

Community Services Report to  
SPC on Community and Protective Services  
2018 October 03

ISC: UNRESTRICTED  
CPS2018-1033

## **Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Service (formerly Accessible Taxi Initiatives)**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On 2018 March 19, Council endorsed a framework for an Accessible Taxi Incentive Program and directed Administration to bring forward the necessary amendments to the Livery Transport Bylaw 6M2007 to enable its implementation. This program is aimed at incenting Accessible Taxi Plate Licence (ATPL) holders and accessible taxi drivers to improve wheelchair accessible taxi service delivery and customer safety while reducing the higher costs associated with operating a wheelchair accessible taxi compared to other taxi vehicles. Subject to Council passing the proposed amendments to the Livery Transport Bylaw, which includes collecting a per-trip fee from all taxi and Transportation Network Company (TNC) trips, the Accessible Taxi Incentive Program will take effect 2019 January 1.

In response to further Council direction received 2018 March 19, this report also addresses options to pilot an accessible taxi centralized dispatch; and investigates options for the delivery of accessible services by TNCs as well as the requirements for allowing ATPL holders and accessible drivers to provide accessible TNC services using the same vehicle.

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#### **ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the SPC on Community and Protective Services recommends that Council:

1. Give three readings to a proposed bylaw to amend the Livery Transport Bylaw 6M2007 contained in Attachment 2;
2. Direct Administration to monitor the effectiveness of the Accessible Taxi Incentive Program and report back to Council through the SPC on Community and Protective Services, no later than 2021 Q1;
3. Endorse Option 2 in Attachment 4 to pilot a third party accessible taxi centralized dispatch; and
4. Direct that the one-time funding request of \$350K in 2019 and \$350K in 2020 to support a two-year Centralized Dispatch pilot project be referred to the One Calgary budget deliberations in 2018 November.

#### **RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPC ON COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES, HELD 2018 OCTOBER 03:**

That Council:

1. Give three readings to proposed **Bylaw 46M2018**, to amend the Livery Transport Bylaw 6M2007 contained in Attachment 2;
2. Direct Administration to monitor the effectiveness of the Accessible Taxi Incentive Program and report back to Council through the SPC on Community and Protective Services, no later than 2021 Q1;
3. Endorse Option 2 in Attachment 4 to pilot a third party accessible taxi centralized dispatch; and
4. Direct that the one-time funding request of \$350K in 2019 and \$350K in 2020 to support a two-year Centralized Dispatch pilot project be referred to the One Calgary budget deliberations in 2018 November.

#### **Opposition to Recommendations:**

Against: Councillors Chu and Colley-Urquhart

Excerpts from the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the SPC on Community and Protective Services, Held 2018 October 03:

The title for Report C2018-1033, was amended, by general consent, by deleting the words "Accessible Taxi Initiatives" in its entirety and replacing with the words "Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Service".

#### **PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY**

A detailed listing of previous reports is included in Attachment 1.

#### **BACKGROUND**

In 2016, Administration undertook a Council-directed two-phased Accessible Taxi Review to consider options with three key objectives: improve customer service for individuals using 24/7 on-demand wheelchair accessible taxis; reduce the financial burden on ATPL holders and

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accessible drivers, and; assess the evolving taxi industry, specifically relating to the effects that TNC operations could have on sustaining on-demand wheelchair accessible service. Council received the Phase 1 report in 2016 February 22 and the Phase 2 report on 2016 December 19, which presented options to improve on-demand wheelchair accessible taxi service delivery. Council referred the matter back to Administration to further consider opportunities where Calgary Transit Access and Livery Transport Services could collaborate in this area. On 2017 March 20, Council received Administration's preliminary assessment of collaboration opportunities for service delivery, and requested additional time to undertake a greater level of analysis to determine whether a collaborative model for on-demand accessible service was possible. Accordingly, Council directed Administration to report back in 2018 Q1 with a comprehensive review and recommendations.

