

Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee 2015 Highlights

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On an annual basis, the Taxi and Limousine Advisory Committee (TLAC) presents highlights to Council from the previous year's accomplishments. Notable achievements for 2015 include extensive public engagement efforts undertaken to better understand citizen needs and expectations, a focus on safety for passengers and drivers, the accommodation of new market entrants and responding to a changing economic climate.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the SPC on Community and Protective Services recommend that Council receive this report for information.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPC ON COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES, DATED 2016 MAY 27:

That the Administration Recommendation contained in Report CPS2016-0434 be approved.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

At the 2015 December 14 regular meeting of Council, TLAC's 2016 work plan was approved, which included plans for a report in 2016 Q2 on accomplishments from 2015.

The TLAC work plan is approved by Council on an annual basis. Previously, at the 2014 December 10 regular meeting of Council, TLAC's 2015 Work Plan (CPS2014-0828) was approved.

BACKGROUND

Through its Terms of Reference, TLAC is mandated to report annually to Council on submissions received and actions taken by the committee.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

In 2015, TLAC and Administration undertook several initiatives to further promote a safe, sustainable and customer service focused livery system. These efforts contributed to increased awareness of citizen needs and expectations regarding transportation options, promoting safety for passengers and drivers, exploring ways to accommodate new market entrants and demonstrating responsiveness to the changing economic climate. A summary of 2015 TLAC Highlights and a full listing of 2015 activities and submissions can be found in the Attachment.

Notable achievements in 2015 include extensive public engagement efforts undertaken through the 2015 Livery Customer Satisfaction Survey, the implementation of the Passenger and Driver Bill of Rights, driver training improvements to support enhanced safety and livery fee adjustments in response to the current economic downturn.

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Increased Awareness of Citizen Needs and Expectations

Research and Engagement with Calgarians

TLAC focused significantly in 2015 on customer service and engagement activities, including gaining an enhanced understanding of citizen needs and expectations regarding the livery system.

TLAC worked with Leger to expand the annual Customer Satisfaction Survey, which included driver and broker input for the first time in 2015. The survey highlighted that citizen satisfaction with the livery system has remained high, with an 87 per cent overall satisfaction rate with livery services. However, feedback from the annual engagement process also illustrates the changing needs and expectations of citizens, including an interest in the use of additional transportation options and a greater comfort level in utilizing online booking systems and smartphone apps. Safety also remains a key concern for Calgarians – research indicates that citizens want safety considerations to be ingrained in livery policies and bylaw amendments. This input is informing livery initiatives and regulation changes moving forward, including efforts to enhance customer service by addressing peak period demand and increasing access for new market entrants.

Accessible Taxi Review

TLAC is continuing to explore and analyze options to increase customer service and availability of accessible taxis. The first phase of this work includes current state analysis, a best practices review and research on existing legislation. The Phase 1 review findings were presented to Council in 2016 February and the final recommendations will be made in 2016 Q4.

Hybrid Vehicle Analysis

TLAC and Administration have focused on enhancing the proportion of hybrid vehicles in the livery fleet over the last several years. The number of hybrid vehicles in Calgary's taxi fleet has increased significantly since 2010. This increase can, in part, be attributed to the awareness efforts of TLAC and Administration, along with the inherent reduced operating costs associated with hybrid vehicles. The expansion of hybrid vehicles in the livery fleet represents a significant step towards enhanced environmental accountability. TLAC and Administration will continue monitoring and reporting on the composition of hybrid vehicles in the livery fleet.

Taxi Stands

In 2015, TLAC considered two reports from Administration about the use of downtown taxi stands. Using GPS and taximeter data, Administration studied how taxi stands were being used and looked at ways to improve on taxi stand locations in the future. This work allows TLAC to fulfill their mandate which includes providing input into ensuring adequate consideration for the orderly movement of taxis and limousines, while accommodating the needs of customers. TLAC, with the support of Livery Transport Services (LTS) will continue to monitor taxi stand utilization to ensure the needs of customers and drivers continue to be met.

