

Transportation Bureau has implemented most audit recommendations for private for hire vehicles

2020 FOLLOW-UP
March 9, 2020



Transportation network companies, such as Uber and Lyft, have operated in Portland since 2015. In 2016, we audited how the Portland Bureau of Transportation monitored these companies and taxicabs.

Our 2016 audit found the Transportation Bureau had addressed some City Council goals, such as competition and public safety, but other goals, especially for service, could not be measured because of data collection and reliability issues. We recommended that the Transportation Bureau monitor service levels and make other improvements.

In the three years since our audit, the Transportation Bureau has improved how it manages inspections of cars and drivers and enforcement. The Bureau uses a new database for ride data from taxicab and transportation network companies, but collection and analysis challenges remain. Uber and Lyft have not reported to the City how many rides they or their drivers cancel, and taxicab companies still struggle with data-reporting requirements. The Bureau needs to do more to analyze the data for service problems and to improve wheelchair-accessible service.



<i>2016 Recommendations</i>	<i>2020 Auditor's Status Update</i>
Use customer complaints and collision reports systemically to inform inspections, enforcement, and education actions. Also revise the collision report form to obtain sufficient information.	Resolved in 2019.
Determine what information is needed to measure the use of and effects of dynamic pricing to best achieve Council's policy goals.	Resolved in 2019.
Adjust inspection processes so resources are deployed to areas of highest risk. Ensure inspections are a surprise to drivers and companies and are not targeting the same companies and drivers too frequently.	Resolved in 2019.
Establish goals and performance measures for inspections. This can inform staffing levels, too.	<p>The Bureau set the following goals and performance measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 95-percent Code compliance rate • To randomly inspect at least 30 percent of permitted drivers each year • To conduct 900 office compliance checks each year. <p>The Bureau also established a Regulatory Compliance Team to bring illegal operators into compliance.</p>



Resolved

2016 Recommendations

2020 Auditor's Status Update

Determine if 50 cents per ride is appropriate to recover regulation costs as part of the annual fee-setting.

The Bureau projects a budget shortfall in four to five years and says Portland's regulatory fee is among the lowest in the country. The Bureau did not identify fee changes.

Educate companies about the data required and take enforcement action against companies that don't provide it.

Uber and Lyft have not reported all data to the City as required by City Code since 2017; companies were not breaking out rides canceled by the company or driver versus canceled by the customer. When companies or drivers cancel rides in a pattern, this could lead to disparate service. The Bureau reached out to Uber and Lyft in February 2020 to get all required data.

Smaller taxicab companies still did not have the systems to report on unfulfilled rides and wait times. The Bureau contracted to provide small business development services for these companies. The Bureau has opted not to pursue enforcement against small companies.

Ensure that companies' self-reported data is accurate and complete. Accurate data is needed to collect fees and to measure service levels.

Some taxicab companies still reported incomplete data to the City. The Bureau is providing technical assistance to improve data collection and said smaller companies are making progress.

Analyze data regularly for service levels and disparities.

The Bureau is using a new database to collect ride data and says its data analysis shows that all areas of the city are served and wait time averages are low. The Bureau continues to review data for wheelchair-accessible rides internally. No in-depth analysis of service disparities has been done since 2015 and concerns about long wait times for wheelchair accessible service persist.

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