Administration presented Report CPS2018-0127 to the 2018 March 19 Combined Meeting of Council with recommendations to endorse an Accessible Taxi Incentive Program, identifying a plan to monitor its effectiveness for two years. The report indicated that, during this two-year period, Administration would continue to explore the potential for an accessible taxi centralized dispatch managed by Calgary Transit Access. The intent was to undertake a more comprehensive analysis of the requirements for a centralized dispatch system, incorporating lessons learned from other jurisdictions that have implemented similar approaches, and report back to Council on the findings by 2020 Q2. Council endorsed the Accessible Taxi Incentive Program and directed Administration to bring forward amendments to the Livery Transport Bylaw by 2018 Q3 to enable its implementation. On the matter of an accessible taxi centralized dispatch, Administration was directed to bring forward a report no later than 2018 Q4 that explored more options related to a pilot centralized dispatch approach which included considering innovative technologies, utilizing Calgary Transit Access or other existing mechanisms as a dispatch resource.

As part of Council's discussion of Report CPS2018-0127, a Motion Arising was also passed directing Administration to: investigate options for the delivery of accessible services by TNCs; identify the requirements for allowing ATPL holders and accessible drivers to provide accessible TNC services using the same vehicle; and return to Council by 2018 Q3 with an update and any required bylaw amendments.

This report was deferred to the 2018 October 3 SPC on Community and Protective Services due to Council approving an omnibus motion to set aside all 2018 September Council Committee meetings for the presentation of One Calgary Service Plan Previews.

#### **INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS**

##### *Accessible Taxi Incentive Program*

Subject to Council's approval of the proposed bylaw to amend the Livery Transport Bylaw (Attachment 2), Administration will implement the Accessible Taxi Incentive Program, an overview of which is provided in Attachment 3. As endorsed by Council in Report CPS2018-0127, the method for funding this program will be through the collection of a nominal per-trip fee, not exceeding \$0.30, added to the total fare of all taxi and TNC trips taken in Calgary, which will take effect 2019 January 1.

Upon full implementation of the Accessible Taxi Incentive Program, an ATPL holder who also holds an accessible taxi driver licence will be eligible to receive up to \$5000 annually in grants

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and incentives. Attachment 3 provides additional information on the timelines regarding the initial payments of the grants and incentives. The timelines for implementing this program are based on two key factors: sufficient funds must first be collected through the per-trip fee to provide the initial payments, and; since a key objective of this program is to improve on-demand wheelchair accessible taxi service delivery, an evaluation on whether ATPL holders and accessible drivers achieved the customer service and safety criteria tied to the incentives over the previous year must be completed before releasing the payments.

Through engagement, a number of ATPL holders and drivers advocated that The City provide up-front payments to cover the costs of installing a wheelchair ramp (i.e. \$15,000) and additional annual payments to cover associated operating costs. In 2018 March 19, Council endorsed Administration's recommendation to provide annual grants and incentives, acknowledging that if collected over the anticipated life of a wheelchair accessible vehicle (i.e. eight or more years), ATPL holders would be eligible to receive more than \$40,000.

On 2018 March 19, Council directed Administration to monitor the effectiveness of the Accessible Taxi Incentive Program for up to two years and report back to Council through the SPC on Community and Protective Services no later than 2020 Q2. However, given that the full amounts of the grant and incentives will only first be paid out over the 2020 calendar year, Administration requests that the report back timeline be moved to no later than 2021 Q1 to allow for a fuller analysis of the program's effectiveness over the first year.

