

News

El Paso taxi drivers vs. Uber: How the city plans on getting involved

Sixty airport taxi drivers signed a petition requesting council get involved.

By:

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taxi drivers v uber

EL PASO, Texas - Uber -- it's the way of the future. More and more young people are opting to call a driver through a mobile app. But at city council Tuesday, traditional taxi drivers are fighting for their turf.

"Uber's mission is to go to every major city in the world and roll out an efficient convenient elegant transportation system," said American entrepreneur Travis Kalanick, who employs glossy, sleek marketing to promote his latest venture -- Uber.

And it's working. Forbes reports the little over four-year-old mobile ride service is valued at \$1 billion. Cities across the globe have had to deal with this burgeoning industry. Protesters in Mexico, Paris and New York and more claiming Uber is stealing their passengers and livelihood.

In El Paso, the protest is much calmer with 60 airport taxi drivers signing a petition requesting council get involved in the so-called "invasion."

"How can we be competitive with the Ubers?," said taxi driver Jorge Delgado.

Delgado said registered taxi drivers in the city have to pay an average of \$8,000 in city fees, such as permits and background checks, just to be in business. The cost is then passed on to the passenger, making Uber's is less expensive alternative. By not following these regulations, Uber is in violation of city ordinance. But Uber can go unpunished because it's an internet company, can cannot currently be regulated the same as transportation companies.

"We need to make the playing field level, we need to also issue regulations for Uber," said Rep. Emma Acosta, whose district includes the El Paso International Airport.

Council was receptive to the plight of these traditional taxi drivers, but admits everyone could evolve.

"I think taxi drivers need to start coming into the 21st century," Acosta said.

Acosta said taxi drivers would benefit from mobile apps, which she plans on discussing, including the need to regulate Uber, at next week's city council meeting.



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