



## **Waterloo Region Taxi Alliance**

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To Region of Waterloo

It's been nearly a year since Uber started operating illegally in the Region of Waterloo. Uber continues to defy the Region of Waterloo bylaws. The unregulated drivers are becoming bolder to the point that they are now lining up outside bars and other venues in the same fashion as taxis, picking up customer for cash payments.

**The Waterloo Region Taxi Alliance is very concerned as its members are now witnessing on numerous occasions not only unlicensed, unregulated, non commercially insured Uber vehicles picking up customer but regular vehicles have now appeared conducting taxi operations which are acting in complete impunity to the bylaws.**

WRTA is becoming extremely frustrated by lack of action from By-law enforcement and Region of Waterloo. If left unchecked we believe that this situation will accelerate where some will turn vigilantes by taking action against Uber and other bandit cabs.

The situation has advanced to the point where an altercation nearly erupted this past weekend between a legal taxi drivers and an Uber or illegal taxi driver in the Uptown Waterloo bar district where university security had interjected to deal with the issue demanding the Uber or illegal taxi to leave the area. We state "Uber or Illegal taxi" because now it has come to a point where we do not know what type of illegal taxi vehicles are now on the road. The lack of by-law enforcement has opened the gateways to a flood of illegal taxis. First out of the gate was the illegal taxis Uber now anybody with a valid license and a vehicle can and are picking up bar patrons. Other issues of concern are just who is driving these vehicles picking up the general public. These illegal taxis are jeopardizing passenger safety and creating volatile atmosphere.

The Waterloo Region Taxi Alliance has made every effort to assist the Region of Waterloo in obtaining Uber driver information and passing it along to the licensing department. The Waterloo Region Taxi Alliance has not received any information back from the Region of Waterloo with regards to any charges being laid or any progress in dealing with these illegal Uber drivers.

The Waterloo Region Taxi Alliance has been successful to date controlling our owner/drivers and will endeavor to do so but the Region of Waterloo must be aware of the potential problems that could occur and the Waterloo Region Taxi Alliance will not accept responsibility.

The situation desperately needs leadership and guidance from the Region of Waterloo. This is now becoming a Lawless operating environment that must be curtailed and brought back to civility. The WRTA and ROW both together cannot accept this..." A total free for all " where any individual can operate an illegal taxi service without any consumer protection and customer safety.

Unlike other jurisdictions Waterloo Region Taxi Alliance is not requesting a moratorium on taxi license fees. We believe that the fees are not the issue. The issue is by-law enforcement. The Waterloo Region Taxi Alliance members want to adhere to these rules and regulations. A lawless operating environment is not an option.

The Waterloo Region Taxi Alliance members are expected to provide subsidized wheelchair accessible vehicles, paying all the regulatory fees, carry commercial insurance while sitting idly by watching their business's erode by the current lawless environment that has been created by Uber and Uber alone. The Waterloo Region Taxi Alliance and its member companies has an excellent working relationship with the Region of Waterloo. We are hopeful that it will continue in the same fashion well past the current by-law review. We are offering to help the licensing department with routine taxi inspection to free up the By-laws officers to track down, lay charges against these illegal bandit taxis and Uber drivers.

The Waterloo Region Taxi Alliance respectfully is requesting the Region of Waterloo to look at the court injunction successfully obtained by the City of Calgary and seek the same to shut down rogue Uber operation in the Region of Waterloo. We also request a press release issuing a public safety warning to our citizens outlining the dangers of ridesharing with the absence of commercial insurance with no accountability by Uber, its drivers and other illegal taxis.

Bill Chester

President Waterloo Region Taxi Alliance