

TLAC RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING TAXI SAFETY PARTITIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council has requested that the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee (TLAC) make a recommendation as to whether or not to mandate taxi safety partitions within the Calgary livery system.

A comprehensive review of partitions as a safety feature found a lack of research supporting their effectiveness along with best practice findings emphasizing the superiority of security cameras over the safety partition approach.

These findings are further supported by Calgary Police Service data; which highlights a reduction in assaults and robberies involving taxis in both 2012 and 2013, coinciding with the voluntary installation of security cameras in taxis in 2012, and subsequent mandatory installation in 2013. Based on these crime statistics, best practice research along with driver engagement, TLAC is recommending against mandating taxi safety partitions.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION

That the SPC on Transportation & Transit recommends that Council receive this report for information.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPC ON TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT, DATED 2014 JULY 18:

That the Administration Recommendations contained in Report TT2014-0562 be approved.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

At the 2013 June 24 Regular Meeting of Council through Report TT2013-0497, Council gave three readings to Bylaw 33M2013, Being a Bylaw of The City of Calgary to Amend Bylaw 6m2007, The Livery Transport Bylaw, mandating that all taxis be equipped with security cameras capable of capturing images of all occupants of a taxi at all hours of the day or night.

At the 2012 July 30 Regular Meeting of Council of through Report C2012-0459, Council adopted the TLAC recommendations to:

1. Direct Administration to prepare bylaw amendments to the Livery Transport Bylaw 6M2007 mandating the installation of in car security cameras by 2013 July 01; and
2. Direct TLAC to report to the SPC on Transportation and Transit by 2014 July with final recommendations on the mandatory installation of taxi safety partitions.

At the 2011 December 19 Regular Meeting of Council through an item of Urgent Business called *Improving Late Night Transportation Options in Response to Alberta's Bill 26*, Council directed TLAC to work with City Administration to consider the mandatory implementation of safety shields as a means of alleviating driver safety concerns.

At the 2011 January 10 Combined Meeting of Council through Report LPT2010-74, Council directed TLAC to investigate a Peer Review Study on driver safety and driver partitions/shields

TLAC RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING TAXI SAFETY PARTITIONS

to determine the impact on driver safety in North America and report back through the SPC on LPT no later than 2011 June. This was subsequently deferred by Council through NM2011-16, Taxi Industry and Regulation review.

BACKGROUND

The mandated purpose of TLAC includes providing advice and recommendations to Council to ensure high quality taxi and limousine services and 'to create and maintain a sustainable...industry' as specified in Bylaw 6M2007. The objective is to ensure public safety, service quality and consumer protection for customers and service providers in the livery industry, creating and maintaining a sustainable livery industry that considers the interests of service providers and meets the needs of the travelling public in the city.

Over half of the violent crimes involving taxis occur during peak late night periods, particularly on weekends. This trend has resulted in challenges at times securing appropriate taxi supply during these time periods based on driver safety concerns. As a result, an analysis of the safety implications of taxi safety partitions is focused on two primary areas, 1) addressing driver safety concerns and subsequently 2) increasing the supply of taxis during peak late night periods.

TLAC and Administration continue to work collaboratively to both enhance driver safety and also address peak period taxi shortages from a variety of perspectives, including plate number recommendations, conditioning of licenses and assessing telephone response times.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

A three-pronged approach was utilized to assess the efficacy of taxi partitions on driver safety, including a best practice review, an analysis of Calgary Police Service (CPS) crime statistics and engagement of the taxi driver community itself. With respect to a review of best practice research, these efforts focused on assessing whether or not partitions have been proven to prevent or reduce violent crime in taxis. In particular, TLAC examined the recent work by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) in the United States (U.S.). This research represents the most comprehensive examination of violence prevention in the livery industry, and specifically investigated the effectiveness of taxi partitions versus security cameras on violent crime rates in 26 major U.S. cities. Findings indicated that while there was no difference in violent crime rates for cities with taxi partitions compared with control cities, jurisdictions with cameras experienced a threefold reduction in violent crime against drivers.

