

SUMMER 2016

9th Ward News

From Alderman Anthony Beale

A Letter from Alderman Beale - Fair First Steps to Protect Passengers and Drivers

Whenever a Chicagoan or tourist gets into a limousine, cab, bus or even a horse-drawn carriage, he or she has always done so with confidence – knowing the driver and the vehicle were duly licensed by the City of Chicago. Now, thanks to an ordinance recently passed by Chicago City Council, you can add ridesharing companies like Uber and Lyft to that list. The new ordinance requires ride-sharing drivers to be licensed – a big step in extending vital consumer safeguards to this new class of service.



Among other things, the ordinance requires Uber and Lyft drivers to have a ridesharing chauffeur license, which will help ensure that rideshare drivers are of good character and know how to safely operate their vehicles. While the ordinance doesn't require fingerprinting – something that is required of all city employees and taxi drivers – the new ordinance does establish a task force to study the issue further. Needless to say, we will be eagerly awaiting their findings.

Other commonsense public safety measures in the ordinance require rideshare vehicles six years or older to pass twice-annual inspections and for drivers to take a drug and/or physical exam when a complaint is filed by a passenger.

While these are all important steps, I am still disappointed that the ridesharing companies don't have to provide any meaningful access to disabled Chicagoans, which was part of my original proposal. However, the new law does require ridesharing companies to design a plan within six months to serve the disabled and to begin implementing it within another six months, or risk a \$10,000 per-day fine. In the meantime, the ridesharing companies must subsidize other livery companies already following the 15% requirement in serving the disabled community. We will obviously have to see what the companies ultimately propose, but we are slowly but surely moving in the right direction.

The public safety safeguards in the ordinance, similar to ones in NY, CA and other markets, strike a fair balance drivers and riders. But I assure you that I will never settle for anything that jeopardizes public safety or allows multi-billion dollar corporations to line their pockets at the expense of consumers.

I am proud to say that 36 aldermen have joined me in supporting this important commonsense legislation. Chicagoans deserve to know that whatever transportation option they choose, it will be a safe one.