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## Cities mull road map to invite Uber back to Broward



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(Mike Slaughter / Sun Sentinel)  
By [Lisa J. Huriash](#) and [Brittany Wallman](#) Sun Sentinel

Some Broward cities are plotting a route to bypass county rules and form a network to allow controversial car service company Uber to operate seamlessly in certain areas.

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business. Other cities talking about joining the coalition include Sunrise, Weston and Coral Springs.

After sparring with county commissioners, Uber announced it will pull out of Broward at the end of this month, frustrated by what it said were some of the most "onerous" and "hostile" regulations in America.



Kiar to county attorney: Let's leave Uber alone

"Uber provides a fantastic service providing convenience, safety and a reasonable alternative for transportation," Udine said.

Uber's drivers use personal vehicles, and are connected to passengers via a smartphone based app. Customers register credit card information, order a ride and pay by phone.

Uber has objected to the county registering drivers, checking backgrounds and fingerprinting them.

Uber has an adoring fan base in Broward, and local leaders have been inundated with messages of support.

"Some nasty, man," said Coral Springs Vice Mayor Larry Vignola. "I've never been in an Uber that wasn't clean. Some of them have bottles of water in there. They are overly polite. I think it's a higher level of service for a cheaper cost."

Vignola called a traditional cab to ferry his wife and daughters to the airport. It never showed.

"She ended up missing her flight," he complained. "They say, 'We'll be there in 15 minutes.' You call back, they say 15 more minutes. I understand the county's point of view, but we feel like it's something our residents want and we want them to have that opportunity."

Uber spokesman Bill Gibbons embraced the coalition concept.

"It's encouraging to see these leaders stand up on behalf of their constituents and advocate for ride-hailing regulation that could secure those benefits for their cities," he said. "Through their leadership, we hope to find a workable solution that creates a permanent home for Uber in their communities."

Others question the practicality of a renegade coalition. Even with a network of cities, the county runs Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport and Port Everglades, two prime locations from which to call a car service, but where Uber wouldn't be allowed to operate.

Weston's city attorney has researched the issue and decided the city can legally regulate the driving service.

Still, Weston Mayor Dan Stermer said his City Commission will pass on the coalition concept until the County Commission resolves the issue. If it doesn't, Weston could allow Uber on the road within city limits.

"For those of us who are out west, having taxis available in a reasonable amount of time is not easy," he said. He said some estimates have Uber making 1,000 trips a week in and out of the city.

"They could be going to Sawgrass Mills mall for all I know," he said. "They could be going to Cleveland Clinic. If you live in Fort Lauderdale you can generally find a taxi. You can't do that in Weston."

**Broward County** Mayor Tim Ryan said attorneys for the county and the cities disagree about whether cities have the authority to regulate

drivers-for-hire. But he's not sure the county would intervene if cities invited Uber within their limits.

"If Uber goes from one city to another city where they're authorized to operate," Ryan said. "I don't yet know whether the county would want to involve itself in that."

Of the 31 cities, only Fort Lauderdale regulates taxis. But the city has not passed regulations specifically tailored to "transportation network companies" like Uber and Lyft.

Broward in April became one of only about 50 jurisdictions in America legalizing the Uber business model and recognizing it as different than a traditional taxi. But Uber refused to comply with the requirements attached to that recognition.

**Broward County** commissioners are on summer break until Aug. 11. When they reconvene, they could change the new laws to appease the ride-hailing companies Uber and Lyft.

But Ryan said he's not sure whether they will. In the past, he said Uber held "vague positions" about what it wanted.

"They want one item, and then when you give it to them, they want something else," he said.

Sunrise Mayor Mike Ryan said his city wants to support the county, "but if they can't [reach an agreement] and it goes south ... the cities will begin working together to allow transportation to catch up with the modern age," he vowed.