

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION SCOPING REPORT (REVISED)

SUMMARY

In 2016, an estimated 7 million taxi trips were delivered to Calgarians. Of the 7 million taxi trips, an estimated 20,000 were for on-demand accessible taxi service. On-demand accessible taxi trips equal 0.025 per cent of total taxi trip requests. Administration, Livery Transport Advisory Committee (LTAC) and Calgary Transit Access (CTA) have collaborated on opportunities to improve customer service for individuals using on-demand accessible taxis and to reduce the financial burden for Accessible Taxi Plate Licence (ATPL) holders.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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 ATPL holders. 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 (Attachment 1).

At the 2016 December 19 meeting, Council referred all three options back to Administration, directing the undertaking of "...an accessible transportation policy scoping Report between Calgary Transit Access and Livery Transport Services which:

1. Addresses the immediate impact of Transportation Network Companies operations on the Accessible Taxi system;
2. Explores opportunities to collaborate on service delivery for the accessible taxi community;
3. Develops potential short-term fixes for the situation; and
4. Considers the options presented in Attachment 2.

And further, that the Administration Report back to Council no later than 2017 Q1.

Throughout Phase 3 of the Accessible Taxi Review, LTAC has been engaged and informed through regular project updates, including participating in the 2017 January 25 LTAC discussion of LTAC2017-02 (KHAN SUBMISSION – ACCESSIBLE VANS AND BUSINESS) and most recently, at the 2017 February 02, Plate Utilization Subcommittee meeting to brainstorm new and unique opportunities for improving the accessible taxi system. Through stakeholder engagement and research the team is focussed on improving customer service for individuals using on-demand accessible service and finding solutions to reduce the financial burden for ATPL holders.

INVESTIGATION

Phase 3 of the Accessible Taxi Review continues to try to find solutions to improve customer service for accessible customers and reduce the financial burden on ATPL holders and drivers. It also seeks to address the immediate impacts that TNCs may have on the accessible transportation system and explore opportunities to collaborate with CTA on service delivery for the accessible taxi community.

Some key facts about on-demand accessible service in Calgary:

- Currently all ATPLs are held by individual drivers. Of the 189 total ATPLs, 100 were issued prior to 2012 and are transferrable between individuals. The remaining 89 are

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non-transferrable and must be surrendered to The City if the holder chooses to leave the industry.

- The average number of accessible trips for an accessible driver is about 2 per week/8 per month.
- ATPLs are more or less evenly distributed between the two largest brokers in Calgary.
- The estimated average deadhead distance for accessible taxi trips is 4.7 km, compared to 2.3 km for all taxi trips.
- If accessible taxis were dispatched centrally, the estimated average deadhead distance would be 2.8 km.
- An accessible taxi costs approximately \$8,000 more per year to operate than a standard taxi including significant maintenance costs for brakes, oil changes and suspension replacements associated with a heavier ramp-equipped vehicle. Capital costs are also estimated at \$15,000 more for the wheelchair ramp installation.
- Through extensive engagement, drivers have told administration that they find it very difficult to earn enough money to cover the additional costs associated with operating an accessible taxi.
- Administration has made efforts to reduce the financial burden on ATPL holders by reducing annual plate licence fees from \$877 to \$220.

Opportunity Analysis

LTS and CTA are committed to working together to explore policy changes, processes, interfaces, performance standards, and reporting mechanisms. This exploration will include discussions with industry to identify technologies available at taxi companies and manual work required to dispatch, review and assessment of performance standards and enforcement impacts. Additional time is required for LTS and CTA to thoroughly assess potential opportunities for collaboration.

Administration, CTA and the LTAC Plate Utilization Subcommittee, which includes one member from the Advisory Committee on Accessibility (ACA), have worked together to identify opportunities to improve on-demand accessible taxi service for Calgarians. The opportunities include short term and long term strategies that could work independently or collectively. Administration is eager to share these opportunities with LTAC to gather expert advice from the taxi, limousine and ridesharing industries, citizens, and special-interest groups. LTAC's feedback will be used in Administration's recommendations regarding on-demand accessible taxi service to Council. These options are over and above the three options presented to Council on 2016 December 19 (Attachment 1). A summary of these opportunities is provided below.

Opportunity 1: Eliminate ATPL fees (Q2 2017 implementation):

An opportunity to further reduce the financial burden on ATPL holders can be achieved quickly through a reduction of plate licence fees from \$220 to \$0. This would require a bylaw change no later than 2017 April 3 so that required system changes can be implemented in time for the annual June plate renewal.

Opportunity 2: Reclassify ATPLs (number to be determined) to TPLs (Q1 2018 implementation):

In 2010, the Livery Transport Advisory Committee (LTAC) selected Hara Associates to undertake an assessment of services and make recommendations on Taxi Supply Demand

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Ratio and accessible vehicle ratios. At that time the industry included 100 wheelchair accessible taxis, which was 7.1 per cent of the total taxi fleet. Hara's report recommended Calgary achieve an 11 per cent target for on demand accessible taxis. This was anticipated to achieve "Reasonable Comparability," meaning all trip requests would be served and most trips would be served within a similar timeframe to regular taxi requests. The Taxi Supply Demand Ratio is still utilized to guide annual adjustments on the number of regular and accessible taxi licences. Council revised the formula in 2014 September which is: $15.3 \times \text{Total Population under age 65} + 22.0 \times \text{Total Population age 65+}$.

