

Recently, Uber received a \$41 billion evaluation. Those of us in the Taxi Industry took notice. Given that the Taxi industry is traditionally a small margin industry how have TNC's managed to become so successful so quickly? They have done so by passing their costs on to the drivers and the community. Fuel, maintenance, payroll taxes, insurance and most importantly the regulatory costs of running a business that is regulated, in the case of the city of Madison as a public utility. It is the passing on of those costs should be most troubling to the people of Madison.

As you well know, unlike most municipalities, Madison does not have a Medallion system. In fact, the city makes very few requirements of it's taxi cab companies. This means that anyone who can provide 24/7 service to the entire city is able to start a taxi company with almost no red tape. This process is simple and straightforward, in fact just a few years ago you approved Green Cab of Madison, with no objection from Madisons established taxi companies, and they been operating 24/7 without interruption since.

However, California based TNCs like Uber and Lyft have been lobbying our city government to reduce the basic requirements rather than working to meet those basic requirements.

Of particular concern is TNCs unwillingness to participate in the basic requirement of background checks conducted by the Madison Police Department. Given the numerous stories in the media over the last year about TNC drivers, stalking, attacking, and even raping passengers it seems only prudent that this body require that all drivers for all TNCs be licensed, photographed and fingerprinted by the city of Madison.

Just this week the Associated Press reports Uber was forced to introduce a panic button for their passengers on their app in India. This panic button will contact their local police department in case of their DRIVER attacking the passenger. This was a response to a city wide ban of Uber service in New Delhi after a woman was raped by her Uber driver. It has also been reported that the driver faced rape charges in 2011 but will still approved to drive for Uber.

All of this makes you wonder why a company valued at 41 billion dollars can't comply with Madison's taxi regulations

when little old Badger Cab, Green Cab, Union Cab and Madison Taxi have done so for years.

For the last year I have the privilege of being the President of what I believe to be the single greatest taxi company in America.

At Union Cab of Madison we share Madison's values. It's in our Vision Statement that we will "serve the community in a way that we are recognized as a sustainable asset and valued resource by all." Living our values is not always the easiest or most profitable thing to do. But we believe that we owe it to our community.

It's important to ask what these companies value and why they don't want to meet the basic requirements to protect our citizens.

For these reasons I am asking this committee to recommend that the council pass the alternate version of this ordinance that requires 24/7 city wide service, proper commercial insurance, and police conducted background checks for all TNCs and taxi companies in the City of Madison.

Thank You For Your Time

Uber introduces 'panic button' in India

San Francisco-based taxi firm's app will allow riders to notify police in case of emergency, and users to share location details with up to five people



A lawsuit in New Dehli alleges Uber is not doing enough to keep passengers safe. Photograph: David Ramos/Getty Images

Associated Press in New York

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Uber is introducing two new safety features for riders in India in response to concerns about safety that followed a passenger reporting she had been raped by a driver.

The San Francisco-based taxi alternative company says it will launch a “panic button” in its ride-hailing app that allows riders to notify the police in case of an emergency, and a “safety net” feature that will allow users to share trip details and their location with as many as five other people.

Uber says it is also creating a local team that will respond to reports by riders and will get a notification when the panic button is pressed.

The company says the new features will be available on Wednesday. Uber did not say if the new features will be available in other countries, but said in an email that it will have more updates in the coming months.

Uber, valued at \$40bn, lets passengers summon cars through an app in more than 250 cities around the world. It faces multiple legal and regulatory challenges as it expands in the US and abroad.

An Uber passenger said she was raped by a driver in New Delhi in December, and sued the company in January. The lawsuit alleges Uber is not doing enough to keep passengers safe, and the company may also face charges if Indian prosecutors believe it misrepresented the

safety of its services.

The company says it plans to improve its safety programmes in 2015 and is looking for new ways to screen drivers.

In India, Uber has been banned in New Delhi, the southern technology hub of Hyderabad, and the entire southern state of Karnataka.

The Times of India said on Thursday that regulators in Mumbai also supported a ban, and that they want Uber to set up emergency support services, put panic buttons in cabs, and display phone numbers for the police and regional transportation office.

On its blog, Uber said the idea of a physical panic button wasn't feasible because it doesn't own the cabs. It added that buttons would be vulnerable to wear and tear and said that if it and other operators were forced to put buttons in cars, passengers might get confused in an emergency.

The company said it would support physical panic buttons if the owner of the vehicle were responsible for installing them and if the button called the police directly.

Is Uber the worst company in Silicon Valley?