In addition to a best practice research review, TLAC analyzed CPS crime data relating to violent crime involving taxi drivers to determine the efficacy of current safety measures already in place. The analysis process revealed that from 2012-2013, the period of time immediately following the voluntary and later mandatory installation of taxi security cameras, a significant reduction in violent crime against taxi drivers occurred. In 2012 for instance, when cameras were brought in on a voluntary basis, this translated into a 12 per cent decrease. Further, in 2013, following the mandatory implementation of cameras, a 17 per cent decrease occurred. In addition, 2013 marked a six year low in terms of violent crime related to taxis. These findings highlighted the significant impact existing safety measures, such as taxi cameras, have had on driver safety, and the extensive collaboration on this issue by all industry stakeholders.

TLAC RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING TAXI SAFETY PARTITIONS

A third source of information which supports the TLAC recommendation involved the engagement of the taxi drivers themselves. A survey conducted in 2012 assessed driver views on the installation of partitions and other safety features such as cameras. Findings from this survey illustrated that 50 per cent of drivers preferred cameras over the 42 per cent preference for safety partitions. It is also important to note that there are no provisions in the Livery Transport Bylaw 6M2007 restricting any person from installing a safety partition; however none have been installed voluntarily to date.

Through the incorporation of best practice research, CPS crime data analysis and the engagement of the taxi driver community, TLAC found that there was insufficient evidence to suggest the effectiveness of safety partitions, subsequently arriving at a recommendation against mandating taxi safety partitions. If despite the current TLAC recommendation, safety partitions were to be considered, it is estimated that \$1.2 million would be required to equip the taxi fleet as a whole, or approximately \$800 per taxi. Additionally, the development of an equipment standards regulation, to address potential liability should the shield cause injury to a driver or passenger in the event of an accident, would also be required.

TLAC is committed to continuous monitoring of safety equipment and advances and will report back with new developments as they arise.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

At the 2014 March 24 regular meeting of TLAC, report TLAC2014-13 Safety Partitions Subcommittee Update was presented, recommending against mandating safety partitions. Members of industry and the public were invited to speak to the recommendation, which was supported by all attendees, and subsequently approved unanimously by TLAC.

Strategic Alignment

This report aligns with Council's Fiscal Plan for Calgary 2012-2014, "Investing in great communities and a vibrant urban fabric."

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

Ensuring there is an adequate supply of taxi services is essential to maintaining a vibrant and productive community. While taxis are used by all segments of society, they are heavily utilized by people with disabilities, enhancing their mobility and reducing social isolation in Calgary communities.

The taxi industry plays a strategic role in the city's economic development while supplementing the use of alternative more environmentally-friendly modes of transportation. It is a vital service for business travelers and tourists, both as a connection to the airport and to key Calgary attractions. It is also a significant means by which business travelers assess the ease of doing business within the city, demonstrating a potential to impact civic economic growth and prosperity.

TLAC RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING TAXI SAFETY PARTITIONS

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

None.

Current and Future Capital Budget:

None.

Risk Assessment

Driver safety is one of the paramount concerns for TLAC. Through the analysis of best practices and key research in the field, safety recommendations are made based on sound evidence and learning's from other jurisdictions. As a result, TLAC is mitigating safety risks for drivers while also enhancing service delivery for the citizens of Calgary.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

A comprehensive review of partitions as a safety feature found a lack of research supporting their effectiveness along with best practice findings emphasizing the superiority of security cameras over the safety partition approach.

These findings are further supported by Calgary Police Service data; which highlights a reduction in assaults and robberies involving taxis in both 2012 and 2013, coinciding with the voluntary installation of security cameras in taxis in 2012, and subsequent mandatory installation in 2013. Based on these crime statistics and best practice research TLAC is recommending against mandating taxi safety partitions at this time.

ATTACHMENT(S)

None.