

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

Engagement Overview

Goals:

- To understand challenges facing the taxi industry and gather feedback on the current regulated taxi meter rate to inform proposed amendments to the Livery Transport Bylaw 20M2021.

Approach:

- Administration conducted stakeholder engagement with taxi drivers and taxi brokers in 2022 March through virtual and in-person engagement sessions, and through a survey made available to taxi drivers online and in hard copy format.
- Engagement opportunities were communicated to over **5,000 industry stakeholders** via an email industry bulletin that was made available in multiple languages including **Amharic, Arabic, English, Hindi, Punjabi, Somali and Urdu**.
- The survey was open from 2022 March 17 to March 31 and was available online or in hard copy format from the Livery Transport Services office or from Livery Inspectors on the road. The survey received **496 completed responses, 730 partial responses and 1,434 views**.
- Virtual meetings were held with representatives of **all five taxi brokerages** operating in Calgary from 2022 March 10 to March 15 and an in-person engagement session was held with taxi drivers on 2022 March 28 at the City of Calgary Livery Transport Services office.

What We Asked

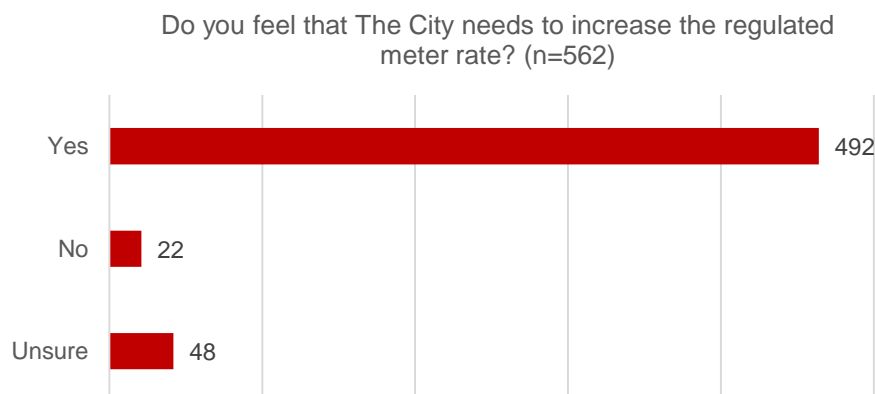
The survey asked respondents whether they feel The City needs to increase the regulated taxi meter rate. Respondents who answered yes were asked to explain why they feel that way.

Facilitators in virtual and in-person engagement sessions asked participants to describe challenges the taxi industry is facing with respect to rising costs and asked for suggestions on how to address those challenges.

What We Heard

Survey:

A total of **562 responses** were received for the survey question about meter rates with **88 per cent** of respondents agreeing that The City should increase the regulated meter rate. Results are displayed in the following chart:



Of those who answered yes, reasons provided include (*verbatim quotes*):

- *Taxi drivers do not make enough money to sustain their families.*
- *Both drop rate and km rate because fuel prices and maintenance costs are going way too high as compared to last year.*
- *Even if we drive average 200 km we are spending 15-20 \$ extra on fuel doesn't matter we make anything or not.*
- *Gasoline price is going up just like Uber need to increase meter. Reasonable.*
- *Our gas expenses is almost 50% up now. The brokers are increased the rent. It is very hard to survive as a taxi driver.*
- *Both the reason for both is every single day even if we drive average 200 km we are spending 15-20 \$ extra on fuel doesn't matter we make anything or not.*
- *Connected to inflation very hardly to live in taxi incomes now.*
- *At least cover our \$15 per day gas which we pay extra.*
- *City of Calgary needs to increase the initial meter start price to \$5 so at least driver can cover the gas expenses which are double than previous year now a days.*
- *Because gas price are very high we don't make any money for self.*
- *Now these days we have less ridership and gas price day by day increase. If taxi rates increase then we guys survive and feed the family.*
- *As a driver I need city to support taxi drivers in hard times*

Virtual Engagement Sessions:

Key feedback collected from taxi brokers includes:

- It has become increasingly difficult for drivers to earn a fair wage; costs are increasing for fuel, car maintenance, groceries, housing, insurance, etc.
- Taxi drivers who operate wheelchair accessible vehicles are spending \$110 per day on fuel.
- Operating costs for brokerages are increasing due to the provincial Insurance Amendment Act (Direct Compensation for Property Damage) which has doubled fleet insurance rates. Property taxes and wage increases to staff have also gone up.
- Challenging to run a business when costs are escalating and the customer base and number of drivers coming back after the COVID-19 pandemic are going down.
- A taxi meter rate increase is required; more support for applying it to the kilometer rate only to decrease sticker shock for customers if the initial drop rate increases, particularly for trips from the Calgary Airport where an additional \$5 airport fee is charged on top of the \$3.90 drop rate.
- Suggested meter rate increase between 5-20 per cent.
- Concern that an increase greater than 10 per cent would cause customers to seek out other transportation options.
- Want to be able to continue having the ability to set lower rates than the regulated rate.
- Meter rate should be looked at by The City every year or ever two years rather than waiting several years and having to do a big increase.

How Feedback Informed the Recommendation

Stakeholder feedback from the survey and engagement sessions was a key factor behind Administration's recommendation to amend the Livery Transport Bylaw 20M2021 to increase the regulated taxi meter rate by 15 per cent based on the Taxi Cost Index calculation. Administration is not recommending any change to the bylaw provision allowing taxi brokers to set lower rates if they choose.