uber should have the same safety requirements, Class 4 license,training, English language and insurance coverage as taxis.

If you think I am being critical I can tell you that everyone in our company and our industry is frustrated with what we have seen. No one knows the community taxi service better than we do. There's been no serious effort to get our input. Instead we're faced with the prospect of changes that will pave the way for Uber, and wipe out our investments and take away our livelihood.

What is very frustrating to us is the fact that you're doing this for a company based in San Francisco to take whatever profits it makes out of our community and our province . A company that has one of the worst reputation's world wide. Everything from a corporate culture of sexual harassment through to an aggressive policy of ignoring, disobeying and undermining rules, regulations and laws.

Coming from our perspective where we are used to following the rules and the laws we raise the question why would you even allow Uber as a company to come into Winnipeg? If you do Mayor Bowman. I can promise you a number of things. If there are not significant changes starting with a delay to get it right we will not forget. Not just our immediate industry but people in this community who have been showing their support for us.

We will be active. We are citizens. And we will be active not only here at EPC but in the future as well.

But all of this is so unnecessary. We want to have input. We want a system that makes sense. We want a system that works for everyone.

What we have now is Uber's by-laws. Not Winnipeg's bylaws. Mayor Bowman Please take a step back, let's get to the table, we can come up with a system of safety fairness and community.

Submission by
Jaspal Bedi