

PUBLIC FEEDBACK RE: TAXI LICENSING PROPOSAL

Public Meeting Held March 13, 2017

Ashalynn Bilton-Smith (College Cabs/Pullman Resident)

- Taxi drivers are held to a high level of excellence.
- Current background check requirements and fees are not unreasonable.
- Safety should not be compromised for convenience.
- Safe and reliable transportation for students when they are at their most vulnerable is in everyone's best interest.
- Taxi medallions limit the number of vehicles on the road and are a common practice in cities nationwide. If Uber cars are limited, there should also be a limit on taxis.
- Ubers should be regulated like taxis are regulated, and should be treated with the same expectations as taxi cabs are.
- Local cab companies are rated as a whole. Yelp and Google Reviews often reflect the few bad experiences, but fail to get customer feedback on a job well done.
- College Cab drivers rent a taxi from the company. They can work as much or as little as they like, but have to be able to pay their rent for the vehicle.
- College Cabs owners also own several other businesses in the Pullman community.
- Local cab companies do good things for the community, including; delivering lost bags from the airport, cutting deals to transport groups, assisting elderly residents with groceries and doctor appointments, doing floral deliveries, making medical deliveries, and more.
- Uber vehicles are hard to identify. Unless they get pulled over, it's difficult to know that these vehicles are operating as a ride service. This makes it difficult to regulate Uber vehicles, and can also be a safety concern as any driver could pick someone up.

Zeno DeRooy (College Cabs/Pullman Resident)

- Current licensing system seems more secure than a simple social security check.
- Fairness is important. If Uber can use a social security background check, other taxi companies should be allowed the same privilege.
- Competition is welcome, as long as it's fair.
- Enforcement is important to make sure that Uber-like services are following policies.
- It is difficult to tell which vehicles are operating under Uber.
- Uber is a part-time job opportunity, not a career opportunity.
- The market will take care of itself.

Mary Torrence (Pro Cab/Pullman Resident)

- Pullman is one of the safest towns that a taxi could operate in.
- WSU is a distinguished university, and taxi companies are proud to support WSU students.
- Taxi drivers are interviewed face-to-face, and business owners get to know them before they are released in the company's vehicles.

- Accountability is important to taxi companies.
- One local taxi company learned that a driver had been in possession of a firearm in a company vehicle. The driver was let go immediately, and is now driving for Uber.
- If a taxi driver makes a mistake, everyone sees it. They are held accountable by members of the public who report back to taxi companies so that issues can be corrected immediately. Uber does not have the same opportunity to hold drivers accountable.

Keith Curran (Pullman Resident)

- Competition is good for a democratic society. It improves quality.
- Local taxi companies are not always reliable and have resulted in missed flights.
- Social security background checks are more streamlined and efficient.
- Competition causes every company to be as good as they can be.
- There is not a lot of Uber demand currently, but there is a lot of potential for demand. Current demand probably does not require regulation.
- Uber vehicles are required to be inspected diligently. The list of requirements is available online.
- Uber offers a review process after each transaction. Drivers and passengers get to rate one another. Efficiency, vehicle cleanliness, and other categories are scored by customers.

Ceara Maxwell (College Cabs/Pullman Resident)

- Competition makes each company to be the best that it can be.
- Do we need to replace in-depth background checks with something that is streamlined and quick?
- Average rates are slightly higher at local cab companies than with Uber. Taxis charge for mileage and time to compensate drivers when trips take longer due to traffic or other circumstances.
- Uber has a high driver turn-over rate.

Zane Larsen (College Cabs/Pullman Resident)

- Pullman has a high turn-over rate for local businesses. The economic eco-system here is fragile.
- If Uber-like companies come to Pullman, 40%-60% of taxi money that currently stays in the Pullman community will be lost to a company that resides elsewhere. Local business owners spend their money at other local businesses.
- More people will be making less money, requiring assistance from taxpayers, if Uber comes to Pullman.
- Good competition is fair competition.
- Pullman can't be compared to Olympia or Kennewick.
- Consideration should be given to how many ride services the Pullman market can sustain. There should be a cap on how many Uber drivers can operate here.
- Regulation of the number of Uber or ride-share drivers allowed to operate in Pullman is a good idea.
- A lot of taxi companies can't sustain against Uber-like services.
- Cab companies take vehicle maintenance very seriously. Owners have a moral

obligation to set a high standard. Uber has requirements about vehicle age, but they aren't necessarily regulating how safe the vehicles are. Vehicle inspections should be regulated, as is done in Moscow.