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Safety of Passengers and Drivers Passenger and Driver Bill of Rights

As a means of enhancing safety for both passengers and drivers, TLAC in collaboration with Administration implemented the Passenger and Driver Bill of Rights in 2015 September. The Bill of Rights is mandated to be displayed on the back of the front passenger seat in every taxi. In addition, cards and stickers with the information are available, and efforts are underway to create a Braille version. This information increases awareness of the responsibilities and rights of both parties and highlights appropriate standards of conduct, payment practices and traffic safety requirements. The Passenger and Driver Bill of Rights promotes a common understanding between passengers and drivers, each of whom have obligations during the course of a trip. Clearly outlining both parties' roles and responsibilities helps reduce misunderstandings and improves the taxi experience for all participants.

Taxi Driver Training

In 2015, Administration with the support of TLAC operated the Taxi Driver Training program, ensuring drivers received extensive education regarding safety and customer service. In 2015, a number of enhancements have been made to the driver training process. Improvements include the addition of an expanded training module on delivering accessible service, ensuring greater awareness of specific pick up and drop off procedures and associated safety practices. Additional training changes also focused on instituting a new partnership with the Calgary Police Service involving increasing situational awareness for drivers, including the identification of potential threats and proactive strategies to mitigate risk. These enhancements serve to strengthen driver safety practices.

Accommodating New Market Entrants

TLAC's research and engagement efforts throughout 2015 demonstrated that although Calgarians are satisfied with taxi services, they are interested in having more transportation choices, for a lower cost. Addressing peak period demand and protecting the safety of the travelling public continues to be important to Calgarians.

In addition to these efforts, TLAC, through the Plate Utilization Subcommittee, engaged the livery industry and Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) regarding new market entrants. Under Council's direction, LTS and TLAC explored ways to facilitate new participants entering the Calgary market. Several options were explored and analysis resulted in the development of a framework that changes the way The City regulates taxis and limousines, while also accommodating new market entrants. This framework achieves six strategic outcomes: safety, accessibility, reliability, fairness, competition and customer focus. TLAC recommended to Council that a bylaw be developed based on the framework which accommodates TNC operations and enhances citizen choice, while protecting the safety of citizens.

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Demonstrating Responsiveness to the Changing Economic Climate

Traditionally the livery industry is impacted more severely than other sectors of the economy during an economic downturn, as the industry experiences an influx of new drivers laid off in other sectors who view the livery system as a temporary means of earning income. In 2015 for instance, taxi drivers experienced a 23 per cent decrease in trip volumes, impacting driver revenues. TLAC and Administration recognized the importance of responding to these emerging concerns in a timely fashion and moved forward a number of livery fee reductions for 2016 through The City's 2016 Resilience Budget process in September. The fee associated with accessible taxi plate licences, for example, has been reduced from \$877 to \$220 for 2016. These reductions partially mitigate the financial pressures associated with the current economic climate, while also contributing more broadly to The City of Calgary's Economic Resiliency Strategy.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

In addition to the extensive public engagement performed throughout 2015 for the Limousine Regulation Amendments and the Livery Customer Satisfaction Survey, feedback was also solicited from the public on the 2015 Highlights at the 2016 April 15 meeting of TLAC. Stakeholders also have the opportunity year-round to submit written reports for TLAC's consideration in accordance with the TLAC submission procedures as outlined on calgary.ca.

Strategic Alignment

TLAC is mandated through its terms of reference to make an annual submission to Council that includes a report on actions taken and submissions received. A full listing of actions and submissions can be found in the Attachment.

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

TLAC and Administration are committed to providing a safe, sustainable and customer service focused livery system. Additionally, accessible livery service enhances mobility and reduces social isolation for those with disabilities in Calgary communities. Further, the taxi industry serves to facilitate the city's economic development while supporting the use of environmentally-friendly modes of transportation.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget

This report has no anticipated impact on current or future operating budgets.

Current and Future Capital Budget

This report has no anticipated impact on current or future capital budgets.

Risk Assessment

The utilization of industry analysis and Livery Customer Satisfaction Survey results mitigate potential risks and supports TLAC's ongoing efforts to enhance public safety and customer service within the livery industry. Further, Administration, in conjunction with TLAC, engages in ongoing monitoring of the livery industry to proactively identify risks and develop appropriate mitigation strategies.

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REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

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ATTACHMENT(S)

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