
INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: CHAIR AND MEMEBERS DATE: 2017 MARCH 15
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER FILE: 2410-20

SUBJECT: **BC GOVERNMENT 2017 MARCH 07 PRESS RELEASE -
BC INVESTS IN TAXI INDUSTRY TO PREPARE FOR ARRIVAL
OF RIDE SHARING**

At the Transportation Committee meeting held on 2016 November 09, the Committee expressed interest in receiving any future white papers released by the Province regarding the vehicle-for-hire (taxi and ride-share) industry. The intent of the original request from the Transportation Committee was to be notified of policy changes or direction.

On 2017 March 07, the Province announced their intention that ride sharing services will be introduced to BC by the end of 2017. In anticipation of this, they announced proposed changes affecting the existing taxi industry.

Beginning this summer, the Province proposes to seek additional input from key stakeholders.

Please find attached the press release for your information.



Eva Prior
Administrative Officer

B.C. invests in taxi industry to prepare for arrival of ride sharing

Tuesday, March 7, 2017 11:06 AM

British Columbia plans to introduce a series of improvements to help the taxi industry modernize and remain competitive in anticipation of ride-sharing services coming to British Columbia by the holiday season at the end of 2017, Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Todd Stone and Community, Sport and Cultural Development and Minister Responsible for TransLink Peter Fassbender announced today.

In recognition of the important and long-standing role of the taxi industry in providing passenger transportation services in the province, the government intends to introduce a number of improvements that will ensure a level playing field in B.C. These include:

- **New app-based technology:** The Province will invest up to \$1 million to help the taxi industry develop an app with the capability of shared dispatch to allow the taxi sector provincewide to better compete with new entrants to the market, and allow the public to hail and pay for a taxi with a smartphone in the same way that they would for a ride-sharing service.
- **Crash prevention technology:** ICBC will invest up to \$3.5 million in the taxi sector to install crash avoidance technology in all B.C. taxis. This technology will improve passenger safety and help avoid crashes. An ICBC pilot showed that this technology led to a 61% reduction in at-fault, rear-end crashes and a 24% reduction in all crashes.
- **Insurance products:** ICBC has been collaborating with the taxi industry to streamline the claims process, and is committed to working with the industry to improve their insurance to make it more flexible and cost effective, which could save taxi drivers significantly. Depending on the number of kilometres they drive, these savings could be in the range of 25%.
- **Reduced red tape:** The Province will work with municipal governments and the taxi industry to remove red tape and overlap within the system, which will save drivers money.
- **Exclusive rights to street hailing for taxis:** Taxis will retain exclusive rights to be hired by phone, at a taxi stand or flagged down at the curb.
- **Pick-up/drop-off anytime, anywhere:** Ride-sharing companies typically operate across municipal boundaries. To ensure a level playing field for the taxi industry, the Province will work with municipalities and other stakeholders to allow all drivers, including taxis, the same access to provide services wherever and whenever a passenger needs a ride.
- **Open up taxi supply:** The Province will work with municipalities to address the current shortage of taxis and vehicles for hire, which will provide more choice, accessibility and opportunity for both consumers and drivers.

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In addition to these improvements, the Province will require the same safety standards for both taxis and ride-sharing providers in order to protect the public and drivers. As part of this, Class 4 licenses will be phased out for taxi drivers, and taxi and ride-sharing companies will be responsible for maintaining records that prove:

- All drivers have an unrestricted driver's licence (no graduated licences) and are at least 19 years of age.
- All drivers have passed a criminal record check for past convictions of violent or sexual offenses as well as other offenses.
- All drivers have passed a safe driving record check.
- Vehicles have passed regular mechanical inspections.

(flickr.com)

Finally, the Province will make sure that appropriate safeguards are in place to protect consumers through fair and transparent pricing.

These proposed improvements are the result of extensive feedback and consultation with stakeholders throughout the province, including the taxi and limousine industry, local governments, business associations, accessibility groups, and transportation network companies. Participants told the province they wanted:

- A fair system that welcomes new companies while ensuring that existing local operators remain competitive and continue to earn a living wage;
- A regulated system that protects passengers, drivers and their vehicles; and
- A modernized system that reduces red tape, unnecessary duplication and provides both consumers and drivers with more choice, opportunity and flexibility.

Beginning this summer, government will seek additional input from taxi drivers, the ride-sharing and taxi industries, police, airports, municipalities, ICBC and RoadSafetyBC as the Province finalizes its plan in time for the 2017 holiday season.

Quotes:

Todd Stone, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure –

“British Columbians have told us that they want ride sharing services, and we’re moving forward to make it happen. While we’re taking action, we know that many people rely on taxis to support themselves and their families. That’s why we’re making investments to modernize the taxi industry and create a level playing field.”

Peter Fassbender, Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development and Minister Responsible for TransLink –

“Over the past year, we’ve had some very important conversations with taxi companies and drivers who told us that we need to ensure fairness so they are able to compete effectively with ride sharing providers. This is why we’ve worked so hard to develop these measures, which reflects what I heard through extensive consultations and will allow ride sharing companies to operate, but also allows the taxi industry to be competitive.”

Andrew Murie, CEO, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Canada –

Having safe, convenient and accessible transportation options is critical. That’s why we call on all political parties to commit to implementing workable ridesharing rules in 2017 to fight impaired driving and help save lives. Mothers Against Drunk Driving supports the Province’s decision to allow drivers with class 1-5 license to drive taxi and rideshare, as this will increase safe options for British Columbians.”

Robin Silvester, Port of Vancouver –

“The Vancouver Fraser Port Authority plays a key role in British Columbia’s economy through the efficient movement of goods and tourists. In 2016, more than 826,800 cruise passengers boarded ships at Canada Place at the Port of Vancouver, with an associated \$2 million in economic activity for each vessel calling at Canada Place. The port authority supports the government’s initiatives to improve British Columbia’s transportation network and the tourist experience by embracing transportation options that are able to efficiently and effectively match supply with demand peaks associated with cruise activities at the Port of Vancouver.”

Greg Wirtz, president, Cruise Lines International Association – Northwest & Canada –

"Cruise passengers rely on safe, dependable transportation options to access and enjoy the many attractions in and around B.C.'s port cities. This important step in offering more convenience and choice will mean an improvement to the cruise passenger experience in B.C."

Julia N. Dumanian, president & CEO, Canadian Hearing Society –

“Equal access to fair, appropriate and barrier-free employment is a right for all Canadians, whether they are deaf, hard of hearing or hearing. The Canadian Hearing Society is pleased that our submission helped inform the B.C. government’s position on ride-sharing legislation and the opportunities it will create by allowing people to use a full class 1-5 driver’s license for ride sharing.”

Learn more:

For more information, check out: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/home/featured-services/services/modernizing-taxi-industry>