-Costs absorbed by Uber are much less than for local cab companies because they operate on such a

large scale, bringing a whole new level of competition.

-Taxi drivers are trained to deal with intoxicated customers who may vomit in cabs. Uber drivers use their own vehicles and may not handle those types of events appropriately.

-College Cabs operates on the "a ride for you is a ride for two" mentality in dealing with intoxicated

passengers, ensuring that they get home safely with the assistance of a friend.

-Local cab companies often transport overly intoxicated passengers directly to the hospital to assure their safety.

-Local drivers are trained to deal with the distractions that come with transporting groups of rowdy passengers, as well as other situations that arise while operating in a college community.

-There are certain times that local cab companies would appreciate having another ride service in town to help accommodate the high number of calls. During these periods when taxi companies don't have enough cars/drivers to meet demand, additional options for safe rides would increase public safety.

Tony Bean (Pullman-Moscow Airport/Pullman Resident)

-The Pullman-Moscow Airport follows the City of Pullman's policy, but also has its own set of insurance requirements that must be met.

-Too many vehicles trying to drop-off/pick-up at the airport causes a public safety and service issue for the airport.

-Uber drivers don't carry their own insurance to meet airport standards. The company meets those limits for their cars.

Denise James (A Wildcat Taxi/Non-Resident)

-A social security number is just a number on a piece of paper. When taxi drivers come to the station to be fingerprinted, they bring their prints with them and there is no question that they belong to the applicant.

-One article suggested that in a study, a large number of Uber drivers failed the fingerprint-based background check, after passing the social security background.

-Keep our town safe and continue to do what has been done in the past.

-Local taxi companies are responsive and allow customers to speak with a real person in a timely manner.

Raven Conyers (College Cabs/Non-Resident)

-Pullman is a safe city, which is why many students choose WSU for school.

-Taxi companies are already paying \$100 and completing the fingerprint-based background check. It doesn't make sense to have a special set of rules for Uber.

-Safety shouldn't be streamlined. It isn't worth changing the laws that have already been keeping Pullman so safe.

Rob Borden (College Cabs/Pullman Resident)

-A level playing field is important for all of the companies that are playing.
-A peer-reviewed study by a team of law enforcement experts on the East coast sent a group of people through the social-security based background check, and then the FBI's fingerprint-based background check. They found that the social security-based system was 43 times less likely to uncover past criminal history.

-In a recent incident, an Uber driver drugged and robbed her passenger. She had previously been

convicted on drug charges in 2002/2003, as well as 2nd degree grand theft in 2012. The FBI background check would have caught this under regular taxi licensing rules, while she flew right through the Uber check.

-It's not worth the risk and the safety of our community to streamline the background process. It

doesn't take long to complete the FBI fingerprint background check.

-Pullman's current ordinance is very good. If the goal is to create an ordinance that is more ride-share friendly, the only needed change is to add "transportation network companies" where references are made to "taxi cab companies" and "transportation network drivers" added to "taxi cab drivers".

-Taxi companies have spent 100 years lobbying to achieve the current taxi regulations across the nation, with the safety of the public in mind.

Karen Kiessling (League of Women Voters/Pullman Resident)

-Kennewick/Olympia ordinances are new, so we don't know what kind of experiences they have had.

Alice Schroeder (League of Women Voters/Pullman Resident)

-Is there a way to require that companies operating in Pullman must be based in Pullman? We are lucky that we have local taxi owners.

Livestream Facebook Feedback

-Taxi cab companies don't always show up when reservations are made.

-Uber drivers are locals. Cougs helping Cougs. Uber makes getting a safe ride easy.

