

Good morning madam chair and committee members. My name is Kurt Enders and I'm President of Checker Transportation.

As the months and years drag on here we are again discussing what needs to happen to make the accessible taxis viable for Calgarians who need it as well as for the drivers who provide the service.

I truly hope we are nearing the end of the debate and that we are here today to talk about how to solve the Accessible problem. The industry and LTS have provided at least three options in the past few years that would have helped solve the problem, but council in its wisdom rejected all three. Now as we discuss the matter one more time, there are approximately 80 accessible taxis that are no longer in service due to driver's giving up hope for a workable solution.

The LTS team has come up with yet another version of what it believes will work. It has gaps and one more time does not deal directly with the issue of TNCs and their competitive advantage provided to them by city council. But I agree in most part with what LTS is proposing and I am hopeful City Council will give LTS the green light to start work on the new proposal for a two-year pilot project, in conjunction with the industry and keeping in mind the fact that the taxi well is starting to go dry.

Trying a centralized dispatching system where the committed accessible taxi drivers log into a third party app or call center, I think is a great way for Calgarians to get all the accessible vehicles under one platform and provide ease of access to transportation. It gives drivers the ability to still work for the company that they currently work with today. I think it would be wrong to force all accessible drivers to join a new unknown company and leave the company they currently work with. Giving the drivers the option to continue working with their current taxi brokers as well as an independent centralized dispatch will help solve some of the driver's concerns about deadheading.

Among the other challenges I see with the new system is the additional workload and the cost that will be placed on each brokerage. As much as some of the data collection and reconciliation will be done via computers, it is going to be a labor intensive job. We still feel that because of the size of our fleet this will take a person 3/4 of their day to ensure that the proper billing is being done between drivers and city administration. When we originally spoke with LTS about this we figured it would be half a day's job. My team now thinks it is going to be closer to 3/4 time position.

More staff means more expense to an already shrinking revenue base.

But we all know we need to start somewhere. With approximately 80 accessible wheelchair vans currently off the road today we need to ensure that we are encouraging drivers to get back into the accessible service. If we do it correctly I feel we should be able to operate our city with less than the current 189 accessible plates.

I fully support having KPIs being set up for the drivers to get the funding for providing the service. I also feel that having drivers wait for approximately one year to start receiving any funding back for their vehicle is a little long. Administration has already stated on page 6 of their report under risk assessment they feel the program does not significantly incent drivers to deliver accessible trips. I agree. If administration is already voicing concerns about what is being proposed and raising red flags before it even launches a pilot program, you need to determine today what is needed to make it a success.

You need to provide a real incentive if you want to encourage drivers to run and ensure that they are picking people up in a timely manner, knowing drivers quite often face deadhead miles that they are not compensated for. We know that the average accessible driver does approximately five trips per month and some do more but if you have a driver that is willing to run to get an accessible customer picked up I feel that drivers should be rewarded immediately for his or her effort. That reward should be anywhere between \$30-\$35 over and above what the meter fare is.

That provides drivers an immediate incentive and remuneration for the work that they have done. On badge renewal if the drivers meet all the other KPIs which are laid out by LTS the driver has the potential to earn an additional \$5000. Administration has recommended putting the meter surcharge at \$.20. If you increase that a nominal amount to \$.25, the reward for the drivers and customer will mean so much more to them.

This plan still leaves TNCs out of being a responsible corporate part of the equation to provide accessible service. Accessible service should be done by all participants in the taxi and TNC industry in Calgary. We would like to know why when TNCs are doing almost half of all livery trips in the city that they are not being required to have accessible vehicles in their fleets. I really wonder why they are not being required to provide the same service or vehicle type that the taxi industry is required to offer. And when I say that they need to provide accessible vehicles in their fleets I don't mean that they can contract with taxi companies to do the work for them. City Council needs to stop treating TNCs with kidd gloves and recognize publicly that the taxi side of the livery industry now offers everything that the TNCs do, except cross border app bookings.

In closing we need to ensure that we are giving the drivers the proper incentive up front for the work they are doing, and ~~we~~ is providing the best possible accessible service to those who need it. I also hope this is the last time I'm speaking in front of you regarding accessible taxi service and why it is not working.

Thank you.