In 2012, Council approved the recommendation that all taxis be equipped with an Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) system which utilizes Global Positioning System (GPS) that is capable of immediately transmitting in an electronic format taxi trip data. Furthermore, in 2012, Council also approved the recommendation that Taxi Plate Licences (TPL) limits be based on a customer service standard that 85 per cent of dispatch calls arrive within 15 minutes and 77 per cent of accessible dispatch calls arrive within 15 minutes.

Analysis of the taxi trip data indicates that 11 per cent of ATPLs results in "Reasonable Comparability". For 2016, it is estimated that wheelchair accessible taxis arrive within 15 minutes 79 per cent of the time. Considering the improved deadhead times if wheelchair taxi trips were dispatched centrally (as per Opportunity 3), LTAC could consider reducing the 11 per cent target for ATPLs by half and still maintain 79 per cent within 15 minutes customer service for individuals using on-demand accessible taxis. This would reduce the overall financial burden for ATPL holders and drivers. The question of which ATPLs to transfer to TPLs is open for discussion.

Opportunity 3: City selected on-demand accessible broker (RFP awarded - Q3 2017; Accessible broker operational – Q1 2018) this could be a standalone option or include option 2, too:

In the past, taxi drivers have been reluctant to drive across the city to pick up on-demand accessible customers because they lose money in transit, this is called 'dead heading'. This opportunity relies on the expertise of CTA to help LTS procure an on-demand accessible broker to respond to all on-demand accessible requests. This process would improve customer service because all accessible drivers would be using the same GPS vehicle location technology that allows the on-demand accessible broker to dispatch the closest vehicle – drastically improving wait times. In addition, the on-demand accessible broker could provide a rewards or incentive program to compensate the driver for the distance travelled to a passenger's pick up location – this will prevent trip refusals and motivate drivers to provide exceptional service.

Additional considerations for Opportunity 3 include:

- All ATPL holders would be required to affiliate with a dedicated on-demand accessible brokerage.
- New and/or existing brokers could apply to become the on-demand accessible broker through the City-approved RFP process
- LTS would work with CTA to ensure City synergies and reap the benefits of CTA's lessons learned
- The on-demand accessible broker could also work with a TNC provider to provide accessible service
- Administration/LTAC could schedule quarterly focus group with accessible customers to continue to improve the service

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Opportunity 4: Subsidization model tied to no trip refusals (2018):

This opportunity considers providing a financial incentive to ATPL holders tied to trip refusals to encourage timely responses to on-demand accessible taxi trips. LTAC has indicated that they would like Council to consider mill rate support when considering funding a subsidization model. In the absence of mill rate support, the addition of a surcharge to all taxi trips remains an option (similar to the funds collection process outlined in the Subsidization/Incentive Model outlined in Attachment 1). This option would reimburse drivers who have an exceptional record with little to no trip refusals.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND RESEARCH CONDUCTED

Significant stakeholder engagement occurred throughout Phase One and Phase Two of the Accessible Taxi Review. Accessible taxi users were engaged through focus groups and a qualitative survey. Administration worked with Leger Research on a survey for accessible taxi users. The response rate was low; however, some qualitative feedback was received. In general, the results showed that users surveyed were generally satisfied with accessible taxis; however, they noted that improvements could be made in terms of reducing wait times for taxis, more certainty from dispatch about expected wait times and easing the financial burden on taxi drivers to ensure that the service continues. Taxi Companies and TNCs were engaged through in-person meetings to discuss potential options and ideas for implementation. Some ATPL holders participated in an in-person survey at licence renewal to discuss their perspectives on the industry and to hear ideas on how to improve the system. As options were developed, a driver Open House was held on 2016 August 11 to solicit additional feedback on proposed solutions. As well, updates and options regarding the Accessible Taxi Review were presented to LTAC six (6) times with opportunity for industry and citizens to provide input throughout 2016. In addition, Administration met with the LTAC Plate Utilization Subcommittee on Thursday, 2017 February 2 to discuss potential solutions to accommodate accessible customers and industry (Attachment 3). Finally, Administration is scheduled to present to the ACA on 2017 February 16. ACA's feedback on the potential accessible options will be included in the Council report.

CURRENT AND FUTURE FINANCIAL IMPACTS

Several of the proposed options have financial implications and these will be considered in the final recommendations presented to Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LTAC TO CONSIDER

That LTAC support Administration's recommendation to reduce the annual ATPL fees from \$220 to \$0, which will be presented to Council on 2017 March 20, and that LTAC provide input to Administration into other opportunities for further scoping, including:

1. Reclassifying ATPLs (number of ATPLs TBD) to TPLs
2. Developing a subsidy tied to no trip refusals
3. Other options identified in the attachments to this report.

SUBMISSION PRESENTED BY:

Carissa Vescio, Business Strategist, Calgary Community Standards

ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1: Phase 2: Accessible Taxi Review Update

Attachment 2: Phase 3: Accessible Taxi Review Update – Options Comparison

Attachment 3: Minutes of 2017 Feb 2 LTAC Plate Utilization Subcommittee – UNCONFIRMED