#### *Options to Pilot an Accessible Taxi Centralized Dispatch*

Further to Council's direction on 2018 March 19, Administration explored additional options for piloting a centralized dispatch for on-demand wheelchair accessible taxi service. Attachment 4 provides a detailed analysis of three potential options:

1. Use Calgary Transit Access as a Centralized Dispatch Resource: This option was identified by Administration in Report CPS2018-0127, presented to Council 2018 March 19. As indicated in that report, while Calgary Transit Access has the ability to support an accessible taxi centralized dispatch system by leveraging existing technology, additional capital and operating investments would be required to provide a 24/7 on-demand service and field monitoring for wheelchair accessible taxis.
2. Award a Centralized Dispatch Contract to a Third Party through a request for proposals (RFP) process: Some jurisdictions in North America have hired third party vendors to provide an accessible centralized dispatch function to improve customer service. Preliminary investigations of these contracts indicate the associated costs would be lower than what would be required to incorporate the function into Calgary Transit Access existing infrastructure.
3. Encourage Industry Collaboration to adopt a Common Commercial Automated Dispatch App product: The livery industries in some municipalities have collaborated in purchasing one software service so that customers who use the App are provided with a live feed of all available taxis within a geographic area. A key benefit to this option is that costs to The City are minimal as industry collectively determines the best solution to improve their service. However, this option relies on industry collaboration, and with some taxi companies in Calgary having already purchased a software service, industry participants may be challenged to reach an agreement on a common App.

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As part of Administration's preliminary review, 311 was also identified as a potential existing mechanism for a centralized dispatch resource. However, 311 was not included in the detailed analysis in Attachment 4 as it does not currently have the necessary technology in place to support this specific dispatch function. Accordingly, in terms of alternatives that leverage existing City staffing/systems, Administration concluded that Calgary Transit Access would be the most feasible existing mechanism to evaluate further as this service's current resources could be better leveraged to support an on-demand wheelchair accessible taxi centralized dispatch.

Given the interest in exploring options related to piloting a centralized dispatch, Administration recommends Council endorse further exploring Option 2 to develop an RFP for the purposes of awarding a centralized dispatch contract to a third party vendor for a two year period. Using a third party vendor would enable The City to test its effectiveness in improving on-demand wheelchair accessible taxi service at a lower cost than would be required to incorporate into the Calgary Transit Access existing system, while still leveraging Administration's experience and oversight in design/specification of an RFP and ensuring oversight from The City. At the conclusion of the pilot, The City would evaluate whether a third party vendor or Calgary Transit Access existing dispatch resources would offer the most feasible approach to continuing such a service over the long term.

Administration seeks Council's direction on the method to fund a pilot on-demand accessible taxi centralized dispatch. In other jurisdictions, driver incentives and central dispatch systems have been funded through a combination of public funds and per-trip fees. Since the Accessible Taxi Incentive Program will be funded through the collection of a per-trip fee, Administration recommends Council endorse the use of mill rate funds for an on-demand accessible taxi centralized dispatch pilot for two years. If this approach receives support, Administration recommends that Council direct that a one-time funding request to support a two-year Centralized Dispatch pilot project in 2019 and 2020 be referred to the One Calgary budget deliberations in 2018 November.

#### *Partnerships between Accessible Taxis and TNCs to deliver Accessible Service*

In response to Council's Motion Arising that resulted from Report CPS2018-0127, Administration investigated options to enable a broader delivery of wheelchair accessible services in Calgary. This investigation identified the following challenges:

- Provincial Regulations: Partnerships between Accessible Taxis and Transportation Network Drivers have not been expressly contemplated in the *Transportation Network Company Regulation* AR 100/2016.

Accordingly, we have communicated with the Government of Alberta to determine their position on this issue. As of the date of the writing of this report we have not yet received their response. In the meantime, Administration will continue to investigate possible options for the delivery of accessible service by Transportation Network Companies and will continue conversations with the Government of Alberta on this important issue.

- Livery Transport Bylaw Amendments: Further clarification from the Government of Alberta is required before Administration can bring forward any recommended

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amendments to the Livery Transport Bylaw to enable accessible taxis to deliver accessible service on behalf of Transportation Network Companies.

Administration will update Council on this matter through a memo following the conclusion of discussions with the Government of Alberta.

