

Background:

Administration, with the support of the LTAC, undertook a two-phased Accessible Taxi Review, which looked at options to improve customer service for individuals using on-demand accessible taxis and to reduce the financial burden for Accessible Taxi Plate Licence (ATPL) owners and drivers. Phase 1 included a best practice review and current state data analysis for the industry. This was received by Council for information on 2016 February 22. Phase 2 included a detailed options analysis and significant engagement with accessible taxi users and the taxi industry, resulting in three options being presented to Council on 2016 December 19: Option 1: Broker Accountability Model; Option 2: Subsidization/Incentive Model and Option 3: Status Quo.

Option 1: Broker Accountability Model – Administration’s Recommendation

This option allows taxi companies to have greater control over Accessible Taxi Plate Licences (ATPLs) allowing them to be responsible and accountable for accessible service.

Possible Implementation Ideas

- Current ATPL holders would be provided the option to transfer to a regular Taxi Plate Licence (TPL). Transferable ATPLs would be traded for transferable TPLs and non-transferable ATPLs would be traded for non-transferable TPLs.
- ATPLs would be offered to taxi brokers along with 2 non-transferable TPLs.
- Performance metric requirements would be in place to ensure that service levels are equal for accessible and regular service. Penalties in place for failing to provide equal service.
- TNCs would be required to provide accessible service, allowed to contract with other service providers.
- Transition strategy would be developed to ensure service levels would not be disrupted while moving to a new system.
- TNCs would also be required to provide accessible service and would be permitted to enter into agreements with other service providers to ensure that service levels are met.

Advantages

- Transitions the responsibility for the provision of accessible taxi service from the individual (the TPL owner) to the brokerage.
- Allows brokerages to have more control over accessible service, ensuring that accessible taxis are available and distributed geographically in a way that ensures reasonably comparable dispatch response times.
- Providing regular TPLs (2 TPLs for every 1 ATPL) to brokers provides additional revenue to offset the increased operating costs of ATPLs.

Disadvantages

- Increased enforcement efforts to focus on ensuring that brokerages provide equal performance metrics for accessible service.
- Does not provide a financial benefit to the individual drivers who have been providing accessible service up to now, except the opportunity to no longer operate an accessible taxi.

- Potential for current ATPL holders to have difficulty selling an accessible taxi if they want to switch to a regular TPL.
- May result in an oversupply of taxis; however, the cost associated with accessible taxis would reduce the likelihood of this.

Engagement Outcomes

- Brokers and accessible TPL owners and drivers were generally in support of this option.
- LTAC provided their support and endorsed this option at their 2016 November 18 meeting.

Option 2: Subsidization/Incentive Model

This option provides a subsidy for drivers of accessible taxis when they provide accessible trips. This should improve accessible customer service while reducing financial burden for accessible taxi drivers.

Possible Implementation Ideas

- An “accessible per-trip fee” (\$0.10) will be added to each taxi/TNC trip taken.
- Drivers (taxi and TNC) will pay the accessible fee (number of trips multiplied by per-trip fee) at time of licence renewal.
- The funds collected will be redistributed to those drivers based on the number of wheelchair trips provided (estimated to be approximately \$40/trip).

Advantages

- Provides a financial incentive for accessible drivers to seek out wheelchair accessible trips, which is expected to improve dispatch response times and customer service.
- Reduces some of the financial burden experienced by accessible taxi drivers.

Disadvantages

- Does not provide any financial support for the initial costs paid by the ATPL holder to install the wheelchair ramp.
- Since each accessible taxi takes an average of 9 accessible trips per month, the financial incentive would not cover a substantial portion of the increased costs associated with accessible vehicles.

Engagement Results

- Drivers of regular taxis were not in support of this option, as they did not want to pay the “accessible per-trip fee,” or have it added to the meter.
- Accessible drivers showed some support, although they identified that the model would likely not cover all of the increased costs associated with the wheelchair accessible van.
- Mixed feedback from brokers on this option.

Option 3: Status Quo

This option maintains the existing accessible taxi model, with the requirement that 11 per cent of the taxi fleet be ATPLs.

Possible Implementation Ideas

- Maintain the existing accessible taxi system.
- Await the results of the accessible transportation policy review between Calgary Transit Access and Livery Transport Services.

Advantages

- No additional administrative costs.

Disadvantages

- Financial burden will still exist for ATPL holders and drivers.
- Customer service will likely not improve in the near future.

Engagement Results

- Accessible drivers and customers have indicated that the current system needs to be improved.