

**Summary of Engagement and Communication
with Stakeholders**

Advisory Committee on Accessibility (ACA)

Administration engaged the ACA to solicit feedback on earlier work on 2017 September 14 and on a draft of the proposed framework on 2018 February 15. In addition, ongoing discussions between the ACA Chair and Administration have occurred over the duration of the Accessible Taxi Review. Key input included:

- General disappointment expressed that the concerns of persons with disabilities are not being heard
- Significant frustration expressed over the delay in The City’s decision-making related to its regulatory responsibilities around supporting improvements to accessible taxi service delivery
- General support for implementing an accessible incentive program, with suggestions that late hour service also be incented and rewards for exemplary service be considered
- Discussion about the 22 ATPLs that have been permanently surrendered, where concern was expressed that Council’s mandate for 11 per cent of the total taxi fleet being accessible is currently not being met
- Concern that the proposed Accessible Taxi Central Dispatch would not be considered before 2020 Q2.

Taxi Brokers

Taxi Brokers were engaged for feedback on 2017 December 13, and again through one-one in-person meetings between 2018 January 9 and 22. Key input included:

Criteria-Based Accessible Incentive Program

- For the most part, brokers support implementing an incentive program in which accessible plate holders and drivers would be eligible to receive annual incentives, provided they meet clearly defined criteria.
- One broker suggested that, rather than an annual incentive, drivers receive an immediate bonus for every accessible trip they complete, accounting for costs associated with deadheading.

Data for Evaluating Criteria for Incentive

- Brokers were advised that The City would require additional data from their companies to determine whether drivers achieved the criteria to qualify for an annual incentive program (i.e. refusing dispatched accessible trips).
- Most brokers indicated they could provide the required data through their existing systems, but some acknowledged their administrative costs would increase to support the implementation of the program.

Funding an Incentive

- Administration explored with brokers the option of adding an accessible per trip fee to each taxi/TNC trip, collected along with weekly stand rents, that customers would pay to fund an accessible incentive program. Brokers have varying degrees of concerns. One broker suggested that such a program should be paid for by adding a surcharge to annual licence fees. Others believe that the program should be supported by mill rate and that the cost should not be solely paid for by customers. It was also suggested that TNCs pay for the cost of funding the program as a way of contributing to the delivery of accessible on-demand service. One broker viewed a per trip fee as a tax.
- Most brokers did indicate, however, that their processes could support collecting the accessible per trip fee through weekly stand rent. The fees collected would subsequently be remitted back to The City, who would evaluate and manage the distribution of the incentive to eligible accessible taxi plate holders and drivers.

Central Dispatch

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- Most brokers supported the idea of an accessible central dispatch operated through CTA if the accessible incentive program does not sufficiently improve customer service, and many supported the idea of integrating an accessible dispatch with their dispatch systems. However, one broker who currently has a contract with CTA, did note the administrative costs and the technical challenges associated with integrating his system with CTA, suggesting that other brokers and accessible taxi plate holders should be made aware of these challenges.
- Some brokers also suggested that centralized dispatch should be extended to the entire taxi system to utilize the fleet more efficiently.
- One broker was opposed, suggesting that the centralized system would be in competition with its dispatch, and that the brokerage has a sufficient system in place to dispatch accessible trips.

Broker Accountability Model

- One broker expressed disappointment that Council did not approve this model on 2016 December 19, suggesting that concerns related to accessible taxi service delivery would have been resolved had it been implemented.
- Another broker, while in support of this model at the time it was proposed, acknowledged that he would not support it now given the impacts related to the introduction of TNCs into the livery industry.

Taxi Drivers – Regular Plates

Two Engagement Sessions for taxi drivers were held on 2018 Feb 7, and 16. Methods for advertising the sessions included emailing drivers directly, communicating to drivers at the Livery Transport Services front counter, posting bulletins at brokerages and Livery Officers speaking directly to several hundred drivers while on patrol, which included providing them with bulletins containing information about the sessions. A total of 19 drivers participated in the two sessions. Key input included:

- General support for the incentive as a good start to offsetting the extra costs of operating wheelchair accessible vehicles
- Regarding using a per trip fee added to the drop rate to fund the incentives, most participants were not opposed, but some indicated that adding an extra fee to the customer could indirectly impact the driver through lower tips

Taxi Drivers – Accessible Plates

Administration engaged with representatives from the Access Calgary Association, an organization of wheelchair accessible vehicle drivers with about 100 members, on 2017 October 26 and 2018 January 18. In addition, an engagement session with wheelchair accessible drivers was held 2018 February 8, in which 9 drivers participated. Key input included:

Annual Accessible Incentive Program

- The City was asked to take into account that the initial estimated cost of a wheelchair accessible vehicle is \$50,000 (which includes the \$15,000 capital cost of installing a ramp).
- Some participants expressed concern that the proposed incentive of up to \$5000 per year may not be enough to incent ATPL holders to continue operating their vehicles. Some suggestions included:
 - The City provide an up front grant of \$15,000 for new vehicles, plus annual subsidies of \$5000 for the higher maintenance costs of operating wheelchair accessible vehicles
 - Provide help to ATPL holders right away through a grant of \$3000

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- Allowing the original ATPL holders (who received their plates in 2006) the option of switching to a regular Taxi Plate Licence

Criteria for Evaluating Eligibility for Incentive

- Participants believe the focus on determining eligibility for an incentive should be based on not refusing trips rather than on completing a certain number accessible trips, because the driver cannot control whether they receive trips through dispatch, and does not take into account that wheelchair accessible customers may call drivers directly to arrange a trip (code 8).

