

Accessible Taxi Review – Phase 1 Findings

Purpose

As a means of assessing and enhancing accessible service in Calgary, Administration in conjunction with TLAC launched a two phase Accessible Taxi Review. Phase 1 of the review is now completed and includes a review of the current state of Calgary's accessible taxi system along with key best practice learnings from other jurisdictions.

Phase 1 Findings

Best Practice Review

Following a review of other accessible taxi systems in North America, a number of common themes and findings have been identified which will inform enhancements to the accessible taxi system, including:

Cost to run accessible taxis are higher than those of conventional taxis

- Accessible taxicabs cost more to purchase and operate. Historically, drivers/brokers have not invested in wheelchair-accessible vehicles in great numbers because they did not find it economical to do so.
- This is a result of high costs associated with purchasing a van and installing an after-market wheelchair lift, which equates to start-up costs of approximately \$21,000 more than a non-accessible vehicle. Ongoing maintenance and repair costs are increased with larger, heavier accessible taxis and further compounding the challenge are fuel efficiency costs which are approximately \$3,000 more annually than non-accessible taxis.

Many jurisdictions are advocating for an increased accessible taxi fleet

- In both Canada and the U.S., there is an increased acknowledgment of the importance of enhancing accessible taxi service. Taxis represent an important form of transportation for people with disabilities, particularly for on demand service.
- To address the need for increased accessible taxis, many Canadian and U.S. jurisdictions are or have already increased the percentage of accessible taxis within their fleet.
- The shift towards TNCs has led many jurisdictions to explore alternate means of supporting accessible service, including incentive programs.
- Many jurisdictions use monitoring systems to ensure accessible taxi service delivery standards are met.

Technology upgrades are enhancing ease of accessible taxi access

- To provide increased service to accessible taxi users many taxi service providers have enhanced their services by developing apps which accessible taxi users can utilize to book accessible taxi trips.
- While an app is not the solution for all users it can provide greater access and availability to on-demand accessible taxi service.

Advisory committees play a key role in advancing accessible taxi goals

- The utilization of advisory committees, such as the Advisory Committee on Accessibility (ACA) in Calgary, is widespread throughout Canada and the United States and has been key to the advancement of accessible taxi service.

Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) are influencing accessible taxi service

- The introduction of TNCs is influencing the taxi industry and its ability to deliver regulated services, as there are typically limited accessible options within TNC service models and they act as a draw, pulling drivers away from accessible service delivery.

Calgary Livery Data Findings – Current State

Dispatch Response Times

- Room for improvement with respect to accessible taxi response times
- Dispatch response times are measured from the time a call is dispatched to the taxi, to the time the taxi arrives and turns the meter on.
- Current target time for regular (non-accessible taxis) involve 85 per cent of trips arriving within 15 minutes. Accessible taxis have a target of 77 per cent of trips arriving within the same 15 minute window.
- The 2015 data collected shows on average, 93 per cent of regular trips met the established target while accessible taxi service recorded on average a 53 per cent on target percentage.
- The discrepancy in response times can be attributed to several factors such as the geographical spread of accessible taxis, boarding times for wheelchair users, etc.
- By factoring in load time and extending the 'on-time' target to 20 minutes accessible taxi response moves to 69 per cent on average; however, this is still 8 per cent below the target.

Calgary Taxi Fleet Composition

- Council mandated that 11 per cent of Taxi Plate Licences (TPLs) be released as Accessible plates in order to meet the needs of Calgarians who require accessible service.
- Currently 189 of 1659 TPLs are designated accessible plates meeting the current 11 per cent Council target.

Accessible Taxi Trips Provided

- Of the one million accessible trips provided by all types of accessible transport (paratransit and on-demand service), accessible taxis provide approximately 18,500 trips annually, approximately 2 per cent.
- On average approximately 9-10 accessible taxi trips are provided monthly per vehicle.

Next Steps - Phase 2

Phase 2 of the accessible review will build upon the best practice findings from other jurisdictions; current state Calgary research; and engagement with internal and external stakeholders, including the general public, TLAC, TNCs, the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and internal partners such as Access Calgary.

Administration will report back on Phase 2 of the review no later than 2016 Q4, with the findings of the stakeholder engagement, and the recommendations on improving the accessible taxi service in Calgary, in alignment with the 2016 Livery Transport Bylaw amendments.