#### **Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication**

This report is in alignment with earlier research and engagement undertaken as part of Accessible Taxi Review Report CPS2018-0127, presented to Council 2018 March 19. Stakeholders engaged at that time included representatives from the Advisory Committee on Accessibility, customers who use wheelchair accessible taxis, brokers, drivers, TNCs and the tourism and hotel industry. Topics discussed included establishing a criteria-based accessible taxi incentive program along with methods to fund the program, accessible taxi centralized dispatch systems and making other improvements to the livery industry. Stakeholders provided their feedback through in-person meetings, email responses and targeted taxi driver sessions. Information on the taxi driver sessions was translated into multiple languages, and distributed to brokerages, by Livery Inspectors on patrol and at the Livery Services Front Counter. Qualitative interviews with accessible customers, completed by Leger Research, also informed Administration's recommendations in this report

#### **Strategic Alignment**

This report aligns with Council direction for One Calgary 2019-2022 to ensure that Calgary's transportation network offers a variety of convenient, affordable, accessible and efficient transportation choices.

#### **Social, Environmental, Economic (External)**

Administration is committed to providing a safe, sustainable and customer focused livery system. Accessible livery service enhances mobility and reduces social isolation for those with disabilities in Calgary communities. Further, the taxi, limousine and TNC industries serve to facilitate the city's economic development, while furthering the use of environmentally friendly modes of transportation by enabling personal travel through an integrated network that does not require purchasing a vehicle. Supporting a pilot that uses innovative technology to deliver an on-demand accessible taxi centralized dispatch service also aligns with The City's goals to stimulate the technology sector in Calgary.

#### **Financial Capacity**

##### ***Current and Future Operating Budget:***

With respect to the Accessible Taxi Incentive Program, as identified in Report CPS208-0127, implementing this incentive will impact the operating budget as one FTE is required to administer the program. The cost of this FTE is to be recovered through the collection of the per-trip fee. Auditing, geospatial and enforcement requirements to implement the program will be managed through existing resources, but would be monitored over the two-year period to determine whether any additional adjustments are necessary.

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With respect to an on-demand accessible centralized dispatch, since this is a new program, one-time operating funds would be required to run a two-year pilot. In addition, should Council decide to maintain a centralized dispatch at the conclusion of the pilot, operating funds would be required to sustain this service.

#### ***Current and Future Capital Budget:***

With respect to the Accessible Taxi Incentive Program, there are no anticipated changes to the Livery Transport Services capital budget associated with this report, however, Administration will monitor any budget implications and report back to Council through the budget adjustment process with any necessary adjustments.

With respect to an accessible centralized dispatch, there are no anticipated changes to capital budgets if Council endorses Option 2 to award a contract to a third party vendor for a two year period. However, following the conclusion of the pilot, if it is determined that the centralized dispatch service be delivered through Calgary Transit Access, capital budget would be required to develop the necessary software and system interfaces with taxi providers.

#### **Risk Assessment**

There is a risk that the Accessible Taxi Incentive Program does not sufficiently incent drivers to deliver accessible trips. Administration will mitigate this risk by monitoring the program's effectiveness over two years and by continuing to explore further service improvements. Regarding an on-demand accessible taxi centralized dispatch contract, there may be risks to The City associated with issues surrounding privacy and data sharing, contractual issues and added insurance or liability risks. These risks would be mitigated as part of the contract development process.

#### **REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):**

Administration continues to explore options for improving 24/7 on-demand wheelchair accessible taxi service delivery. This report responds to Council direction to bring forward amendments to the Livery Transport Bylaw 6M2007 to implement an Accessible Taxi Incentive Program and provide options for piloting an accessible taxi centralized dispatch service.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Attachment 1 – Previous Council Direction/Policy
2. **Attachment 2 – Proposed Bylaw 46M2018**
3. Attachment 3 – Overview of the Accessible Taxi Incentive Program
4. Attachment 4 – Options for Accessible Taxi Centralized Dispatch