Funding an Incentive:

- Participants cautioned about how an accessible per trip fee paid by customers of all taxi/TNC trips may be perceived by regular taxi drivers as transferring additional costs to them.
- Participants identified administration costs associated with managing the collection of fees from drivers.

Additional Feedback:

- Many participants would like to receive the same specialized training provided to drivers who work for the brokerages that have contracts with CTA, but one participant affiliated with one of these brokerages has refused taking this training because the brokerage does not use the wheelchair accessible vehicles to deliver CTA contracted trips
- Some participants asked to amend the bylaw to extend the allowable taxi vehicle age beyond eight years, provided it passes mechanical and safety inspections.
- Consider providing a deadhead incentive
- Allow customers who pay with ACE cards, issued to eligible CTA clients, to book wheelchair accessible taxis from any brokerage, not just through the companies under an existing contract with CTA.

Transportation Network Companies (TNCs)

TNCs were engaged for their feedback between 2017 December 12 and 2018 January 22.

Key input included:

- City and provincial rules be updated to enable ridesharing companies to partner with city licensed taxis and limousines to engage in discussions about expanding service offerings and leverage technology.
- CTA engage in partnerships with ridesharing or taxi companies to divert non-wheelchair passengers into more cost-effective point to point services and increase the reliability and service for wheelchair accessible passengers.
- Reduce costs for accessible vehicle owners and drivers by removing limits on vehicle age that pass safety inspections
- Maintain the \$0 ATPL annual licence fee.

One company indicated that some cities across Canada (Ottawa, Waterloo Region, Winnipeg) have implemented a per-trip fee on regulated trips to fund accessible transportation initiatives. This company identified challenges with a municipal performance incentive program, which include associated administration costs and potential fraud around the reporting of accessible trips completed. It was suggested the fund may be better used to provide free accessibility training for drivers and dispatchers, aimed at providing a more consistent user experience, or provide incremental funds for CTA to develop programs that divert non-wheelchair passengers into more cost efficient vehicles, thereby freeing up wheelchair accessible vehicles to provide more reliable service for these customers.

Livery Stakeholders

Stakeholders, including former LTAC Members who contributed to earlier phases of the Accessible Taxi Review, were engaged for their feedback on 2018 January 18. Some

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participants expressed frustration that the challenges associated with delivering 24/7 on-demand wheelchair accessible taxi service are the same today as they were in 2006, following the initial release of Accessible Taxi Plate Licences. One participant noted that in cities where wheelchair accessible taxi service is working, it has been due to strong commitment from the top. Additional input included:

Criteria-Based Accessible Incentive Program

- Overall, participants support implementing an incentive program in which accessible plate holders and drivers would be eligible to receive annual incentives, provided they meet clearly defined criteria, to offset the costs incurred for operating a wheelchair accessible vehicle.
- One participant also suggested providing an immediate incentive on each trip delivered to account for deadheading, acknowledging that this might best be delivered through a central dispatch system.

Funding an Incentive

- Participants discussed that Calgary Transit Access receives a significant amount of mill rate funding to provide accessible transit service. It was suggested that The City should look at using some of these existing allocated funds to support improvements to delivering 24/7 on-demand wheelchair accessible taxi service.
- Administration explored with stakeholders the option of adding an accessible per trip fee to each taxi/TNC trip, collected along with weekly stand rents, that customers would pay to fund an accessible incentive program. Participants suggested that The City consider a funding model that includes using a combination of existing mill rate funds and a per trip fee.

Central Dispatch

- Participants support exploring the potential for an accessible central dispatch operated through CTA, to leverage existing infrastructure, if the accessible incentive program does not sufficiently improve customer service.

Additional Feedback

- Participants encouraged The City to consider the customers for this service, some of whom may be unable to communicate the importance of a 24/7 on-demand taxi service to their quality of life.
- Consistent driver training focused on servicing wheelchair accessible customers was suggested as a key component to an accessible incentive program.
- Other participants noted that, as our population ages and citizens are faced with more challenging mobility issues, we will see increased demand for wheelchair accessible taxis.
- One participant suggested The City develop a media campaign, promoting wheelchair accessible taxis as “dual-purpose” vehicles, acknowledging the challenges drivers face in attracting regular taxi trips that are needed to be viable.
- Participants suggested The City consider additional incentives for wheelchairs accessible taxi drivers, such as issuing fast lane vouchers at the airport after an accessible trip has been completed.