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From: Jason Taylor <tayljaso@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 07, 2017 5:35 PM
To: citycouncil
Subject: Ride Share Services for Salem

Categories: Recorder Tasks

To the Members of the City Council of Salem,

My name is Jason Taylor, and I am writing this letter to urge the city council to allow ride-share services to begin operating in Salem. I have lived in the Salem area for the majority of my life and have loved what the city has to offer. Over the past year due to job relocation I have been residing in the Portland area slated to return to the Salem area April 10th. While up in the Portland area where ride-share services are allowed I have seen first hand the benefits that these services provide over standard taxis. Some of the benefits of ride-share services have been easier accessibility during busy times or inclement weather, streamlined riding experiences (no card swiping and fees), cheaper fare rates, the ability to hold your driver accountable for issues and to know who they actually are, and most importantly the biggest alternative to drunk driving.

While coming down to Salem for an event I opted to use a cab service (Willamette Valley Yellow Cab) to get myself from Mission street to downtown. The dispatcher quoted me 20 minutes, however the actual arrival time was 40 minutes. Once at my destination the driver made it clear it was an inconvenience for me to use a debit card to pay. So we had to sit there for an additional 10 minutes while he figured out how to swipe my card via a square reader on his phone. He kept saying my card was declined, I eventually had to grab his phone and input the card numbers manually for it to be accepted. This made the beginning of the night a bad experience and had I not been from Salem to begin with would have tainted my view of the city. For this cab company to be come to city meetings and shout concerns about Uber and Lyft "lowering standards" for companies is ludicrous. They are merely trying to stave off having to improve their standards and technology to compete in the industry.

In contrast, with ride-sharing, upon requesting a ride the application gives a real time minute count to when your driver will be arriving (typically never over 10 minutes). Since the card information is already in the system there is no need for cash or point of sale checkout. Meaning, my nearly hour long experience with that cab service could have been cut down to 20 minutes. Everyone's time and experience is valuable, and this is something that ride-share services provide over any other means of conveyance.

The ride-share industry has also forced cab companies to increase their customer service and update their technology. Which in turn, makes them more competitive. While ride-share services are direct competitors with cabs, there are different clientele for each. Cash-only riders or those who do not like technology will still primarily utilize cab services, and in Portland it is apparent they are still operating efficiently. The customers who would typically drive themselves even when they shouldn't are more apt to use ride-share services. I have been told by countless friends, co-workers, and people I meet while out and about that Uber and Lyft is the only means of transportation they will take and it has stopped them from driving drunk more than once.

In summary, Salem is a progressive wonderful place to have grown up in, work in, have fun in, and make friends in. However, it is very much behind in terms of its transportation offerings. I urge you, members of the city council, to allow ride-share services to operate in Salem. It will only help make an already wonderful city better!

Sincerely,
Jason Taylor