-Uber creates an economic opportunity for people to make additional money that can be fed into the local economy.

-While Uber is an app, the moving parts of the business are the same as a taxi company. They should follow the same rules.

-Unmarked cars are hard to regulate. How will we know if each driver has a license from the City?

-There was an Uber driver who had a DUI and was using Uber as a means to pay for his fines. Is that who we want driving our sons or daughters?

-Taxi companies put a lot of miles on their cars, which equates to high maintenance costs. This would be a quick way to ruin a new car.

-Uber can come in when they can ensure that those drivers are properly checked to keep customers safe.

-Among Uber drivers are convicted murderers and those convicted of felony sex offenses against children.

-Links to articles:

(A) <http://bit.ly/2mQ0p8H>

(B) <http://bit.ly/2lw0dhT>

(C) <http://thebea.st/2pM0HyX>

(D) <http://bit.ly/2oxNBnl>

(E) <http://cnnmon.ie/2b1IE2h>

(F) <http://fxn.ws/1PzNw8p>

(G) <http://cnet.co/2pm8bvL>

(H) <http://on.mash.to/2pLHy05>

(I) <http://nyti.ms/2oZyWDf>

(J) <http://cnet.co/2pMWYEj>

-Uber drops drivers from the platform if they fall below a 4.7 star service rating.

-Uber requires an annual vehicle inspection to ensure safety.

-Adding Uber to Pullman is capitalism. It requires companies to step up customer service.

-Local cabs are notorious for being late, not showing up, having long wait times, overcharging, allowing too many passengers in a vehicle, and being rude.

-Current taxi licensing laws do not require vehicles to be marked.

-Uber matches the driver's license photo and information, including vehicle registration, to the social security number.

-If a limit will be put on Uber-like vehicles, a limit should also be placed on taxis.

-“I only use taxis when I have to and will always take an Uber when able first.” Uber means clean vehicles that show up in a reasonable amount of time, as well as the ability to rate the driver.

-Taxi cabs are often called to transport PRH patients who are discharged from the hospital or emergency department without another means of transportation. It is important to know that patients are in good hands with regulated drivers. However, taxis are often unavailable and increased availability with increased safety and security measures would be welcome.

-Uber is throwing a fit because they will have to spend more money to pay by our City's rules that keep our citizens safe.

-Uber will allow college students to have more jobs and will make Pullman a safer city.

Feedback Received via Email

-Uber is people hiding behind an app.

-Pro Cabs drivers already have social security background checks, taking the extra step on their own.

- Link to peer reviewed study about background checks versus security checks and their effectiveness included in this link: (K) <http://bit.ly/2oubE7j>

-A suggested way forward for taxi and tnc companies and how to make sure we keep the public safe (emphasizing the background checks being fingerprint verse Social Security number based):

(L) <http://bit.ly/2ocnhnw>

-Examples of failure to catch bad people on the front end of the screening process: <http://www.whosdrivingyou.org/rideshare-incidents#assaults> *(list of various links- no PDF)*

(M)<http://www.whosdrivingyou.org/blog/these-uber-incidents-could-have-been-avoided> <http://wjla.com/news/crime/police-uber-driver-arrested-after-attempting-to-murder-police-officers>

(video – No PDF)

-“I hope that the City of Pullman will keep its fingerprint-based ID system for all persons who pick up strangers for pay; and invite Uber to come to Pullman when they have raised their standard of safety, corporate-wide. My hat’s off to the Uber driver who voluntarily stepped up to Pullman’s standard.”

-“ Pullman had been discussing taxi licenses, and decided against it. Then a repeat felon applied for a license in Moscow, which did require a background check. Turns out he was driving for a two-town company based in Moscow, and had been driving for a Pullman company. The ASWSU Senate sent a resolution to the City Council, asking for licensing. They wanted coed students in all states of vulnerability to be safe. They were seeking maximum safety. With that part of licensing, I was and remain in agreement.”

Feedback Received via Twitter

-Hope Pullman PD holds firm.

-Link to article:

(O) <http://bit.ly/2obluO3>