

Sent via email to: [minister.mto@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.mto@ontario.ca)

May 13, 2026

The Honourable Prabmeet Sarkaria  
Minister of Transportation  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor, 777 Bay Street  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1Z8

Dear Minister Sarkaria,

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and its members are committed to reducing regulatory barriers and expanding transportation options across Ontario. We support the Northlander Rideshare Pilot that was announced as part of Bill 98, *Building Homes and Improving Transportation Act*.

Recognizing that the goal of this pilot is to inform potential province-wide regulation of rideshare services in the future, AMO has three recommendations that reflect input from our members from across the province. These recommendations, which focus on the principles of coordination, fairness and clarity, have been shared with Ministry staff and apply to both the proposed pilot and any future regional or province-wide expansion.

1. Coordinate with existing methods of transportation including municipal transit.
2. Ensure the framework sets a level playing field for rideshare companies and local taxi companies.
3. Provide clarity that compliance and enforcement will be led by the Province.

We applaud the Province for working to improve first and last-mile connectivity challenges along the Northlander corridor, and the consultative and measured approach to this regulatory reform intended to expand transportation options across Ontario.

**Recommendation 1: Coordinate with existing methods of transportation including municipal transit.**

We support the goal of the Northlander rideshare pilot to provide Ontarians with more local transportation options – first along this corridor, and ultimately across the province. To deliver this outcome, we recommend your government work closely with municipalities and the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission to ensure rideshare services complement existing transportation options – in particular, municipal transit services.

Municipalities along the Northlander corridor are concerned about overnight arrival and departure times. These times often fall outside of existing transit and taxi operating hours and make it difficult for passengers to access local transportation options. We encourage the Province to consider how to coordinate last-mile services, including rideshare, to ensure there is coverage outside of normal operating hours. Without this

coordination, there is a risk that rideshare will instead operate only during the day, competing with and potentially undermining the viability of existing local services.

At the same time, municipalities are optimistic about opportunities for rideshare to unlock innovative approaches to public transit. Some communities even use rideshare services as a cost-effective alternative where ridership is not high enough to justify traditional transit services. Provincial regulation can help provide a baseline regulatory framework that makes it easier for municipalities to adopt this type of arrangement without creating a patchwork of rules in their communities and across the province.

**Recommendation 2: Ensure the framework sets a level playing field for rideshare companies and local taxi companies.**

We appreciate the pilot excluding municipalities that already regulate rideshare services and provides clarity that the provincial regulation will take the place of any existing local by-laws. Municipalities are comfortable with the Province taking responsibility for rideshare regulation. This approach, however, will create separate rules for rideshare and the taxi services that municipalities regulate. Municipalities are concerned that if a rideshare regulation creates a preferential operating environment it could:

- increase pressure for the de-regulation of taxis, resulting in less oversight and reduced safety for passengers and operators, and
- result in the loss of local taxi services as drivers move to a less restrictive, or lower cost regulatory regime, leading to fewer local transportation options.

Inconsistent regulations that could create an uneven playing field include requirements to provide access to accessible vehicles, a limited number of taxi licenses, and safety features like in-vehicle cameras. Municipalities are also concerned that the use of dynamic pricing including surge pricing, which is prohibited for taxi services could create affordability barriers, leaving passengers unable to access transportation when arriving at Northlander stations late at night, or in inclement weather.

Finally, while rideshare drivers are considered independent contractors, rideshare companies are predominantly international companies headquartered and domiciled in the United States. Creating a preferential operating environment for foreign companies over existing locally owned taxi businesses would be inconsistent with the Province's recent Buy Ontario initiatives which municipalities support.

**Recommendation 3: Provide clarity that monitoring and enforcement will be led by the Province.**

We understand the pilot regulation will include requirements for rideshare companies, drivers and vehicles, and the onus to demonstrate compliance falls on rideshare companies. However, municipalities are concerned that the proposed framework does not provide clarity about oversight, specifically, who is responsible for ongoing monitoring and enforcement of the rules during the pilot.

Municipalities with rideshare by-laws currently provide oversight and enforcement – activities that are funded through the collection of licensing fees. We understand that during the pilot these fees will instead be paid to the Ministry, redirecting the revenue municipalities need for enforcement. In communities that are not already licensing rideshare operators, requiring local enforcement would create a new, unfunded mandate.

To address these concerns, we recommend the regulation clearly specify that the Province will lead enforcement and include a process for reporting non-compliance.

## **Conclusion**

AMO supports this rideshare pilot as an input into decisions on a province-wide rideshare regulatory framework. The right pilot and province-wide framework will deliver coordinated and fair oversight of rideshare and other transportation options like transit and taxi services. Applying the lessons learned from this pilot to a province-wide rideshare regulatory framework requires additional consultation. This will ensure the province-wide framework meets the needs of all communities, not just those along the Northlander corridor. AMO looks forward to continuing to work with you to support the expansion of transportation options across the province.

Sincerely,



Robin Jones  
AMO President  
Mayor of the Village of Westport

cc: The Honourable Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Bruce Macgregor, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Transportation  
Martha Greenberg, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing